

STEPS TO A WORLDWIDE CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT

Jesus has incredible plans for you. However, there are some things He needs you to let Him do in you first. Are you willing to allow Jesus to help you be one of His World Changers?

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Joining Jesus' Way Of
Changing The World

Steps To A Worldwide Christian Movement

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Introduction

Have you ever felt, deep down inside, that God has a very special purpose for your life? Have you felt that somehow you aren't truly reaching your full potential? One thing God has placed in all our hearts is a desire to be part of something that really makes a difference. We often define it as being successful or popular. But being famous, successful, or rich has exhibited to most of us that, that isn't the answer to this cry coming out of our hearts. What is the answer?

These Guys Are Ego Maniacs

Wanting To Be Important

Mark 10:35-37 (NIV) Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Him.

“Teacher,” they said, “we want You to do for us whatever we ask.” “What do you want Me to do for you?” He asked. They replied, “Let one of us sit at Your right and the other at Your left in Your glory.”

Mark 10:38-40 (NIV) “You don't know what you are asking,” Jesus said. “Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?” “We can,” they answered. Jesus said to them, “You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with, but to sit at My right or left is not for Me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared.”

Mark 10:41 (NIV) When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John.

Helping Them Become Important

You would think that Jesus would have jumped all over James and John. They were demonstrating that they weren't humble men motivated by a love for people. They also were showing that their main concern wasn't for the glory of God. The ten other disciples would have been more than happy to have jumped all over them. How dare these two try to get the positions they all wanted and were afraid to ask. But, as usual, Jesus didn't react like we would expect Him to.

Mark 10:42-44 (NIV) Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all.

The Secret To Being Successful

Instead, of Jesus being offended at His disciple wanting to be great, He told them how to be great and how to be first. There is a human desire to be first and there is a godly desire to be first. Jesus wants to fan the fires of the godly desire to be great in the Kingdom of God.

It's easy for you to get confused, when Jesus tries to kill the human desire to be great. That can cause you to think He is trying get rid of all passion, determination, and fervor. It's usually the person who lacks passion and concern that Jesus has trouble with, not the aggressive person.

There's a type of person who is passionate, driven, and can best be described as a go-getter. That type of person is who Jesus wants to use more than anyone else. However, it can be difficult getting the go-getter into the Kingdom work. They usually are pretty full of themselves. That was the type of person Peter was. It took the special work that only Jesus could do to change his heart and still keep the passion he possessed. Here is another one of those passionate types.

Now That's What Jesus Is Looking For

The Passionate Type

Phil 3:12-14 (NIV) Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.

Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do:

Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

1 Cor 9:24 (NIV) Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore, I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

Have You Lost Your Dream?

Jesus is even hoping to inspire those who once were filled with dreams, passion, and fire. People who started out believing that God was going to use them in a mighty way. But, after one disappointment and beat-down after another; they have decided that it was just some kind of pride or misunderstanding about God's plan for their lives. Their concern for the enormity of the needs around them and the lack of success in the ministry have taken their toll on whatever dreams and aspirations they have had.

The key for a disappointed person to think about is, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, and a host of others went through what you, a somewhat discouraged person, is going through now. The difference between those who waited faithfully and those who stopped believing, is the end-success of the lives and ministries of those who refused to stop believing.

Jesus wants to speak to your heart; He wants to help you be willing to be re-inspired, willing to hope and believe again, and be willing to let Him show you a way to be a winner in Him. Be willing to see if Jesus and the Bible have the answer to what was missing in your first attempts.

Here's What Jesus Wants For You!

This is Jesus' goal for those who have faith in Him:

John 14:12 (NIV) I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in Me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.

This goal, more than likely, exceeds any of the goals you have had for your ministry. He does have a dynamic plan for your life and ministry. That is established in this Scripture. You just have to make sure you don't give up until you are experiencing all He has planned for you. The desires He has placed in you are there for a reason. Sometimes they look and sound egotistical. And, sometimes they are ego motivated. But, as you have seen, that doesn't stop Jesus from redirecting these motives in the right direction.

You may have this feeling of dissatisfaction. You may not be happy with the status quo. You may be looking at the condition of the world and want to do something about it. Rather than pointing out how bad things are and talking about how unbelievable it is, you get upset and want to change it. The big question is, what can be done about a world that is in so much trouble? Money hasn't helped, education hasn't helped, government hasn't helped, and religion hasn't helped. Where do you see the type of change that would make the world a better place? It comes in a one-on-one level in the transformed life of a new believer in Jesus. A person whose life has been really messed up is totally changed and is heading in the opposite direction.

Don't Look At Me. It's Not My Fault.

What Brought Jesus' Success?

While it is true that the world can't be changed in mass, it isn't true that the whole world can't be changed one person at a time. Jesus started a movement that has been heading in that direction for centuries. The problem is, that movement has bogged down in many areas of the world. God is moving in a mighty way in some places in the world. And, He is being rejected in other parts of the world. Is the rejection because the Gospel can't be presented in those places? Or, is it because God's people aren't presenting it the way they should?

For people like you, who aren't satisfied with just wondering and talking about it, there's a way to find out. Would you be willing to assume you are the problem? Would you be willing to come to Jesus, empty of all your ideas? Would you be willing to let Him tell you what the problem is with some areas of the worldwide Christian movement He started? If you did find out that you are the problem, what would be your next move? Would you want to be involved in the larger aspects of Jesus' worldwide Christian movement? Would you be willing to lay your life before Jesus' discipleship training system and start all over again?

The Preface

Before You Start

Jesus Wants To Change Your Life

Luke 6:46-47 (NIV) Why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say? I will show you what he is like who comes to Me and hears My words and puts them into practice. If you just read this book and move on, what will happen to you? During this study, if you don’t ask Jesus for the things you read, they may enter into your brain, but, they won’t enter into your life. Jesus is going to be taking you through His Gospels and teaching, training, and transforming you into one of His disciples. But, as you are walking along with Him, you need to be praying and asking Him to apply these things to your attitudes and character.

Powerful Keys

Mat 7:7 (NIV) *Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.* There will be a textbox with a prayer in it to give you a possible request to Jesus. These will be vital prayers that stop your reading and help you invite Jesus to change your life. It will be a very specific prayer, asking for that specific thing Jesus is dealing with. Except for some new and interesting information, this will be an exercise in futility, if you stay the same. Jesus’ disciples were supernaturally transformed. You must be supernaturally transformed. That won’t happen, if you don’t take out the time to ask Jesus for it.

Mat 7:8 (NIV) For everyone who *asks* receives; he who *seeks* finds; and to him who *knocks*, the door will be opened. Jesus, help me not just read another interesting book on an interesting subject, put it down, and only make a few changes in my life. Help me stop my reading and ask You to apply each truth You give me. I want to be changed supernaturally like you transformed You disciples. I want to come out of this study and prayer time equipped to do what Your first disciples did.

Who Gets Good Gifts?

Mat 7:11 (NIV) If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask Him! Praying the above prayer or something similar to it makes a major difference than just reading another book. Even if it is an awesome subject, if you don’t *ask your Father in heaven*, He won’t *give good gifts* to you. He gives *good gifts to those who ask Him*.

Jesus, help me start *asking* You for everything. Help me understand that Christianity and ministry exist in the supernatural realm. They can’t be accomplished by human effort or world training. As I go through these studies and prayers, help me do it with faith in You and not as a religious exercise. Help me know for a fact that studying Your truths and *asking* You to apply them to my life is how I grow spiritually and how I do ministry.

Prayer Is The Answer

James 4:1-2 (NIV) What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. Your human effort and world training may be a little more civilized than this; but, you get the point. Human effort, human reasoning, and world training don't work in Christianity. Only *asking* God works; He alone has the power and skills to help you live the Christian life that takes His supernatural input.

Jesus, I have some incredible human skills and abilities. My people skills have really increased over the years. I can get people to do things for me that are very impressive. But, I can see that I need You and Your work in me in order to do what You have planned for me to do. Help me to go into this study and prayer time with an open heart and a yielded mind.

Your Attitudes And Character Must Change

James 4:3 (NIV) When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. This is very hard on most Christians. When they pray and don't get an answer they can be happy with, they get all kinds of negative attitudes. Jesus will be putting a priority on your attitudes and character, so this situation, described in this verse, doesn't happen to you.

Jesus, do whatever it takes to make it possible for me to get my prayers answered. There are so many areas of my life that need Your God-size, miraculous intervention. It has been confusing for me, at times, as to why You didn't respond to my prayers the way I needed You to. Help me see that You put a priority on my spiritual growth. If I need to not get something from You, so I will change spiritually, You *will* say "no." Help me start getting beyond all these "no" answers by already growing like I should.

Jesus' Goal For You

John 15:7 (NIV) If you remain in Me and My words remain in you, *ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.* As you are going through this book, the first prayers you need to pray are ones that help you **remain in Jesus and His words remain in you**, so you can *ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.* If you haven't started your prayers with those prayers first, then many of your other prayers will be answered "no."

Jesus, help me understand that there are some things I need to pray for, so I can *ask whatever I wish, and it will be given* to me. As I go through these studies and prayers with You, help me learn what needs to be changed in my life and my attitudes and character. Help me see that they have hindered our relationship. Since Your priority is my spiritual growth, I can see why You have held back on many things I prayed for. Help me realize it isn't always because You don't want to do it for me. You just can't, because it would not be good for me.

Chapter One

What Did Jesus Do Differently?

Jesus' movement could be what many Christian leaders have been looking for. It has already demonstrated that it has the full potential of changing the world. If you want to be involved in something really important, this is the movement for you. What would it take to be a part of a worldwide Christian movement that spreads around the world today? What would it require for you to see the people who occupy this planet now, start seeking God by the billions?

Jesus, assuming that God is in agreement with such a possibility, what would I need to do to be a part of a worldwide Christian movement? If You started indicating to me that You are going to start generating a mighty movement for today, what plan would You set forth? Many have thought about this and have posed some suggestions, as to what it would take. Do You want more churches? How about more ministers? Would more small groups help? Maybe You want more prayer? Do You want more repentance or greater dedication? Help me see what it is You want for me, so I can be a part of such a movement.

Christianity Is Losing Ground

All kinds of studies have been done. Some have studied other generations. Others have even gone back to the book of Acts and tried to find out more about what made them so successful. Large quantities of books have been written on what the authors found out through all their extensive research. Yet, the population is growing at a horrendous rate; your responsibilities are increasing far beyond your abilities to respond; and, you can keep trying to set something in motion that will somehow get a big enough movement on the move.

Jesus, I know the Bible holds the answers to the question. Somewhere in between its two covers holds the answer to my world. What exactly would You do, if You were to extend Your mighty Christian movement to every person in my generation? How would such a movement affect me as Christian leader? Help me come to You and ask You.

Stay With The Original

Mat 28:18-20 (NIV) Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” Jesus developed disciples and they were world changers. If you developed disciples, would they be world changers? If you aren't a world changer, will they be? Or, would they just be pretty good?

Jesus, what happened from the first disciples to those today? Is it because they are a copy of a copy? Have they lost resolution like a copy of a picture, then a copy of that copy of a picture, then a copy of a copy of that copy of a picture? Show me that this is exactly what happened.

I Don't Have It, Do You Have It?

You need to go back to the original worldwide movement produced by Jesus. You need to know exactly how He did what He did to start the movement that is affecting your world today.

Who Knows What To Do?

If you are willing to except the possibility that the worldwide Christian movement has bogged down in some areas of the world because of you, then you are going to have to be willing to expose all your opinions to Jesus. You are going to have to let Him show you what it takes to get disciples produced in all nations. Be willing to find out whether or not Jesus agrees with your procedures.

Jesus, how would I go about finding out what You did to start the original worldwide Christian movement? Show me that I must go back to the Gospels and sit at Your, my Master's feet. No one is going to argue that You didn't know how to start and maintain a worldwide movement. You gave me major keys, as He presented the "Great Commission." And, I have responded to *most* of the keys.

What's Missing?

Mat 28:19-20 (NIV) Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." You probably got the "go" part. You may even have the "make disciples" part. You could even have the "of all nations" part. What a lot of ministers didn't get was the "teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" part.

Jesus, when I started out in the ministry, I wanted to just go and start doing the ministry and make disciples. The problem with the ministry and the disciples I made were, it all looked just like me. I didn't look like You. And, the ministry and disciples didn't look like You either. I thought I was ready. Others ordained me and said I was ready. The question is, did You think I was ready? **Teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.** Wow, Jesus, that definitely wasn't me or anyone around me.

When Do You Need It?

Teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you: You know what most ministers think, when they read something like this. Some think they are ready to go. While others know they aren't ready. But they think they can get ready on the fly.

Jesus, I can look at Scriptures like, **Luke 10:2 (NIV): He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."** Then I can say to myself: "I need to get out there and get this job done." And it is true, I do need to get the job done. The question is, Jesus, what kind of a person do I have to be before I am able to "get the job done?"

Why?

How many churches are closing around the world? How many ministers are failing and losing their faith in Jesus? What is wrong with them? What is taking so long to get the Gospel message out to the whole world? What did Jesus' disciples have that you don't seem to have?

To Be Or To Do, Is That The Question?

Being Powerful Without Pride

This can all sound like an argument concerning which is more important. Should you wait around until you have become so holy that you are finally ready to go out and do the ministry? Or, should you grow as you go? What is more important? Is "being" more important or is "doing" more important? What if those aren't your only two options?

Jesus, were You trying to make Your disciples better or trying to make them more dependent? Maybe hearing, and staying connected are the important issues. Is it possible that You never intended to make me holy? Could You be trying to get me connected to holiness and then let that holiness shine through me to others? Is spiritual transparency the important issue?

Who Is Going To Be Doing This?

John 15:5 (NIV) I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in Me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing. Jesus, I can see that, if I start being holy, I am going to really feel proud about it. But, if the holiness I am experiencing is You flowing through me, I am going to be more prone to give You the glory.

Gal 2:20 (NIV) I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me.

Who Gets The Credit For This?

James 4:6 (NIV) But He gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." If the life you live is the life of Christ, it is going to be really hard to take credit for anything. Well, except for those stupid things you do that you know aren't Christ living in you.

Jesus, what do I have here? Is it where every time something great happens, You get the glory, and, every time something wrong happens, I get the blame for it? Teach me that this is pretty much what I am going to see happening in Your discipleship training system. Is this something I want to sign up for? Every time I open my mouth, You point out that I said something dumb. No wonder Your discipleship training system has been revamped.

Who Gets Blamed?

Here's how Peter got treated, after being brave enough to step out of the boat and walk on water: **Mat 14:31 (NIV) Immediately Jesus reached out His hand and caught him. "You of little faith," He said, "why did you doubt?"**

Who Is A True Disciple?

Jesus help me understand that a disciple isn't Your disciple until You say they are. If they haven't been taught

1. **TO** obey *everything* You commanded the original disciples to obey, and if they haven't been taught
2. **HOW** to obey *everything* You commanded the original disciples to obey, they aren't ready to get involved in the "Great Commission."

Jesus, obviously, neither the first disciples were nor am I going to be perfect, while living on this planet. However, show me that there are some nonnegotiable issues that some have made negotiable. These cause my life and ministry to be very disappointing to You and to me.

Look At The Questions Again:

- Does Jesus need more churches? It depends. What kind of churches?
- Does Jesus need more ministers? That really depends. Are they ministers that Jesus would put His stamp of approval on? If they aren't, then they are not going to be an answer to a worldwide Christian movement.
- Maybe Jesus needs more prayer? You would think that this question would have to be answered with a resounding "yes". But Jesus even challenged this process. He said that the Father wouldn't even hear certain types of prayers.
- Could it be that Jesus wants more repentance or greater dedication? If a person tries to get more spiritual for selfish, prideful, or humanistic reasons, their greater dedication will be non-beneficial. If they keep doing things on purpose and then keep repenting, Jesus will ignore that kind of repentance.
- Some of your best answers to those things you consider "Christian" can be blasted out of existence, once they are exposed to Jesus' life and ministry. That is why Christianity isn't moving forward like it should.

Whose Side Are You On?

Jesus, what side of the crowd would I be standing on, if You were starting Your earthly ministry now? I may "think" I know the answer. But, do I? Peter thought he knew the answer to this question and discovered something disheartening about himself. Show me that it is important for me to find out whether or not I would qualify as one of Your disciples. I need You to put me and all my ministry under Your microscope. You knew then and You know now how to start and maintain a worldwide Christian movement.

Chapter Two

Here Is How To Get There

Before Jesus starts helping you dig into His Gospels, you will need to let Him lay out a little ground work for the system and the principles this study and prayer system is based on. First of all, you will need to see four issues or steps that must be considered all the way through the Gospel study and prayer time. The training system that Jesus exposed His disciples to, held a certain standard throughout. Ask Jesus to help you see this training system and its standards.

Four Steps: If anyone (1) *desires to come after me*, let him (2) *deny himself*, and (3) *take up his cross*, and (4) *follow Me*. (Matt 16:24)

Here in Matthew 16:24 *Jesus* gives you four broad, all-inclusive steps for “anyone” who wants to be involved in His worldwide Christian movement.

1. **Desires To Come:** Jesus, help me have an intense desire to join You.
2. **Deny Himself:** Jesus, help me give up my own plans, abilities, opinions, efforts, desires, and goals.
3. **Take Up His Cross:** Jesus, help me accept the death instrument that begins, carries out, and finalizes my victory over various areas of human activity in my life, as the Holy Spirit reveals and implements them in me.
4. **Follow Me:** Jesus, help me accept the life provision--You--to start living out the walk in the Spirit, as each human activity is replaced with the Christ-life.

Jesus' Plan For Everyone

From Salvation To Ministry

Eph 2:8-10 (NIV) For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Jesus, teach me the two aspects to my Christianity. My personal Christian life and my ministerial call. Help me understand that over the years, since Your ministry on earth, some have tried to divide these issues up. They imply that “lay” Christians do the menial tasks and provide support, while professionals do the ministry. Lay people, they say, aren't responsible for any ministerial gifts. However, show me that the Bible doesn't teach that.

From New Christian To Mature Minister

Eph 4:11-13 (NIV) It was He Who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Jesus, teach me that this is Your goal for every new believer. While it is true that You don't call everyone to fulltime ministry, show me that it is not true some do not have ministerial gifts. Help me realize that the whole world won't be reached with the Gospel message, if everyone does not get involved.

Here Is What Gets You There

Let Jesus show you what every person is to look for in living the Christian life and doing the ministry God has called *them* to do. If you aren't looking for it, then it will be impossible for you to yield your God-given free will to Jesus.

The Personal Commission:

John 15:5 (NIV) I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man *remains* in Me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing. This is your assignment for your personal relationship with Jesus.

John 15:7 (NIV) If you *remain* in Me and My words *remain* in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. If you fulfill your assignment, this is the results you will get.

The Ministerial Commission:

Mat 28:18-20 (NIV) Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore, *go and make disciples* of all nations, *baptizing* them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And, surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Luke 6:46 (NIV) Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? Jesus, help me see that, if I respond to the above requirements, certain changes are going to take place in my life and ministry. Teach me that these are changes that exhibit the fact that I am yielding to the full demands of God. Show me that this is what the Bible says happens to all who respond to Your personal and ministerial requirements. Make it clear to me that these requirements aren't optional, if I want to be a World Changer. Teach me that my Christian life and ministry start to fall off when You require something of me, and I don't do it.

Here Is What It Looks Like

Your Personal Commission:

Gal 2:20 (NIV) I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me. This is how it is done.

Gal 5:16 (NKJV) This I say then, walk in the Spirit, and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh (body). This is what you are to do. But, when the Bible tells you to do something, it is vital that you not try to do it with human effort or world training. **Mat 7:11 (NIV) If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask Him!** So, take out time to pray for this to be provided and fulfilled in your life.

Jesus, since **I no longer live, but You, my Christ live in me**, help me yield my God-given free will to Your life. **The life I live in my body, help me live by faith in You, the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Yourself for me.**

Jesus, since my personal-commission assignment is to **walk in the Spirit, and I will not fulfill the lust of the flesh** or my fleshly body, empower me to **walk in the Spirit**. Teach me how to go about my day walking **in the Spirit**.

Your Ministerial Commission:

Your assignment is to follow Jesus' example in these verses:

John 8:28-29 (NIV) So Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am the one I claim to be and that I do nothing on My own but speak just what the Father has taught Me. The one who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do what pleases Him."

Jesus, help me follow Your example of how You lived Your life. Since You did **nothing on Your own but spoke just what the Father had taught You**, then it is obvious that I should live my life with the same relationship with You.

John 5:19 (NIV) Jesus gave them this answer: "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by Himself; He can do only what He sees His Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does...."

Jesus, help me understand that this is how You will be training me. You will allow me to live in the midst of the ministry; but, You will be guiding me and empowering me to do it. Help me see that as long as I am aware that it is You doing it, I won't be taking the credit and entering into pride. Help me always keep in mind that **God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble**.

John 12:49-50 (NIV) For I (Jesus) did not speak on My own accord, but the Father Who sent Me commanded Me what to say and how to say it. I know that His command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told Me to say.

Jesus, command me **what to say and how to say it**. Do it so that, when supernatural, God-sized things are flowing through me, I won't think it is because I am such a great Christian. Let it be that **whatever I say is just what You and the Father have told me to say**.

John 14:10 (NIV) Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in Me? The words I say to you are not just My own. Rather, it is the Father, living in Me, Who is doing His work.

Jesus, teach me that this is what Galatians 2:20 is telling me. You won't take away my God-given free will. So, You will only be able to live through me, during my day, in those moments when I yield to what You want to do and say through me.

John 14:31a (NIV) But the world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what My Father has commanded Me.

Jesus, help me totally trust and submit to You, so that this is how I treat You. Show me that this is when my Christian life will represent You in a powerful way. And, this is when my ministry will allow You to do supernatural things in and through me. And, this is when I become a World Changer and live Your Jesus-life.

John 15:15 (NIV) I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.

This is Jesus! Can you believe how submitted He was to listening and obeying the Father. If He did His life and ministry this way, how much more should you? This approach solves a lot of pride issues. If you design, implement, lead, motivate, and push to a conclusion a plan; you are going to be tempted to accept all the praise and glory for the success. Provided it does succeed in the first place.

Jesus, help me realize that, if the whole plan is from You, where You designed, implemented, led, motivated, and brought it to a conclusion; then I am almost forced to give You all the glory and credit. Plus, help me see that this way of doing Christian life and ministry requires a relationship with God. Show me that this way keeps us in constant communication.

Chapter Three

The Minister In The Ministry

Your *main* responsibility is your steps to personal Christian growth. If you aren't in good spiritual condition, you are not going to be used as a vessel of honor to fulfill God's will in the life of others. It is in your own best interest to live the life you are proclaiming and proclaim the life you are living. There are two issues here:

1. Hypocrites teach one thing and live another.
2. People who lack love are having success in an area of their life but won't share it with their friends.

John 15:3 (NIV) You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Jesus gave all His foundational Christian growth training to His disciples *prior* to their final ministerial assignment. Everything you see in the book of Acts is a testimony of all Jesus accomplished in the personal, Christian part of their lives. Jesus properly prepared *them* before He was interested in setting up a ministerial goal, a dynamic strategy, a worldwide Christian organization, a church or anything else you might use to start your ministry.

Jesus, You know that the person in the ministry is more important than the ministry itself. Since You were going to have a worldwide Christian movement, You knew it had to be in and through people totally dedicated and constantly connected to You. Help me be totally dedicated and constantly connected to You.

Are You For Real?

Are You Living It?

You must be careful not to confuse *knowledge* with Christian life. You realize that those who know *about* God are not the same as those who *know* God. The same is true of those who have a *knowledge* of God's Word, but, don't live it. Jesus explained it this way:

Luke 6:47-49 (NIV) I will show you what he is like who comes to Me and hears My words and puts them into practice. He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built.

But the one who hears My words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete.

Jesus, a lot of the way I was prepared for the ministry was to train me well. Was I living what I learned? Who knew? It was assumed that it wasn't their job to find out. I had passed their tests. They knew I knew all the right answers. From that point, it was up to me to live the life. I didn't do well under that training program. I assumed that I was living it just because I had the information in my head. I did take the information and *try* to live it!

What Makes You Real?

There were times in my life when I knew I was presenting information I wasn't living. Sometimes I would tell the congregation: "When I point my index finger toward you, there are three fingers pointing back at me." That sounded good and humble. But, it didn't change me. Jesus, on the other hand, had a discipleship training system that revealed an important issue. He knew who was *becoming* what.

Jesus, show me that the first thing that is going to be challenged by You, as I take a look at *Your* training system, is going to be my personal growth and training system. Help me see that in most cases, You trained Your disciples different than I am being trained and am training others. You could have used any system for training You wanted. And, help me understand that You *did* choose the one presented in the Gospels.

Whose Training System Are You Involved In?

You probably have heard all of the old arguments against doing it Jesus' way. You may have bought into some of those "other" systems and are suffering big time. You may have tried to become more relevant to the current generation. You may have coupled new procedures with Biblical ones. You may have decided to pick and choose which things to use.

Jesus, sometimes I wait to see who comes out qualified to pick those training systems that are relevant for me. I often just want to see who is succeeding. If they get unusual "success," I go with the training systems they picked and leave out the ones they didn't. I figure that those they left out must not be applicable for today. If those systems were all that important, they wouldn't be having all that "success." Right? Help me see that the question is, would You consider these ministers and ministry successful?

Where Are You?

Let Jesus give you a quick look at some of the basics to His discipleship training system. He presents two requirements for moving into a life that really lives fully the things of God's Word. First, you have to **remain in** Jesus. Second, He and His Words have to **remain in** you. That is the system Jesus and the Bible sets forth for getting the Scriptures of the Gospels to infuse themselves into your life and ministry on a permanent basis.

Four Aspects Of Remaining In Jesus

If you remain in Me: Jesus, teach me four aspects of remaining in You:

1. **Totally:** Help realize that there are no reservations, no stipulations, and no holding back.
2. **Permanently:** Help me understand that I must never be satisfied, never finished, never having ownership, and constantly be seeking all of You.
3. **Intimately:** Help me realize I must be in an attentive, growing relationship of love, devotion, and depth with You.
4. **Personally:** Help me see that I must have a focusing of thoughts, feelings, actions (speech, activities, influence) toward a personal relationship with You.

Five Aspects Of Jesus' Words Remaining In You

If My Words remain in you: Jesus, teach me five aspects of Your Words remaining in me:

1. **Knowledge:** Give me information stored in my brain concerning what the Bible says.
2. **Understanding:** Give me interpretations from the Holy Spirit of what the Bible means.
3. **Wisdom:** Train me, by the Holy Spirit, on how the meaning is to be applied to my life.
4. **Will:** Help me be willing to allow this meaning to take place in and through my life.
5. **Life by the Spirit:** Apply that Biblical principle, by the Holy Spirit, to my life, because I am willing to accept the change.

This Is The Best Resource In Town

One of the best ways of remaining in Jesus and Him and His words remaining in you, is to walk with the Holy Spirit through the life of Jesus in the Gospels. It is there that you will be able to view two important parts to the Gospels. The first part is Jesus' life. The second part is Jesus' words. The five aspects, mentioned above, help you remain in Jesus. In other word, if you, assisted by the Holy Spirit, spend time looking at the life of Jesus and devote time reading what He said, that will help you to remain in Him. The more time you spend exposing yourself to His life and His words the more it will all become a part of your life.

Jesus, help me use the two lists provided above to help me lays out the goals I need for remaining in You. Help me understand that they lay out the results I can expect in my life, if I do what it takes to get them. Help me realize that the lists do not give me the steps for getting those results. Help me understand that they need to be broken down into actual procedures. So, I ask You to start breaking down the aspects of You and Your words remaining in me.

I Know Everything There Is To Know About Knowledge

It all starts with knowledge. A lot of your spiritual knowledge came through personal, spiritual experiences. Someone introduced you into a saving relationship with Jesus and the things you experienced taught you a lot about Him, right? Also, through having that experience, you got to know Him personally. You learned about Him and you got to know Him intimately.

You are gaining even more knowledge through the study of the Bible. From the Bible, your personal relationship is growing and your knowledge is growing. The Bible keeps helping you to *know* Jesus better and it is helping you learn more information *about* Him as well.

Jesus, this can sound like beginner stuff. But, show me that it is and it isn't. There are times when I am too busy to study my Bible for my spiritual growth. Help me keep in mind that, just because a chef served food to two hundred people doesn't mean he got fed. There must be times every day that he stops and eats. Also, his nutritional needs may not be the same as the people he served. He may need food with much greater nutritional value. Help me see that this is definitely the case with ministers ministering to the intense needs of other people. I must spend time feeding on the things of God for my own spiritual maintenance and growth.

Chapter Four

You Must Get Back To The Basics

Spiritual Fatigue

Keeping yourself in tiptop spiritual shape takes work. It requires you making time to develop your own spiritual growth. If you are crisis oriented, you will have a hard time making this a priority. Has this ever happened to you? You start feeling a little tired all the time. You think you just need to rest a little more. But, when you take a vacation, you come back more fatigued than when you left. Your days off, if you have them, don't seem to help much.

Jesus, help me understand that my spirit person, on the inside of my body, doesn't have a way to let me know it is starving. So, it expresses itself through my body's fatigue. Help me realize that I am running out of spiritual power. My spiritual batteries are about on zero. Show me why. I may be using up on others, everything I get from You. Teach me that the more I minister, the more I need to spend time with You and Your Word.

Living On Past Spiritual Food

What you are getting ready to look at are basic spiritual requirements that have to stay with you all the days of your life. When you get too important and/or start trying something other than Biblical study, that is when you find yourself going the wrong way.

Mat 7:28-29 (NIV) When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law. Jesus, show me that You are going to be speaking and ministering through me. If I am in low spiritual condition, I will give You the same cooperation as someone who is about to fall asleep.

I'm Telling You The Truth Now

Jesus Is Supplying You With Truth

Mark 13:31 (NIV) Heaven and earth *will* pass away, but My words *will never* pass away.

Jesus' Words are your strength, power, security, direction, and spiritual health. But, you know a whole lot of other words and information. If any of them are contradictory to Jesus' words and you are basing your life on them. You and your ministry are suffering because of it. The success of your life and ministry are dependent on what you base them on. They will only be as effective and results producing, as the power behind them.

Jesus, when I know what God's Word says, I can be much more confident, when I speak. When people come to me, thinking that I am a good source for getting good answers to their issues, help me not give them inferior information. People seeking the truth and new believers trust their ministers to give them Biblical guidance. If I fail them because of poor preparation or poor spiritual condition, help me see that it isn't going to go well with me.

Jesus Is Supplying You With Power

Many ministers are dropping out because of spiritual failure in their own lives. Why? Not enough Biblical support to sustain their own spiritual wellbeing. A good Christian book can serve as a glass of milk to drink with a steak dinner of God's Word. Seminars, sermons, church services and small groups, good Christian books and good Christian music, and Bible studies don't take the place of eating and digesting the Bible under the Holy Spirit's leadership. You desperately need Biblical knowledge. And, here is where it all starts.

Five stages of knowledge:

1. General information – Jesus, help me know the basic concept of a Scripture or a Biblical topic that You want me to get familiar with.
2. Workable information – Help me be able to express it in my own words.
3. Specific information – Help me be able to quote it verbatim from a reliable translation and/or the original Hebrew or Greek.
4. Exhaustive information – Within reasonable limits, help me completely study all possible translations, renditions, usages, and derivatives of the words in it.
5. Transforming information – Empower me to allow The Holy Spirit to produce that Scripture or a Biblical topic into the daily activities of my behavior.

I'm Reading This Great Book About God

Bible Time Matters

You know the Bible is the answer to all the problems you face. But, are you spend adequate time in it? The Bible encourages you to spend a lot of time in it. That alone gives you the confidence that it will change everything. Below is a recommended procedure for moving into a closer personal relationship with Jesus and learning more about Him.

The procedures for obtaining **knowledge**:

1. Jesus, help me read the Bible or book of the Bible straight through as fast as possible.
2. Help me read it slowly and allow the information to attach and categorize itself in my mind.
3. While reading through slowly, help me underline special verses that the Holy Spirit prompts me to underline.
4. Once I finish the slow reading of the Bible or book of the Bible, help me go back and read and then reread the underlined verses until they become more familiar.
5. Help me study each underlined verse until the basic concepts can be expressed. And if it is needed, help me read the passages above and below them.
6. Help me study each underlined verse until I can express it in my own words.
7. Help me pick out the most outstanding underlined verses, memorize them, and practice quoting them verbatim.
8. For verses that need even greater attention, help me do word studies on them.
9. Help me do topical studies by finding verses that address the same, similar, and/or related subjects.

Choosing Supernatural Brain Food

Knowledge is mostly mechanical. It is a process whereby the brain is enabled to store the information. The above system simply exposes the brain to Biblical information in order to help it become more familiar with it. Many make the mistake of thinking that this is the end of the goal. They feel that once they know a Scripture, that fact alone will change their life.

Jesus, help me realize that knowledge of the Bible is mostly providing the Holy Spirit with the raw building materials necessary to start changing my life. Teach me that the Holy Spirit usually won't work with things I don't know. Make it clear to me that I *do* have to know a truth before it can set me free. But help me keep in mind that once my brain possesses that knowledge, it becomes usable material for the Holy Spirit to work with.

John 8:32 (NIV) Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.

Psalms 119:11 (NIV) I have hidden Your word in my heart that I might not sin against You.

I Know You Think You Understand What I Meant

The knowledge in your brain under the anointing and guidance of the Holy Spirit will produce understanding. Understanding is knowing what the original meanings were when the Holy Spirit caused that Scripture to be written. Knowing what the Bible says needs the additional information of what it means. If you are left to your own opinions as to what a Scripture means, you can find yourself heading in a totally wrong direction.

Jesus, since I sincerely want to go the direction You want me to go, help me give up my own opinions and let You give me each verse's meaning. Make it clear to me that the meaning of one verse won't contradict the meaning of another. If that happens, help me see that it is time to take both verses and expose them to You. Help me always know that it isn't a problem with the verse. It is a problem with my understanding of the meaning of that verse.

The procedures for obtaining **understanding**:

1. Jesus, empty out any preconceived opinions, impressions, preferences, or biases.
2. Explain the verse to me. Give me Your intentions, when You caused it to be written.
3. As I meditate on a verse reveal the depths of its meaning to me.
4. As I read the passages above and below the verse, help its meaning become clearer.
5. Use Scriptures You have already helped me understand and compare them with the one I don't understand or want to understand better.
6. Guide me to a reliable church leader or mature Christian that I can respect.
7. Guide me to reliable Christian books by trustworthy authors on the subject. But, help be aware that just because someone has written a book, doesn't make them an expert.
8. If it still doesn't come clear, help me put it aside and wait on Your timing for that particular Scripture. But, help me keep praying for its meaning and not just forget it.

I Don't Think This Applies To Me

Understanding the meaning of a Scripture or passage isn't the same as knowing how it is to be applied to your life. You can know what a Scripture says and even know what it means and still not know how it is to be used in real life. Wisdom comes from Jesus showing you how to apply a Scripture to your attitudes, character and behavior. The reason you can lack victory in various areas of your life and ministry is because you lack the power and transformation that, that specific Biblical truth provides. You have to know a truth before it will set you free.

The procedures for obtaining **wisdom**:

1. Jesus, deliver me from human and worldly wisdom.
2. Let me have an overall general wisdom for life.
3. Also let me have specific wisdom that applies to the Scripture or topic I am studying.
4. Help me understand the meaning of the Scripture I am seeking life change through, so I won't misunderstand and try to apply it in a wrong way.
5. Search my heart and help me truly want to know how this Scripture is to be applied to me.
6. If I have resistance, fear, or misunderstanding concerning a Scripture, which is about to be applied, help me be willing, by You explaining the benefits, helping me understand the purpose, and teaching me to trust You with or without understanding the implications.

You Want Me To Start Living This?

This is where you can fall short. Knowing what a Scripture says, knowing its meaning, and knowing how it is to be applied, still isn't enough. You must yield to Jesus and let Him do the actual work. Your life and ministry will fall short for as long as this last principle hasn't been applied. Once a Scripture is applied, that is when you are living by the Holy Spirit.

Gal 5:16 (NIV) So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. This is a power-life that operates supernaturally with God-sized results.

The procedures for **living by the Spirit**:

1. Jesus, help me trust the Holy Spirit and His work in my life.
2. Jesus, make sure I have the specific wisdom that explained what is being applied, how it is going to change my life, and what I am going to have to be willing to let happen to me.
3. Jesus, if this new change is replacing an old habit, help me be willing to let the old habit go. Help me not try to mix the old with the new. Help me not plan on living the new when convenient and going back to the old when desirable.
4. Help me *yield* to the Holy Spirit and His power. Help me not to try to live this new change on my own. Help me know that it is Him empowering me to succeed.
5. Jesus, if I fail in my new change, empower me to turn back to God and renew my commitment to the new change. Help me always willing to be changed. Help me always ask Him to forgive me for the failure, teach me how to better use His Word, and how to better yield to the Holy Spirit's power and influence.
6. Help me never, never, never give up. Help me just keep repeating the above process until the new change becomes a normal way of life.

Chapter Five

I Will Do It If You Will

It is very important that you not under estimate the power and transformation that comes from the simplistic set of procedures you just went through. You can complicate the work of God with mountains of rules and volumes of steps. Or, you can try to over simplify it by putting the entire responsibility on God. You *can't* do it by yourself and God *won't* do it by Himself. He created you, so you would learn how to work together with Him. He being the smart one in the relationship means you are going to have to learn to follow His lead.

Jesus, teach me that obedience is a big part of my relationship with God. When God lays out how He wants me to gain victory over certain maladies in my life and ministry, make it clear to me that, that is the *only* way it is going to work. There will be no shortcuts and no addendums. As I start flowing through the Gospels and watching You at work, help me truly believe that I will see the above procedures at work there.

You Must Live It!

The main issue here is the fact that Jesus isn't impressed with you when you stop off at the hearing aspect of what He tells you.

Luke 6:47-49 (NIV) I will show you what he is like who comes to Me and hears My words and puts them into practice. He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. But the one who hears My words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete.

Jesus, make it clear to me that You want to see the things You tell me, showing up in the activities of my life. And, You want me to teach my trainees the same thing. Help me submit my attitudes and character to You, as a top priority above everything else. And, help me do the same with my trainees.

You And Your Trainees Must Do This

Mat 28:19-20 (NIV) Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

Jesus, help me totally understand that hearing something and storing it in my brain isn't enough. Help me realize that I must not teach something I am not living. If I don't have a breakthrough in that area, help me see that I can't help others with something I haven't been helped with. Show me that I can't give what I don't know or have in my life.

It's A Will Problem

The Success Criteria

John 15:7 (NIV) If you remain in Me and My words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.

“**Whatever you wish**” could seem to be saying that any of your desires, will, preferences, wishes, hopes, etc. will be given to you. That approach to interpreting this Scripture would make it say that you will get even your momentary whims honored. God can't give you carte blanche control over answers to your prayers under these types of circumstances.

Jesus, show me what it is that governs the results of this verse. Help me understand that, like in all of Christianity and ministry, special criteria *must* be met. If my life, my ministry, and me training others is going to succeed, remaining in You and Your words remaining in me are going to decide what happens. Show me that this is not optional.

God Honors Your Free Will

Jesus taught you the procedures for obtaining knowledge, understanding, wisdom, and life by the Spirit. So now, let Jesus help you with one of the most important issues of all--your will. Your will is a huge matter with God.

Jesus, teach me the deep aspects of my will and its relationship with God. Help me understand what kind of barrier it can cause between Him and me. Help me always remember that it is a God-given free will. Show me that, when He made me in His image, that was a vital part of me being a human. Set me free from the confusion that it is causing, in why my relationship with Him is sometimes distant and answers to prayers don't seem to come.

Who Put This Tree Here?

Gen 2:9 (NIV) And the LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground--trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Leave that tree out and you would all probably still be in the Garden of Eden. Why would God put the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in Paradise? Because, Man is only a robot without a free will. *And*, Man is just a robot with a free will, without choices. Adam and Eve possessed a free will, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil provided the opportunity for choice, they exercised their free will on that tree, and they fell.

Jesus, teach me about my God-given free will and the choices I have to exercise that free will on. Show me that God honors my free will; and, He honors my choices. Help me see that if I make the wrong choice, He won't be able to give me **whatever I wish**. There are a lot of things I can wish for, if left to my human desires. That's why this Scripture has requirements.

You Are Free To Submit

Luke 22:42 (NIV) Father, if You are willing, take this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done. This is what you are going to have to do with your will. You are going to have to submit your will to the will of God just like Jesus did. Your Christianity and ministry depend on it. If you want to be a World Changer, if you want to have an impact on the people around you, then there are requirements that will be placed on you.

Phil 2:5-8 (NIV) Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death--even death on a cross!

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Jesus, show me that this is what is required of me; if I am going to be able to help people, I must allow You to put Your attitude in me. Help me realize that I will never be able to do what is needed without this attitude. It is going to take You flowing through me, so You can do supernatural and God-sized things in the lives of hurting people. They need You rather than what I have to offer.

This Thing Keeps Crawling Off The Alter

How do you find out what God's will is for your life and ministry and then submit to it? How do you submit your will to God's will like Jesus did? It isn't good enough to know you should; you must allow Jesus to put this in your Christian life and ministry.

Romans 12: 1-2 gives you the answer. **"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--His good, pleasing and perfect will."**

1. Jesus, teach me and empower me to **offer** my body on the alter as a living sacrifice.
 2. Help me not **conform any longer to the pattern of this world.**
 3. Help me **be transformed by the renewing of my mind.**
- Jesus, use these three things to bring me to the place where I **will be able to test and approve what God's will is--His good, pleasing and perfect will.**

Do these three things, and what do you get? You get a clear picture of what God's will is. God's voice comes in as clear as a bell. No static from Satan, no misdirection from your body, and no special advice from the world. You will be hearing God's voice and only God's voice. You will be able to always pray according to God's will and get your prayers answered positively. You will never be wondering: "What is God's will for my life?" No more worrying: "Is this God speaking to me?" "Is it me?" "Maybe it's the devil?" "Maybe it's my body being influenced by worldly desires of the devil?"

Jesus, train and empower me to do these three things, so I will have my spiritual life cleared up. Even though these three things sound simple, help me understand that there is good news and there is bad news. I have a will of my own and God isn't going to supersede it. I am glad God doesn't just take over my will, once I come to Him. I am glad He only takes over a situation in my life, when I submit it to Him. All this keeps me existing as a free will being. But, the problem is, I don't easily give up situations and decisions during my day.

Why Is It Taking So Long?

Because of the free will problem, this three-item list requires a lot of steps. There are steps you must take, so they will head toward fulfillment. None of these three requirements are going to happen, as an instant work of grace. They were credited to your account with God, as a work of grace. But, they don't show up in your behavior until you turn each one over to God.

The steps involve knowledge, understanding, wisdom, will, and life by the Spirit. You will be doing this Scripture-by-Scripture, all through the books of the Bible. God will wait for you to read it, start to understand it, come to a point of wisdom on how it will be applied to your life, let you decide whether or not you want it applied, and then He will act according to your decision.

Jesus, teach me that this knowledge, understanding, wisdom, will, and life by the Spirit system is my relationship with God. He waits, as I take my time going through my Bible. He waits, as I ponder whether or not I want to let Him give me victory in an area of my life that the Bible is dealing with. There are times when I think I am waiting on God to finally give me the victorious Christian life and a dynamic ministry. But, make it clear that God is waiting on me.

I Have A Doctorate In Human Effort

The best place to live and minister victoriously is to take your journey with Jesus. He successfully transformed His disciples into dynamic Christians that started the worldwide Christian movement, you are experiencing today. You may feel you are already ready to be mightily used by God. You may have such a strong call of God on your life that you feel obligated to do something mighty for God. You may have such great ministerial training and paid such a heavy price getting it that you feel you are totally equipped for God's great work.

Jesus, help realize that many have come and gone having pretty much the same qualities as I do and failed. But, help me see that some of those who originally failed, have come back to You and asked the hard question: "Why did I fail, Jesus?" Now with a humble heart and an open life, show me that they started letting the God of the universe put His qualifications in them. Help me be convinced that there is no One more qualified to set this example and lead me into these qualifications than You, Jesus. Help me submit my will to Your will.

Chapter Six

I Wish I Could Have Lived When Jesus Was Here

Jesus Is Your Instructor

You are going to walk together with Jesus. He is going to take you through His message, ministry, methods, and life. You will be given an opportunity to submit to His training. And, you will be given an opportunity to let the Holy Spirit become your guide into all that Jesus is and is doing.

John 16:13-15 (NIV) But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He *will* guide you into all truth. He will not speak on His own; He will speak only what He hears, and He will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to Me by taking from what is Mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is Mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is Mine and make it known to you.

Jesus, work through the Holy Spirit to train and empower me to be a World Changer. I haven't yet had the experience described in John 16:13-15. Help me be ready to be changed from the inside out. Teach me that it doesn't start out as a strategy, a method, a ministerial system, or a worldwide goal. It starts out as a work through the Holy Spirit on my attitudes and character. Help me understand that unless I am living it, I can't help others get it.

Learn How To Give People Jesus

If you aren't who you need to be, then you cannot do what you need to do. If you die to yourself and start living the Jesus-life, then and only then will you do God's work God's way. Jesus has a system of training that involves Him living in and through you. His way of training takes advantage of the fact that He can communicate with you Spirit-to-spirit.

Gal 2:20 (NIV) I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me. Jesus, prepare my heart for a system of training like nothing I have ever experienced or thought of before. Help me see that I am getting a relationship and training with You that is just as good as Your disciples got, when You were on this earth.

Supernatural Training

He will bring glory to Me by taking from what is Mine and making it known to you: If someone went on an incredible trip to a beautiful place, if, when they came back, they could connect their brain to your brain, you would instantly have the memories of that trip, just as if you had gone there yourself. You would remember the smells, the tastes of the foods, the feelings of the air and water, the travel and walking, and everything that your friend experienced. That is what Jesus wants to do with you. He wants you to experience training through a supernatural method that only He can provide.

John 14:12 (NIV) I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in Me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. Jesus, help me understand that this is You bringing me to a place where You can do Your work in and through me. Help me realize that I will never do anything greater than You, without it being You doing it through me. And, help me see that I will never have that happen without You preparing my attitudes and character, so You can freely work through me.

The Plan

Let It Happen To You

As you enter into learning from the Master of the worldwide Christian movement, it will be up to you to live in the moment. Starting with Matthew's Spirit anointed report, you will spend your time observing, learning, and being transformed by the Father's plan through His Son. If you stay detached, like you are just reading a human book, your heart will be closed.

2 Tim 3:16-17 (NIV) All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. Jesus, help my heart and mind be opened in a supernatural way. Help me yield to the Holy Spirit, so I will feel like I am there with You and the disciples. When you talk, when You heal, and when You rebuke, help me put myself in three places. Help me join You in ministering; help me join the disciples in being trained; and help me join the people, as they are being healed.

Let Jesus Set The Environment

As you know, the book of Matthew doesn't start with Jesus' discipleship training system. It starts with the genealogy of Jesus. Let Jesus show you a few important aspects of Himself, and then, let Him move you on into the discipleship training relationship.

Jesus' Genealogy

Jesus, In Abrahams' Family Tree

Mat 1:1 (NIV) A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham: The DNA that is passed from person to person from one generation to the next shapes your physical characteristics. Your spiritual family does the same. The Old Testament gives the account of the beginning of man in Adam and Eve. Spiritually speaking, you didn't fair well with them. You inherited what is often referred to as the "Adamic Nature." That is what the Bible talks about in **Psalm 51:5 (NIV) Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.**

Gen 17:4 (NIV) As for Me (God), this is My covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations.... Jesus, starting with Abraham, help me understand that God began to build a new family. This family produced a family tree, a heritage, and a legacy. Teach me about the DNA I am based on. Help me get to know my spiritual inheritance, so it will change my life and ministry.

Your Spiritual Family Tree

The spiritual channel of DNA is passed from person-to-person from one generation to the next by means of a powerful mechanism called faith. The first family member, Abraham, started it off and from him God built a whole new *spiritual* family.

Rom 4:16 (NIV) Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring--not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all.

Rom 1:17 (NIV) For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

I Know That!

Do You Know What You Think You Know?

One of a minister's most difficult problems is, being able to stay with the basics. You used faith to get saved and then you can try to use something else for the rest of your life and ministry. As Jesus takes you through His life, if you don't allow faith to transport you into the event, you will be a detached observer. You won't be a disciple walking and living with Jesus, you will stay here. Your spiritual family is tied together through faith.

Jesus, help me see that Your genealogy is filled with names of people who lived and died and nothing more is said about them. Their greatest accomplishment is that they lived long enough to have children, who passed on the spiritual DNA to their children. Help me stop and let You teach me why the Bible explodes into a great presentation, when it got to Abraham. Help me understand that he started and finished his life with faith that led to obedience.

Wouldn't it be interesting to look back a few hundred years at your spiritual family tree? Who were all the people who lived and proclaimed the message which was passed from generation to generation until it reached you? Some of them contacted large quantities of lives. Others only lived long enough to keep the message heading down through time to reach you.

Jesus, as I look at Your genealogy, I see people I want to be like and people I don't want to be like. I really *want* to be one of those who contacts large quantities of people; so, help me be touched by You. Teach me that all those whose life was touched by You and they responded in continuing, obedient faith, were people who had a great impact on those around them. Help me see how much You lived Your life in total obedience.

Chapter Seven

I Struggle With Doing What I Am Told

Jesus Is Baptized In Water

Total Obedience In Preparing To Start His Ministry

Mat 3:13-17 (NIV) Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. But John tried to deter Him, saying, “I need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?” Jesus replied, “Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.” Then John consented.

As soon as Jesus was baptized, He went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on Him. And a voice from heaven said, “This is My Son, Whom I love; with Him I am well pleased.”

Jesus is almost ready to start His ministry. Just a few loose ends to tie down. You could assume that, since He is Jesus, He doesn't need any preparation to do the ministry. But, Jesus is doing His Father's will to the letter. No short cuts. What is He concerned with? Is He going over His notes on organizational structure? Does He need to go over His studies on strategies for building a Christian movement? No, He is putting His faith in doing DNA of righteousness.

Jesus, You only have approximately three years to start a Christian movement that will last for thousands of years and cover the entire planet. At this point, You don't have a moment to lose. Since You are about 30 years old and still haven't done any ministry, and since the world is in desperate need of a Savior, why did You get Yourself baptized? What is Your priority? **“It is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.”**

Jesus, I was going full blast in the ministry by the time I was 18 years old. How does the Father feel about Your delay in ministry? **“This is My Son, Whom I love; with Him I am well pleased.”** Oh. Well, I guess this little stop off to be baptized is okay.

Righteousness Comes Through Obedience

As you can see here, righteousness is the great issue in Jesus' heart and life. His deepest desire is to please His Father. He wants and is doing only those things that fulfill His Father's wishes. From beginning to end it is **“not My will but Yours be done.”** This is the place you must come to. Your part of the family tree will be decided by how you fit into Your Father's will.

Jesus, I struggle with what I think God's plan should be. I know it doesn't make sense for me to think that way, but I sometimes believe that my little brain can come up with a better plan than God can. So, I devise a ministerial strategy, hold it up to God, and ask God to bless my plan. But You, on the other hand, are watching for the Father's plan and joining it.

It is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.

Righteousness is what God is all about; it is His DNA. God wants a relationship with you. You want to do something important. God wants to do a ministry in and through you. You want to do something that you can get the credit for. Fulfilling all righteousness helps you die out to your own selfish desires and yield to the will of God for you and all those around you. God doesn't flow through unrighteousness. Everyone gets cheated with unrighteousness. That is why many are not a part of the family of God and aren't a part of His family tree.

Jesus, teach me that righteousness brings the blessings of God in me and through me to others. Help me see that Your message, ministry, methods, and life were all about righteousness. Help me see that my message, ministry, methods, and life are also all about righteousness. It isn't about amassing large numbers of people. It is about leading large numbers of people into Your righteousness. Salvation brought righteousness, as being credited to my account. And Your Jesus-ministry causes righteousness to flow in and through my life to others.

Sinners Don't Like Righteousness

Mat 16:24 (NIV) Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone would come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me." It wasn't until you found out what Jesus and Christianity really offered that you changed your mind about Him and it. You didn't start out loving righteousness. And, if your definition is still a little bit skewed, you may not be real sure you like it now. But, righteousness is how people get connected to God's family tree.

Jesus, help me see that righteousness is something that could make every person on the planet more blessed, happy, excited, and joyous than they could ever dream of. But, because they only know what sin can do and have no idea what righteousness can do, they will persecute me for presenting righteousness to them. But, help me be willing to put up with their misunderstanding and keep explaining all You have to offer them.

What Is Righteousness?

Righteousness is only doing good to yourself, other people, and God's plan. It is true that this puts you in a right relationship with God, which is the typical definition of righteousness. But, righteousness is a spiritual condition brought about by behavior. You are righteous because you think, feel, say, and do righteous things. It is much more important for you to know what righteousness looks like in real life than to have a nifty little definition of it.

Jesus, help me live a righteous life. Help me see that it is the way I treat myself, other people, and God's plan. Empower me to live it in such a way that, as I go through my day, I have been a true example of You and Your righteousness. Help me realize that the way I treat people has a lot to do with whether or not they want You. Help me live a life around them that helps them want what I have.

It Has Started

Did You Join Jesus?

Mat 3:13-17 (NIV) Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. But John tried to deter Him, saying, “I need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?” Jesus replied, “Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.” Then John consented.

The question is, did you join Jesus in that baptism? Or, did you just see Jesus getting baptized? Nothing has changed about Jesus’ ministry from then to now. Do you see Jesus’ purpose in your baptism? Do you understand that Jesus was in you, when you were baptized? Jesus and your life and ministry started at the moment of your baptism. And God included you in His approval because Jesus is in you. **“This is My Son, Whom I love; with Him I am well pleased.”** Because of what Jesus did for you, this is how your heavenly Father feels about you.

Jesus, help me not just read these passages. Help me not just watch You go through Your life on earth. Help me realize that You are in me now. You are starting Your ministry in me right now. I didn’t do this, when I was baptized; but, I must do it now. Empower me to see myself being baptized with You, as I read this account. Make my new ministry with You be real and powerful. Help me yield to the Holy Spirit, so I can live this, as You take me through it.

Make This Your Purpose

“Let it be so now; it is proper for you to do this to fulfill all righteousness.” It is vital that you yield to Jesus and His motivations, purposes, and goals. If you just listen to Him talk and watch Him do these things, you aren’t letting Him start His ministry in you. This is Who Jesus still is; He hasn’t changed, as He lives and ministers in and through you. It is vital that you see this, as Jesus getting your ministry started off in the right direction.

Jesus, help me see that the Holy Spirit is taking me through this for ministerial training. You are seeing to it that I get the same type of training that Your disciples got. Show me that this is my opportunity to open my heart and allow You to transform my life and ministry. Help me realize that, when this has been accomplished and You and I are working together in the ministry, this is where I got what I needed.

Accept The Holy Spirit’s Involvement

He (John) saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on Him (Jesus): If Jesus didn’t try to do His earthly ministry without the Holy Spirit *coming on* Him, you sure shouldn’t. Jesus said in Acts 1:8 (NIV): **“But you will receive *power* when the Holy Spirit *comes on* you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”**

Jesus, let Your Holy Spirit come on me in power, so I will be able to cooperate with You and Your ministry. Help me yield to Him, as He empowers me to give my body over to Your ministry. Let it be saturated with Your Holy Spirit, so it will be under His control.

Chapter Eight

Learning Spiritual Warfare

Jesus Is Led Into Being Tempted

Mat 4:1-11 (NIV) Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. Don't you usually know what you need to do next each day? Why would Jesus need to be led by the Spirit? Here is where you start to see the difference in you and Him. Jesus isn't going to do anything unless He is told to.

John 14:31a (NIV) But the world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what My Father has commanded Me. Jesus, help me be a person that can receive and carry out Your orders. Help me give up my opinions, plans, desires, and notions are. Help me let You tell me what Your plans are for each day. Help me follow Your example of submission to God's Spirit. Show me that if I don't, I am not going to be where God wants me, doing what God wants done.

Here I Come, Ready Or Not!

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 does 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.

The Jesus, that is in you, already knows how to use **the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God (Eph 6:17)**. The Holy Spirit is letting you see Him in action. However, it is vital that you see Jesus' procedures for spiritual warfare. Since you have a God-given free will, if you don't know what Jesus wants to do in and through you, you may get in His way. See what Jesus did; see what procedures He used; feel the attitude He exhibits; allow yourself to be there with Him flowing through your body. Learn how to be used to resist the devil.

Jesus, help me see my body and I there with You. Help me know what it feels like to have You resisting the devil through my mind, heart, and body. Help me understand that You and I will be facing this many times doing my life and ministry. Help me yield to this time of training, so I will be well acquainted with what You will want to do in and through me.

Jesus Gets You Ready

1 Tim 3:6 (NIV) He (the overseer) must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. It isn't just recent converts who run into problems. Even those who have been Christians for a long time can still not be ready.

1 Cor 3:1-3 (NIV) Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly--mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men?

Heb 5:11-12 (NIV) We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn. In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food!

Jesus Is Limited By You

It might seem like all you have to do is allow Jesus to flow through you with all His knowledge, foreknowledge of the future, understanding, wisdom, skills, abilities, and power; and, that is a lot of it. But, you must understand Jesus' purpose for training you. Since He is getting *you* ready for life and eternity, He will *only* use who you are and what you know.

Jesus, help me see that You aren't just limited by my will. You are also limited by my knowledge, understanding, wisdom, and training. Help me understand that You will only use those things I have allowed You to put into my brain, heart, and mind. It is Your objective to help me learn how to use them by You working through me with them.

You Need Relevant Spiritual And Ministerial Training

How many ministers set out to do the ministry and get shot out of the saddle before they hardly even get out of the ranch gate. What was missing in their training? In your training, were there a lot of things that were taught that you never really used in ministry? Did you get spiritual warfare training? Do you know how to put on all the armor of God?

Jesus, a lot of important issues weren't taught. They felt that these things should be taught in church. But, no one realized that the minister, at church, wasn't taught them either, when they were being trained. Consequently, these important issues got left out of all spiritual training at church and in ministerial training. Help me understand that You won't leave any important issue out of the training You give me.

What Does That Look Like In Real Life?

Eph 6:17 (NIV) Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Look at the skill that is exhibited, as Jesus battles with the devil. The right Scripture, at the right time. But, the objection you may have, is the fact that it is Jesus using these Scriptures. It comes easy for the King of kings and Lord of lords to do spiritual warfare with the devil. However, that is the whole point; it is the King of kings and Lord of lords that will be teaching you spiritual warfare. He is going to train you, empower you, and equip you.

Jesus, help me always be aware that I won't be learning spiritual warfare alone. I won't be fighting the devil, using my own strength and power. I won't be resisting temptation with my own skills, talents, skills, or abilities. You are inside me, and, will be giving me hands-on training, while You are actually doing the work. But, help me keep in mind that You are only using those things I know, understand, know how to apply and am willing for You to use.

Your Intelligence Has Been Increased

John 14:26 (NIV) But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

The Holy Spirit is your Counselor, Teacher, and Reminder. He will be helping you learn the Word of God; He will help you grow in your spiritual condition. He will increase your abilities. He will increase your knowledge, understanding, wisdom, and life in Him. Then you will make them available for Jesus to use in your training. Jesus will then take them and increase your experiences with them. Those things the Holy Spirit does in you, Jesus will use to train you.

Jesus, as Your Holy Spirit exposes me to Your message, ministry, methods, and life, help me realize that I will be surrounded by the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit. I won't be the same person that I was prior to this training. I believe You take it all and reveal to me how to use it all to win. Help me grow mightily, so You have a lot to work with.

You Are Starting With These Things

2 Cor 10:4 (NIV) The weapons *we* fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have *divine* power to *demolish strongholds*. You have had these weapons all a long; it is just highly possible that no one taught you that you had them and how to use them. But, even if they did, no one is able to teach you like Jesus is. He will join you in a supernatural way and teach you from the inside out.

Jesus, help me realize that no matter what and how much I was taught, Your training system and You, as my teacher, will supernaturally exceed anything I have been exposed to so far. Help me come to You, as a little child, and let You train me on every aspect of spiritual living. Help me always give You my full cooperation, so you can help me reach my full potential.

You Are This Person

Rom 8:37 (NIV) No, in all these things *we are more than conquerors through Him Who loved us*. You have been this person from the moment you became a child of God. But, like a new born baby with all their physical body parts intact, you have had to do a tremendous amount of growing, learning, and experiencing. Jesus will help you take all you have become, so far, and use it to show you how to take advantage of the fact that you *are more than conquerors through Him Who loved* you.

Jesus, help me believe that I *am* this person, so I can *let* You use it. Help me see that I must *know* this fact and *let* You help me live on the basis of it. Help me always keep in mind that You won't force this truth on me. You are waiting for me to learn them, have faith in them, and then join You in using them. Teach me how to totally yield to You all during my day.

You Have God Inside You

1 John 4:4 (NIV) *You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the One Who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world*.

Your battles get easier, as you start to realize your battle is fought together with Jesus. All you do, is learn and get God's provisions Jesus' way. Then you yield to the Holy Spirit's power to change you. After that, you let Jesus work through you. Then finally, be sure to give Jesus all the glory. As you grow in these things, your life and ministry will take on a major change.

Jesus, I am ready to give up my human approach to spiritual issues. Help me move into those things You have provided me. Help me open my heart and mind to Biblical training that supersedes all other procedures. Help me realize that Christianity and Your ministry cannot be fulfilled by using human effort, human techniques, or world training. Show me that I must learn how to yield to You, so You can train me with Your supernatural methods.

Chapter Nine

Do Something, Even If It Is Wrong

Jesus Starts His Ministry

Mat 4:12-17 (NIV) When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he returned to Galilee. Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali--to fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah: “Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the way to the sea, along the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles--the people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.” From that time on Jesus began to preach, **“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.”**

Here are questions you must have answered by Jesus before you can join Him in starting your ministry: What does He want you to do? What type of ministry has He called you to? What aspect of the message does He want you to present? Where does He want you to start? When does He want you to start? How does He want you to start? With whom does He want you to start? If you aren't on the same page with Jesus, you will make wrong decisions and turns.

Jesus, help me understand that, if I start doing things that You haven't called me to do or doing them in ways You don't want them done, I am going to have a very disappointing ministry. Help me see that You aren't just moving randomly here. You are fulfilling specific Scriptures; You are proclaiming a specific message, and You are obeying a specific direction from Your Father. Help me realize You are showing me that the only way ministry is going to be successful, is to move away from following God in general. You know exactly what, where, when, how, and why. Show me these things, so I can yield to You.

I Was Wondering How That Was Going To Work

The Ministry You Will Be Doing

John 14:12 (NIV) I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in Me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. You must never forget that Jesus' ministry hasn't ended. It isn't your ministry, now that He is seated at the right hand of the father. The Holy Spirit is working in you to bring you to the place where Jesus and His ministry can flow through you. Jesus' plans are to do even greater things through you than He did while physically on earth. But it will be Him flowing through you.

Jesus, help me learn the Bible; help me learn what it says, what it means, how it is to be applied to my life, and to yield to it being applied to my life. Help me understand, that as You work with me using those things the Holy Spirit is exposing me to in the Gospels, I must already have that particular spiritual breakthrough. Help me grow spiritually, so I won't limit the training You are wanting to do through me.

The Life You Will Be Living

Gal 2:20 (NIV) I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. You haven't lost your God-given free will. As you go through these Gospels with Jesus, you will find out what Jesus wants to do in and through you. He will make it clear what He wants to do, where He wants to do it, when He wants to do it, how He wants to do it, and why He wants to do it. But, you will always be able to say no, not now, not there, or not like that. All during your day, you and He will be discussing these things.

Jesus, help me see how I can take Your ministry flowing through me and hinder it. Help me understand why so many ministers are falling short of what You are capable of doing. Show me that it isn't because of the system You are providing; it is because of the contamination, resistance, ignorance, and human effort. Help me be clear on the fact that my spiritual growth will make all the difference, as to how much You flow through me.

The Words You Will Be Speaking

John 6:63 (NIV) The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life. Once you yield to Jesus by allowing Him to guide your every step, that is the moment you will see what He can do through an obedient vessel. The Holy Spirit will help you enter into the Gospels and join Jesus in His life, message, ministry, and methods. He will make them real to you. He will help you understand what you are experiencing. And, He will help you grow spiritually. That will help you be ready to respond to what Jesus will want you to do with Him.

Jesus, help me understand that, to the degree, I literally join You in Your life, message, ministry, and methods, is the degree I am trained by You. Help me allow all the verses in the Gospels be real to me. Help me understand what You are causing me to experience. Help me grow spiritually, so You can expose me to Your very best training. Help me feel like I am literally there walking with You. Bring me into this Biblical system with transforming power.

Source You Will Be Yielding To

Phil 4:13 (NIV) I can do *everything* through Him (Jesus) Who gives me strength. This is Jesus' plan for you because you believe in Him. He is not a respecter of persons. The rules are the same for everyone. The difference between one person and another is, the degree to which you join Jesus and the Holy Spirit in that plan. It will have to do with time, effort, money, resources, people's opinions, your desire, and your willingness to make sacrifices.

Jesus, help me see how great a privilege it is to have You be willing to teach, train, transform, and empower me. Help me stay aware of the value and privilege You are offering me. Show me how wonderful, how glorious, and how blessed I will be, by opening my heart and mind to the life and ministry You want for me. Give me the information and the emotional influence that helps me be willing to do what it takes to be a World Changer through You.

I'm Sorry, I Didn't Hear You

You know it is *God's* work; you know *you* can't do it. You are aware that Jesus has to be the One Who is doing it *through* you. Where you can struggle is at the point of hearing and knowing exactly what He wants. You will have to respond to Him with the slightest prompt and with an immediate obedience. Here are some Scripture verses that will give you a hint, as to what you need to be looking for in your relationship with Jesus' life and ministry.

Jesus, as I go through the Gospels with You, help me learn how to hear Your voice. Since I can't hear it physically, give me very sensitive spiritual ears. Help me hear Your slightest whisper. Help me get the slightest implication of what You want. Help me grasp the full meaning of what You say to me. Then help me respond immediately to Your will.

Fix Your Eyes On Jesus

Heb 12:2 (NIV) Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the Author and Perfector of our faith, Who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. When you are going about your day, your thoughts must be connected to Jesus. You will have to be consulting Him for every decision you are about to make. The disciples didn't get to make any decisions. They could have, if they had wanted to. They did try to talk Jesus into letting them. But, they became World Changers by obedience.

Jesus, I can always be like those who didn't follow you. I have the right to make all my decisions and choices. But, I choose to follow You. Show me why Your disciples were so successful in their ministries in the Book of Acts. Help me do like them and give You my undivided attention. Show me that I will lose track of where You are, if I don't keep my eyes locked on You.

Give Jesus Your Attention

Mark 4:9 (NIV) Then Jesus said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." You have spiritual ears; however, they may not be tuned into Jesus. Everyone in the crowd heard what Jesus was saying. There were just some who didn't like what He said. You are heading into some very pointed words from Jesus. Do you have ears that can hear and obey? Do you have ears that hear exactly what Jesus meant or do they distort, water down, or reject His meaning?

Jesus, when I hear something that appears to be too hard for me, help me run to You for Your power and help. When I hear something I don't understand why, help me let You guide me into those reasons for seeing the benefit in it. When I hear something that is scary, help me come to You for comfort and security. Help me never get to the place where I decide to quit.

Chapter Ten

I Only Need You For The Big Things

John 15:16 (NIV) You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit--fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in My name.

As you prepare for this training relationship, looking to Jesus for everything, is a true demonstration of your faith in Him. The more you exercise your faith in Him, the greater the relationship develops. The greater the relationship develops, the more your love grows. The more your love grows, the more you listen to everything He has to say. The more you listen to what He has to say, the more you give your life over to Him and His ministry.

1 Cor 3:10 (NIV) By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. Jesus, prepare my heart for this training relationship. Help me not join You for some special things I think I need. Help me not just pick up a truth here and there. Make it clear to me that I need it all. Start me from the ground up and lay a foundation in me that everything else is built on.

I Am An Expert In Biblical Interpretation

Your Final Authority

2 Pet 1:20-21 (NIV) Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

The Bible cannot come under your control. Everything written in God's Word has to remain under God's control. He has to decide what Scriptures to apply, when, where, and how. As you are reading the Gospels, you can't use other Scriptures you know to conflict. If you start interpreting God's Word, deciding when, where and how to apply it; it is then that you are no longer under Jesus' leadership. He has to set the standard for all the rest of the Bible.

Mat 5:38-39 (NIV) You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. Jesus, the eye for eye, and tooth for tooth concept was Scripture from the Old Testament. When You said, "But I tell you," You exerted Your authority over the Bible. Help me see that I am studying under the authority of all authority.

Mat 28:18 (NIV) Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Even while reading your Bible you can go astray, if you put your dependency on your own brain, skills, abilities, and intelligence. The Holy Spirit has to be constantly speaking to you, telling you what it means, how it is to be applied, who to apply it to, and which Scripture is applicable to the situation. Jesus wants this kind of continuing relationship with you. And, you need this kind of continuing relationship with Him. This training is dependent on that attitude.

Jesus, help me understand that You are my Lord. My life and ministry are all from You and Your provisions. Help me enter into this training with total respect, submission, and humility. Help me see that I will not get Your training, if I don't completely give You the honor and awe You deserve. Purify my attitudes, so I can treat You the way You must be treated.

I Think I Will Decide What To Do Today

Devoting Your Life

Jesus has to be in control of your day. The Word belongs to Him and your life belong to Him. Each day's ministry has to be Jesus ordained and controlled. Once you turn your message and ministry over to Him, you are well on your way to being a Jesus-trained disciple. If Jesus is in control of what you say and what you do, you and those you minister to will be safe.

John 10:14-16 (NIV) I am the good shepherd; I know My sheep and My sheep know Me--just as the Father knows Me and I know the Father--and I lay down My life for the sheep. I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to My voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.

Jesus, help me understand that You weren't just talking about Yourself during Bible days, You are talking about Yourself that lives in me. Let the Holy Spirit infuse Your love and compassion for hurting people into my heart. Help me accept that this is not an optional attitude. I must allow You to fill me with this, so You can get my cooperation.

You Must Yield To The Good Shepherd

John 10:11-13 (NIV) I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. If Jesus is not in control of your life and ministry, no one is safe.

Jesus, I have had times when I could walk away from Your people. I have worked with people for as long as it was convenient. I have allowed myself to become detached from people who needed my help. Help me see why I must allow Your heart to totally influence my heart. Help me see that I am not yielded to You, if I don't have this attitude about people.

I Guess I Was Somewhere Else When God Showed Up

Let Jesus show you some regular humans and their life and ministry that were constantly being influenced by the Holy Spirit and Him. These are people who were trained by Him concerning how to hear, understand, and obey His wishes on a daily basis.

PHILIP

Acts 8:26-39 (NIV) Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Go south to the road--the desert road--that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the book of Isaiah the prophet.

The Spirit told Philip, “Go to that chariot and stay near it.” Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. “Do you understand what you are reading?” Philip asked. “How can I,” he said, “unless someone explains it to me?” So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

The eunuch was reading this passage of Scripture: “He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before the shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth. In his humiliation he was deprived of justice. Who can speak of his descendants? For his life was taken from the earth.” The eunuch asked Philip, “Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?” Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.

As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?” And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing.

PETER

Acts 10:1-48 (NIV) At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly. One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, “Cornelius!” Cornelius stared at him in fear. “What is it, Lord?” he asked.

The angel answered, “Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God. Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter. He is staying with Simon the tanner, whose house is by the sea.” When the angel who spoke to him had gone, Cornelius called two of his servants and a devout soldier who was one of his attendants. He told them everything that had happened and sent them to Joppa.

About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles of the earth and birds of the air.

Then a voice told him, “Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.” “Surely not, Lord!” Peter replied. “I have never eaten anything impure or unclean.” The voice spoke to him a second time, “Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.” This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven. While Peter was wondering about the meaning of the vision, the men sent by Cornelius found out where Simon's house was and stopped at the gate. They called out, asking if Simon who was known as Peter was staying there.

While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, “Simon, three men are looking for you. So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them.” Peter went down and said to the men, “I’m the one you’re looking for. Why have you come?” The men replied, “We have come from Cornelius the centurion. He is a righteous and God-fearing man, who is respected by all the Jewish people. A holy angel told him to have you come to his house so that he could hear what you have to say.” Then Peter invited the men into the house to be his guests.

The next day Peter started out with them, and some of the brothers from Joppa went along. The following day he arrived in Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. As Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him and fell at his feet in reverence. But Peter made him get up. “Stand up,” he said, “I am only a man myself.” Talking with him, Peter went inside and found a large gathering of people.

He said to them: “You are well aware that it is against your law for a Jew to associate with a Gentile or visit him. But God has shown me that I should not call any man impure or unclean. So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection. May I ask why you sent for me?” Cornelius answered: “Four days ago I was in my house praying at this hour, at three in the afternoon. Suddenly a man in shining clothes stood before me and said, ‘Cornelius, God has heard your prayer and remembered your gifts to the poor. Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. He is a guest in the home of Simon the tanner, who lives by the sea.’

So I sent for you immediately, and it was good of you to come. Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us.” Then Peter began to speak: “I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right. You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.

You know what has happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached-- how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how He went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with Him.

You are witnesses of everything He did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed Him by hanging Him on a tree, but God raised Him from the dead on the third day and caused Him to be seen. He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen--by us who ate and drank with Him after He rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that He is the One Whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about Him that everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins through His name.”

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Then Peter said, “Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as you have.” So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.

Chapter Eleven

The Results Of Jesus' Training

Jesus Reveals His Source

This is the way the Jesus and the Holy Spirit works today. The Gospels show you how important a constant relationship with the Father was to Jesus. And, the book of Acts shows you how important the Jesus and Holy Spirit are for your present-day ministry. Jesus said that everything He did was under the constant guidance of the Father.

John 5:30 (NIV) By Myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and My judgment is just, for I seek not to please Myself but Him who sent Me.

“By Myself I can do nothing.” Jesus, since that was Your relationship with the Father, as You did Your earthly ministry, then I definitely need the same dependency on You and the Holy Spirit. Thank You for showing me how my life and ministry work. I can see how the ministers in the book of Acts did things through the same relationship. They didn't have a life or ministry without that relationship. Lead me into that same type of relationship with You.

The Results Of The Holy Spirit

Acts 4:31-33 (NIV) After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly. All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all.

You have to always be looking and listening for indications from Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Frequently God has different plans than you. And, His plans are always better. It can be impossible to plan your day. In the two illustrations above it would be pretty hard for anyone to miss what plan God wanted implemented. God was really making His plans clear. However, there are times when His plans aren't so obvious.

Jesus, sometimes I struggle with not being in control of my day. I allow my circumstances and issues of life to dictate what I do that day. I can see that I can't have a successful ministry, if I decide the events of the day. Help me give you my calendar and my daily planner. Help me flow in Your schedule. Help me see that the needs and ministerial assignments have to be under Your control. You alone know where I should be.

PETER AND JOHN

Acts 3:1-4:4 (NIV) One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer--at three in the afternoon. Now a man crippled from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, "Look at us!" So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them. Then Peter said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong. He jumped to his feet and began to walk.

Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God. When all the people saw him walking and praising God, they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him. While the beggar held on to Peter and John, all the people were astonished and came running to them in the place called Solomon's Colonnade.

When Peter saw this, he said to them: "Men of Israel, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of your fathers, has glorified His servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned Him before Pilate, though he had decided to let Him go. You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. You killed the Author of life, but God raised Him from the dead. You are witnesses of this.

By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through Him that has given this complete healing to him, as you can all see. "Now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders. But this is how God fulfilled what He had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Christ would suffer.

Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that He may send the Christ, Who has been appointed for you--even Jesus. He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as He promised long ago through His holy prophets.

For Moses said, "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything He tells you. Anyone who does not listen to Him will be completely cut off from among his people." Indeed, all the prophets from Samuel on, as many as have spoken, have foretold these days. And you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, "Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed." When God raised up His servant, He sent Him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways."

The priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to Peter and John while they were speaking to the people. They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. They seized Peter and John, and because it was evening, they put them in jail until the next day. But many who heard the message believed, and the number of men grew to about five thousand.

If you were locked into your schedule, you would have said: "I came here to pray. I don't have time right now to be messing around with a handicapped person. I will try to get back here with some money tomorrow or the next day." But, Jesus has His own plans and He will expect you to change yours and go with His. He does things in a God-sized way.

Jesus, I can see that a major part of Your training has to do with me being submitted to Your plan. What You are looking for is the person You can do Your plan through. Help me be trained and transformed, so You can decide to do these kinds of things through me. Show me that with Your discipleship training system, I can be made ready to have such a relationship with You and the Holy Spirit.

Jesus' Discipleship Training System

Finding Submitted People

Now let Jesus show you the original people He picked for His discipleship training system. You will notice that they don't pick Him; He picks them. He has certain criteria that they have to meet. Some of that *criteria* will be revealed through testing. The first test is, will they follow when called?

Other criteria is between Jesus and His Father. Does the Father approve of this person? A lot of time, effort, and money are expended on people that don't meet the Father's criteria. And, no time, effort, or money are expended on some people who *would have* met the Father's criteria had they been given the chance. This will be a part of your training--how to pick disciples.

You Have Got To Be Kidding

Mat 4:18-22 (NIV) As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." At once they left their nets and followed Him. Going on from there, He saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed Him.

I guess Jesus never heard of the Scripture:

1 Timothy 5:8 (NIV) If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

What is the pay schedule? Is there a retirement plan? What about my bills, my responsibilities, and my reputation? Does Jesus' organization have financial stability? Can He always make payroll? Will Zebedee be taken care of without James and John? What happens to Peter and Andrew's company and the families they are supporting? Will these four guy's salaries be big enough to cover all of these needs? Shouldn't there be some kind of contract drawn up, job description put together, and an agreement made as to how all this is going to work?

Jesus, I can see that another issue is trust and obedience. As I put myself in this situation, I am going over all those questions above. It seems impossible for me to make this move. But, I am sure it was just as hard for Your disciples then. Help me not miss this opportunity to go with You and be trained by You. Help me do whatever Your assignment is for me.

Chapter Twelve

Who Put You In Charge?

Let's say that Jesus came by your work place. Could or would He say to you: "Drop your work and come follow me?" Were things different back then? Was their situation different than yours? Would Zebedee and Peter's wife be more understanding than your spouse and relatives? Is it morally, ethically, Biblically, or spiritually correct to ask something like this of you and your family? These are hard questions that you have felt the pain of conscience on, as you have read this and other similar passages.

Jesus, I suppose that if You came to my workplace in the flesh and asked me to quit my job and follow You, I would do it. As long as I knew that You, the God of the universe, was specifically talking to me, I would say "yes" to You. However, this isn't the only issue, is it? Would I know Your voice? Would I believe You really said that to me? Did You mean now? Was this a literal command or just a spiritual test to see if I am willing?

And This Is Just The Beginning!

Disciples who are Jesus' disciples do what they are asked, when they are asked. It is highly possible that this wasn't Jesus' first contact with these guys. But, it is His first assignment for beginning disciples. The entry level requirement is, drop what you are doing and come with Me. From this point on, you have to decide whether or not you want in. If you feel that the entry level requirement is too high, you will drop this book. Since this is the first step to becoming a disciple, will you join?

Jesus, help me see that I must change on this matter. If I refuse to respond immediately, I can expect my discipleship training to come to an end right here. I must obey when You ask something this hard of me. I must have such a relationship with You that I know it really is You. If I don't, I will start trying to rationalize the call and convince myself that I really haven't heard from You. You must be able to come to me and ask me to do something really scary and my answer be "yes" to You.

It is true that Jesus' will is different for each person. But, His requirements are the same. You must respond immediately to whatever He asks you to do. As you continue to move through this training system with Jesus, He *will* be asking you to do something impossible for you. If you respond in human effort, you will fail. If you make your decision based on human reasoning, you will fail. But, if you ask Jesus for His power to help you respond, you will win.

Test Me On Something Else

You can count on the fact that Jesus will come walking by your life and ask you to do something that will require total faith and trust. That “something” He will require, will be just as mind blowing as Him asking you to quit your job and follow Him. The issue to be dealt with right now is whether or not you would be ready to do it immediately. Is there anything in your life that would be too important, too precious for you to drop it and follow Him?

Jesus, when I see the disciples quitting their jobs and I start applying that to my own life, I think of poverty, not knowing where my next meal will come from, You taking me to the brink of disaster and saving me at the last moment, my home being foreclosed on, and all kinds of worst case scenarios. Help me be transformed by the Holy Spirit through spiritual growth, so I will be ready to do whatever it is You require of me.

All Is Not Lost

Matthew 8:14 (NIV) When Jesus came into Peter's house, he saw Peter's mother-in-law lying in bed with a fever. Peter still has a house? Peter still has a mother-in-law who is willing to live with him? Peter has a mother-in-law living in his house and eating his food?

Matthew 19:27 (NIV) Peter answered Him (Jesus), “We have left *everything* to follow you! What then will there be for us? This doesn’t sound like someone who has a house. The thing about Jesus is, He knows that you need these things. He understands that you have responsibilities to your families and to many other people. He is the One Who put these standards in your life. He just wants you to change sources. Whatever He asks you to do, He wants you to trust Him to supply the resources for the assignment. Just because Peter quit his job didn’t mean he no longer had money coming in.

Jesus, help me be able to respond to Your assignments immediately. Help me know that You will meet all my needs. Help me make my decisions based on the fact that I totally trust You. Empower me to see this issue with Peter and base my life on Your character like he did.

Peter left everything. But, he didn't lose everything.

Let Me See Now, Where Did I Leave That Boat?

Peter Still Had A Boat

John 21:3 (NIV) “I'm going out to fish,” Simon Peter told them, and they said, “We'll go with you.” So, they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

See how the things they put into second place in their life are still around. If Jesus’ second command had been to sell it all and give the money to the poor, then Peter would have left everything and lost everything as well. But, that wasn’t a requirement. Jesus just wanted first place in his life. The boat was Peter’s source of income. It was a major factor in how he was able to pay his bills. When Peter left the boat, his source of income changed.

Jesus, help me trust You with my career, my job, and my income. They are the things that establish my lifestyle, health care, retirement, entertainment, and basic necessities. I have been very involved in trying to establish and maintain my resources. I typically put the major percentage of my time into obtaining money. Help me be able to put this very important area of my life in Your hands. Fill my heart with faith and trust in Your willingness and ability to supply all my needs and the needs of all those who depend on me.

There Was Enough Money To Steal Some

John 12:6 (NIV) He [Judas] did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it.

Here is the results of all of them putting their trust in God for financial supply. They had a money bag. They even had a money bag that had enough money in it that Judas could pilfer it. And, it still had enough money left for all the bills to be paid. Even when Jesus had them strip down to the bare necessities for a short training session, their needs were met.

Luke 9:1-6 (NIV) When Jesus had called the Twelve together, He gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and He sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. He told them: “Take nothing for the journey--no staff, no bag, no bread, no money, no extra tunic. Whatever house you enter, stay there until you leave that town. If people do not welcome you, shake the dust off your feet when you leave their town, as a testimony against them.” So they set out and went from village to village, preaching the gospel and healing people everywhere.

Luke 22:35 (NIV) Then Jesus asked them, “When I sent you without purse, bag or sandals, did you lack anything?” “Nothing,” they answered.

Jesus, I am seeing a pattern here. You aren't calling me to financial ruin. I just won't be able to get my financial needs met through self-dependency. You are going to put me on a God-dependency system. The pattern isn't that I quit my job and go into full-time ministry. The pattern is that I immediately respond to whatever You ask me to do. But, that isn't going to happen, if I haven't settled major issues in my relationship with You.

You Don't Have To Rob Peter To Pay Paul

Phil 4:18-19 (NIV) I (Paul) have received full payment and even more; I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. And my God will meet all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

Jesus, I see the same thing in Paul's life. You aren't neglecting him. You are speaking to other Christians asking them to join Paul financially in the ministry. Paul allowed You to start ordering the events of his life. And, You made sure his needs were met. Help my trainees and I learn to live this, so we will be able to do the ministry Your way.

Chapter Thirteen

Company Benefits

You Can't Outgive God

Mark 10:29-30 (NIV) “I tell you the truth,” Jesus replied, “no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for Me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age (homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields--and with them, persecutions) and in the age to come, eternal life.

When you leave some important thing behind because Jesus asks you to, He isn't asking you to give up the necessities of life. It may cost you the extravagances of life sometimes. But you have to decide where you want to be rich. Do you want to make your sacrifices while investing in eternity? Or, do you want your extravagances now? If you know it is Jesus and you know He is asking you to do something really scary, you know He *will* take good care of you.

Jesus, help me not forget about this much more important issue of growing in Your character. I don't just get my financial needs met. As a matter of fact, help me see that it becomes one of the least benefits of putting my trust in You. Teach me that once money is put in its proper place and You move into full control of the daily activities of my life, I really start being blessed with true riches. Show me that no amount of money can take the place of spiritual blessings. Help me see that moving into Your plan is better than all the riches of the world.

Acts 4:13 (NIV) When they saw the *courage* of Peter and John and realized that they were **unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.**

Exactly when did all this courage happen? It started happening several years before, when Jesus came by and said: “Come, follow Me.” From that moment on they were constantly with Jesus. Was that a good thing? Sure, they left some things behind. It is possible they may have become pretty wealthy according to their current standards, had they stayed with their jobs. But, they would have missed out on helping start the worldwide Christian movement.

Jesus, help me see that, unless I get a breakthrough in this area of putting my finances and resources in Your hands, I will not get this training. I will never be able to live the Jesus-life, be used by joining You in helping hurting people, and be a World Changer. Help me believe that You will take care of every need I and those who depend on me have.

What School Did You Go To?

You Will Lack The World's Approval

And realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men: This is a really funny Scripture. They saw them as unschooled, ordinary men. The fact that these men didn't go through their schools didn't make them unschooled or ordinary. These men were actually the best trained men on the planet. And, they were far from ordinary or unschooled.

Jesus, I can fall for this at times. I can let the prestige, positions, worldly respect, popularity, and opportunities that come with the type of education the world recognizes. I can be pushed into areas of training that You don't approve of. Teach me that these attitudes can affect churches, small groups, Sunday schools, Bible schools and seminaries. Adequacy, education, training, qualifications, power, influence, success, and acceptance all come from Your discipleship training system. But, it will only be appreciated by those You heal and transform.

You Will Lack The World's Authority

Luke 22:25-27 (NIV) Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as One Who serves."

What is your motive for getting involved in being a World Changer? What do you want to get out of being involved in the ministry? What is your definition of a leader? How do you treat people who are poorer, less educated in the things of God, or are in inferior spiritual condition? Will you minister to them, as one who is better, one who has the answers to people less fortunate than you? Will you feel superior, better trained, and more important?

Jesus, I can see that without Your training and healing, I will be unable to truly minister to hurting people. Even if I try to be humble, a servant, and a compassionate person, I know I will fall short. Help me not join You because I can trust You with my finances. Help me not join You because I have loving motives. Help me not follow You because I am a servant to those I minister to. Help me join You because I lack all of these things and need them fixed.

You Will Lack The World's Resources

Luke 9:57-58 (NIV) As they were walking along the road, a man said to Him, "I will follow You wherever You go." Jesus replied, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay His head."

The world will have the biggest and the best equipment. They will have the largest buildings. They will have the greatest financial resources. They will have the most extensive organizations. And, they will have the most people working for them. You are joining a ministry that won't get its greatest successes through these things. They will come through the supernatural, God-sized works of Jesus. You are learning how to operate in the spirit realm.

John 14:12 (NIV) I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in Me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. Jesus, help me see how You did Your ministry, as it related to finances, buildings, organizations, staff, bookkeeping, equipment, and resources. Help me see why so many people get bogged down in managing rather than ministering. Show me how they get involved in fundraising rather than doing Your work. Help me follow Your example of being actively involved to doing **what You have been doing.**

You Will Lack The World's Business Systems

Luke 16:8 (NIV) The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly. For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light.

This manager had been cheating his boss and got caught. So, he went around and reduced everyone's bill, so they would do business with him after he got fired. He was using techniques you see all the time. People sell people things they don't need. They charge them more than the product is worth. They claim the product will do things it won't. They produce the product where it won't last, so they have to keep buying it. You won't be able to do any of these things.

Jesus, You are heading me into a way of life where I will have to submit all my world training. You are inviting me into training that will require me to unlearn a lot of things. Help me trust You, as You contradict much of what I have always accepted as good business practices. Help me embrace things that won't, at first, make any sense to me.

You Will Lose Control Over Your Resources

Mat 5:39-42 (NIV) But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

Since Jesus owns everything, He doesn't concern Himself with money, possessions, or resources. If He needs a fish to supply Him with tax money, it will. If He needs Peter's boat to be filled with fish, it happens. If He needs water to turn into wine, no problem. If He needs a few fish and some bread to feed multitudes, that is how it will be. So, when someone wants to borrow something from you, give it to them. Jesus will give you more and better ones.

Jesus, help me understand that You are leading me into a business system that operates on a totally different set of principles than the world. Show me that I will be living in Your generosity. I will be able to be incredibly generous, forgiving, and merciful because You are my source. Help me accept the fact that I will be doing things that will look like they will cause failure, when in fact they will bring great success.

Chapter Fourteen

Let The Training Begin

Mat 4:23 (NIV) Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, *preaching* the good news of the kingdom, and *healing* every disease and sickness among the people.

Now, this is ministerial success. This is going to be big. Should you buy some land and build a synagogue? How about getting incorporated? Don't you need to write up your doctrines of faith, print up some literature, pass out some brochures, and start giving your new synagogue some exposure to the community? How are people going to start coming to you if they don't see that you have a place to meet? Where are you going to set up shop? Some of the most successful synagogues use the Sadducee doctrines and methods. Are you going to do some research and see what they are doing?

Jesus, once You had a few trainees, You introduced the "go into all" method. Like fishermen, I don't like the "go into all" method. In a lot of ways, it is scarier than quitting my job and starting to work on a new, unestablished ministry. What You meant by "I will make you fishers of men" is starting to take on some undesirable meaning. Help me see that You will work through me, as I go out and talk to strangers about You.

Jesus, am I going to have to sail around in my spiritual boat, cast out my spiritual net, and see if I can catch some strangers who may not want to be caught? That is a lot like fishing for piranhas. That is the moment when most of my ministerial friends would turn to their old fishing buddies and said: "Do you think that boat is still parked where we left it?" But, help me be a lot more committed than a lot of people and take the next step of faith.

That Is Easy For You To Say

You Weren't Taught This Way

The seminary that Jesus' disciples went to was a lot different than the one you may have gone to or are going to. He provided the power of God's anointing to everything He did and said. When He **"went throughout Galilee,"** He was able to transform people's lives and bodies. That is really cheating! How in the world does He expect you, who couldn't heal an already pretty much recovered person from a common cold, to get involved in the "go into all" ministry? The Bible is full of this kind of thing.

Jesus, everywhere I read in Old Testament or New Testament, something miraculous is constantly happening. It would appear that You aren't going to let anyone do the ministry unless they allow You do God-sized things in and through them.

You Don't Minister This Way

Here you are, reading your Bible, trying to learn how to do the ministry, and Jesus takes you out on your first outing. What do you get? Preaching and teaching with power **and healing every disease and sickness among the people**. How is this supposed to help you learn how to do the ministry? That can feel like totally useless information for your ministry. Those things don't happen today! Even if they do, they sure don't happen to you.

Jesus, when I preach and teach, they go to sleep. When I pray for them, they get worse. Help me calm down and realize that this is exactly why I have joined Your discipleship training system! I know that most of my friends know exactly how I feel. Help me not throw my Bible down, grab my favorite blanket, cuddle up on the couch, and read my favorite book: "How To Get Your Church To Grow In The Twenty-First Century."

Jesus, You are doing all these power things. They come easy for You. Your disciples were just as powerless, at this stage of their life and ministry, as I often am. Help me wait and see them after graduation though. Show me that a lot of things are going to happen in their life and ministry from boat-leaving to graduation. And, show me that it will happen to me too.

Don't Leave Home Without It

Mat 4:24-25 (NIV) News about Him spread all over Syria, and people brought to Him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed, and He healed them. Large crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and the region across the Jordan followed Him.

You Didn't Get Cheated

It is fun reading about Jesus and how great His ministry was. Sometimes you may wish you could have been there and just followed Him around. No doubt that being there was a lot more exciting than reading about. But, this isn't the purpose of the Bible. This isn't entertainment. What Jesus is showing you and His trainees is how to start and keep a worldwide Christian movement going.

Jesus, what is fueling Your ministry? God! This is obviously not some human effort. You knew Your disciples weren't able to do these things. However, You knew this is what it is going to take to start and keep a worldwide Christian movement going. I even know that it is going to take You to do this size of a job. But, when I look at Your ministry, I can see that it is really going to have to be all You. Help me see that this is Your whole point of training.

You Still Get Jesus

You do need Jesus' involvement to do anything this big. But, it isn't just because of the magnitude of the assignment. Jesus wants the world to know that it is Him ministering to them. He wants your ministry to be so miraculous that people don't get confused, as to Who is doing the work. When Jesus does things His size and His way, He gets the glory. When you do the ministry using your abilities, it is a lot easier for people, and you, to give you the glory.

1 Cor 2:3-5 (NIV) I (Paul) came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a *demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power.*

Jesus, I can see that none of Your trainees did their ministry without You and Your power. Help me to come to You and to the people I minister to **in weakness and fear, and with much trembling.** Let my message and my preaching be not with wise and persuasive words, but with a *demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that their faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power.*

How Long Will This Last?

He's Doing This Mostly For You

What was the major factor to getting a worldwide Christian movement going? The people who got transformed and healed are dead and gone. The popularity of Jesus didn't get it going.

"The news about Him spread all over Syria." That didn't last long. **"Large crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and the region across the Jordan followed Him."**

A lot of these excited, loving people probably were the same ones who were later shouting: **"Crucify Him!"** Why is He wasting His precious, short time on this planet doing temporary things? For the trainees! They are going to carry this message everywhere.

Jesus, help me see that You did what You did, with the multitudes, out of great love; but, You knew that all that healing, casting out demons, cleansing the lepers, and raising the dead, for the large part, were going to be temporary. Many people would go back to their lives and do their own thing. But, all during this miraculous work, Your disciples were going to last.

Jesus, teach me that even those in the crowds, who did remain faithful to You, were going to need pastors, evangelists, teachers, apostles, and prophets. Help me realize that your major point was being made to the disciples, as You moved through the crowds. You were showing me what You want to do in and through me.

You may not want trainees tagging along. You have very little time for them. You may stick them in some lesser ministry and let them sink or swim. You are busy doing the ministry. Let someone else cloister them in a building and teach them hypothetical ministry. But, that wasn't Jesus' attitude. He wanted His trainees to have real, hands-on training. While He was doing many wonderful things in the life of the people around Him, He was busy making disciples. He didn't just have one following Him around; He had twelve; and later He had seventy-two more.

Jesus, help me be aware that You are training me to be successful in the ministry, so I can help others be successful. Show me that I'm not just trying to help the multitudes, I am helping future leaders be developed. Make it clear that they will only be as effective as I am effective. Help me pay close attention to You and what You want to do in me. Help me see that You will take them through the same Gospel studies, so they will know what You require of them.

Chapter Fifteen

You Are Probably Wondering Why I Called This Meeting

Mat 5:1-2 (NIV) Now when He saw the crowds, He went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to Him, and He began to teach *them*, saying:

What's The Objective Here?

If you can get a crowd, would you walk away and go up on a mountainside? Maybe Jesus did it, so they could hear better. Haven't all your ministerial efforts been to develop a crowd? How can you know whether or not you are a great minister, if not by the size of the crowd you attract?

A lot of the time, Jesus had *large* crowds. What an opportunity "for the work of God!" This has got to be what He was trying to produce. All that powerful preaching and teaching and all those impressive miracles had to be for the purpose of building a *large* crowd. Get the offering plates. Find a choice piece of land. Where are the builders? You have yourself an alive and thriving Synagogue (church). Now it is all coming clear. The "go into all" method is just used long enough to get a crowd to start coming to the building. Wow, what a great strategy! No! that is all wrong; this wasn't what Jesus was trying to do.

Jesus, help me understand that You are trying to reach large quantities of people. But, crowds don't produce the transformation people need. Help me realize that there has to be a network of relationships that develop from Your ministry. Show me that crowds, if that is all that happens, will dissipate and people will go back to the way they were living. Teach me that I have to help people build relationships with each other. But, not just any kind of relationship; it has to be one that produces spiritual growth in them.

The Objective Dictates The Procedure

Okay, here is another mistake Jesus made (just kidding). He sat down. When you speak to a crowd, don't you want to stand up? Don't you want a microphone, huge speakers, and an amplification system that will knock the socks off of the people on the back row? When you sit down, you can't really talk loudly. The crowd can't see you very well, when you sit down.

Jesus, why did You sit down? **"His disciples came to Him, and He began to teach them."** Oh! Help me see that this really is a discipleship training system. You aren't just teaching the ministry to them. You are doing the ministry in front of them. They are getting firsthand experience based on real life. Show me that, if a picture is worth a thousand words, then exposure to real-life training is worth a billion words. Teach me that this is an important aspect of Your training that cannot be changed. Help me yield to it for my ministry.

Have You Seen Their Classrooms?

Here Is The System

Jesus is the instructor, the synagogues, cities and country sides are the classrooms, the crowds are the object lessons, and the disciples are the students. A real Minister is doing real ministry in front of them. People's life are being changed while the disciples are being trained. Will this system work? It did and it will. Do you have to do discipleship training this way? Most haven't been. Jesus could have trained these men any way He wanted to.

Jesus, help me understand that most training, during Your time on earth was being done the way we do most of it now--in a classroom. Sometimes I wonder whether or not everything You did was important for me to follow to the letter. I figure that some things You did just because it worked best for that time period. I am concerned that people won't respond to things like that today. But, help me see that once I start slicing and dicing Your ministry, I don't know where to stop. That is when I end up with a copy, of a copy, of a copy, of a copy of Your discipleship training method and an anemic worldwide Christian movement.

Now, once again, don't get this wrong. Jesus was not against classroom ministry and training. This sermon on the mount was proof. Church schools, Sunday schools, Bible schools, Seminaries, etc. can be awesome. But, none of them are going to replace hands-on training.

Jesus, help me understand that regardless of what else Your disciples were exposed to, they had to be put under the direct leadership of God-anointed, God-approved, ministers. They had to get the opportunity to watch and be part of it all. Your ministers have to bring them to You and let them see You flow through them. If they don't see You doing Your work through them, then they will never be able to do Your type of ministry.

Don't Teach What You Know

Let's face it, in a classroom or church meeting you can teach and preach things you aren't living. Out in real life you have to have a genuine ministry that works in the middle of life. If what you believe and teach doesn't work in real life, it doesn't take a disciple long to figure it out. When you are with the crowds, you can't just teach what you know; you can't teach from your brain. People have to experience the transforming power of God changing your and their life; or, you get revealed as a fake.

Jesus, teach me that only in those areas of my life and ministry where God is flowing through, do I qualify to address other's issues. If these needs aren't met in me, I can't help others in that area. If people's lives are falling apart in spite of all my teaching and preaching, I have a problem. If my goal is just to amass a large crowd, then I have lost Your goal. I must be transformed in an area before I am qualified to help others there. If, in secret, my life is falling apart and I am still ministering, show me that I have an even bigger problem.

Understanding What Jesus Requires

This Is Supernaturally Achieved

1 Cor 9:27 (NIV) No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

This is an aggressive approach to life; but, it gets you out of Jesus' way, so He can meet the needs of hurting people. It isn't something you can do by your own power; but, it is something you have to be willing to allow Jesus to do to your body. It is a moment-by-moment and issue-by-issue decision you make all during your day.

Jesus, help me be aware that my body has demands that would break the requirements of Your teachings. It has drives, weaknesses, and open doors to Satan's temptations. Empower me to **beat my body and make it my slave, so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.** Teach me how to follow Your pattern of ministry and power. Help me see how You bring Your body under Your control, so I can understand what to pray for and what to receive from You.

Just Being In Favor Of It Isn't Living It

Rom 2:1 (NIV) You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things.

When you preach or teach something you aren't living, the fact that you are preaching or teaching on that subject proves that you know it is wrong. And, the fact that you aren't living free from what you know is wrong, you bring judgment on yourself. Ministering to others doesn't exempt you from living what you present to them. It looks, to people, like you are righteous when you speak against various sins. But it doesn't impress God.

***Being against the works of the body isn't enough.
God wants you set free from its works.***

Jesus, help me understand that the objective is for me to be a channel through which Your power can flow. But, it isn't until Your power begins changing my life, that it starts working in the lives of the people I minister to. You lived Your life right out there in front of the people. Everyone could see whether or not You lived what He said to them. If I am struggling in an area of my life, show me that it will block off Your work in that area.

Jesus, help me spend the necessary time for You to do Your work in me. Help me see that I won't ever be perfect in this life. But, help me also see that I must share those breakthroughs You have given me and not share those areas where You are still working on me. Show me that this kind of ministry will go around the world and change the lives of those contacted by it. And, it will produce world-changing disciples.

Chapter Sixteen

New Believer's Class 901

Mat 5:3-12 (NIV) Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

If you were Jesus and you only had a short time to teach your trainees how to start and keep a worldwide Christian movement going, what would you say? It probably wouldn't start with "blessed." Here is the God of the universe in a human body. He is about to open His mouth and provide the principles for a worldwide Christian movement. Would you attend a class taught by Jesus? The brochure says: "Jesus is going to be explaining what He did to get His disciples trained and prepared for starting and keeping a worldwide Christian movement going.

Would you sign up for a class taught by Jesus? Would you bring a video device with lots of batteries, a notepad, and lots of pens? And, would you try to get there early enough to sit on the front row, as close to Him as you could get? If Jesus came in, walked to the front, sat down on the edge of the platform, and prepared to speak, the whole crowd would come to a complete silence. What are His first words going to be? He speaks! **"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."** Oh, man, you already have that material. That is old school. Weren't you expecting something really revolutionary?

Jesus, help me see that this is world changing information. Show me that this is exactly what I need, in order to be mightily used by You. Help me understand that this was Your first priority for helping Your disciples be World Changers. Make it clear to me that You prefaced all the other things You had to say, with this vital information. Help me respect Your ministry and Your priorities for training me.

It Didn't Work So I Faked It

Do you really want to be a part of Jesus' ministry? Are you really open to what He says you are going to have to be, do, and teach? You are His next wave of trainees (you may feel you are too far advanced to be a "trainee"). What would it take to be able to do the ministry lived by His trainees recorded in the book of Acts? Are you finding that God's power isn't flowing like it did with them? Are you having to resort to techniques that don't require God's power?

Jesus, reveal to me that, if my ministry could be done by any human being, Christian or not; I need to come and sit down with You on the mountainside and start listening. I need to say to You: “I am sorry I didn’t receive these things from You before. But, I am here now, sitting at Your feet, ready to listen and obey. I commit myself to not teach anything to others until You have produced it in me.”

Here is where Jesus really comes in handy. He is going to reveal, in several ways, what you have to *become*. First, He outlines, with these eight power-attitudes of God, the basic characteristics of the life He is going to be living in front of you, His trainee. All of the things He is presenting here are resident in Him. Then, as you walk away from the mountain with all this information, you are going to be watching for it be installed in your daily walk with Him.

Jesus, when I am exposed to concepts like “**poor in spirit**,” I usually leave You and try to get the interpretation somewhere else. Help me understand that this isn’t a Bible study, this is a power-attitude that You want to supernaturally put in me. Help me realize that I will know a lot about what “**poor in spirit**” means, once I receive it. Help me see that it would be a mistake to take my eyes off of You. You are the Author and Perfecter of my faith. You are the Beginning and the End of all I need. You are the complete package for all my training, empowering, transforming, and anointing. I learn it, become it, and share it through You.

Listen to Jesus, as He outlines your basic spiritual needs:

The Eight Power Attitudes Of God

Embracing A Deficit

These power-attitudes decide your relationship with Jesus. If you allow Him to install them in you, you will have an incredible relationship. They have to do with the receptivity of your heart and mind. Your relationship, training, and transformation are based on the degree these eight items have affected your attitudes. Ask Jesus to transform your attitudes by these powers.

Jesus, help me realize that this is a vital moment in my relationship with You. Reveal to me that these power-attitudes have the ability to open my heart and mind to You and Your ministry in a powerful way. Show me why You started Your sermon with these issues. Help me give them the respect and cooperation needed for me to get everything You have to offer.

Jesus, help me be willing to feel a need. Help me be willing to see my inadequacies, weaknesses, deficits, and shortcomings. Help me understand that this attitude of deficiency is vital for establishing a relationship with You. Help me see that the weaker and more inadequate I become, the more I provide You with places in my life where You will supply supernatural provisions and manifestations.

Spiritual Component One

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

The Ability To Receive From Jesus

Luke 6:20 (NIV) Looking at His disciples, He said: “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Being **poor in spirit** is the foundational power-attitude for all the other seven power-attitudes. Therefore, it will be a *much more* involved study and prayer presentation. It will go on chapter after chapter after chapter. But, be patient, because you need this help; it will prepare you for the smaller studies and prayers for the other power-attitudes.

Jesus, help me understand that this is talking about attitudes. It is my attitude toward You. It is my receptivity to those things You are offering me. It is my ability to accept what You are saying without resistance. It makes it possible for me to hear Your voice, understand what You are saying, see how You want to apply it to my life, and help me be willing to receive that application. Help me see that it will set the standard for my receptivity to Your message, ministry, methods, and life. Let it make major changes in my attitudes.

Opening Communication With The Holy Spirit

John 4:24 (NIV) God is spirit, and His worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.

Your poor spirit needs a Spirit. Jesus is talking about a person who is **poor in spirit** and knows they are poor in their spirit. The very first aspect of your being **poor in spirit** was coming to Jesus for salvation. It is the recognition of a spiritual need. You know you are missing something vital from Jesus and are open to Him meeting it.

Jesus, I can see that, if I think I am full, satisfied, and complete in an area, I will no longer be open to Your help, training, and healing in that area. If my whole, overall attitude is one of me not needing anything from You, I have cut myself off because You won't force it on me. Help me see that to the degree I am **poor in spirit**, is the degree of openness I have to You.

Rom 8:16 (NIV) The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.

How do you know you are saved? How can you know what Jesus is trying to say to you? It is the same process. Just like you know you are saved, you will know what Jesus wants. But, have you ever doubted your salvation? It wasn't because of inadequate communication with the Holy Spirit, it was Satan trying to refute the Holy Spirit's assurance to your spirit. You will know what Jesus is trying to teach you. But, you will also be lied to by the devil. Part of your training will be teaching you how to know Jesus' voice and Satan's voice. Being **poor in spirit** has a special feature. It gives you a submissive attitude, but, only to Jesus' truth.

Jesus, help me allow my knowledge of the fact that I am saved show me how I will be able to know what You are telling me. As I go through the Gospels, I know You will have special message to me personally. Help me get used to the way the Holy Spirit talks to me, so I will have an experience with spiritual communication.

Chapter Seventeen

Spiritual Component One

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

The Power To Yield To The Holy Spirit

Rom 8:9 (NIV) You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. This Scripture makes it clear that everyone who becomes a Christian has the Spirit living in them. God wants to unite with your spirit on a Spirit-to-spirit basis. And, salvation made that relationship possible. So, now you have the Holy Spirit connecting you to Jesus and the Gospels. It is just a matter of you learning how to hear, understand, and respond to Jesus' commands that are coming your way.

Jesus, help me understand the control of the Holy Spirit. Help me take advantage of His control by allowing Him to tell me what You are saying to me. Let Him be my mediator between You and me. Let my Spirit-to-spirit communication with Him speak through God's power-attitude of me being **poor in spirit**, so I will respond to You immediately in obedience.

John 14:16-17 (NIV) And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Counselor to be with you forever-- the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept Him, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. But you know Him, for He lives with you and will be in you.

This was before Jesus had gone back to heaven and the Spirit had come. He is now in you and is your **Spirit of truth**. Since Jesus is the truth, He will be making your journey through the Gospels a powerful experience. But, you will only get as much from Him as you are **poor in spirit**. You hear what you want to hear and do what you want to do. **John 16:7 (NIV) But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.**

Jesus, help me see that this power-attitude connects me with the Holy Spirit in special ways. As I am going through the Gospels, let this connection empower me to move into Your earthly ministry. Let this make it possible for me to see, feel, and experience what Your disciples experienced. Let me live in the Holy Spirit in such a way that the Gospels come alive to me.

Now This Is Going To Make Things A Lot Easier

Being Able To Hear Your Father's Voice

John 6:44-45 (NIV) No one can come to Me unless the Father Who sent Me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the Prophets: "They will all be taught by God." Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from Him comes to me.

Your heavenly Father is trying to get you to learn how to do your ministry with Jesus. He and the Holy Spirit are pointing you to Jesus for training. But, this kind of training takes a type of being **poor in spirit** that is intense. Jesus is totally different than us humans. He is God of the universe and requires your respect and commitment. If there is any rebellion, resistance, or pushback, He steps aside and lets you have your way.

Jesus, help me understand how fragile my relationship is with You. With Your determination to honor my God-given free will, I am going to have to have this power-attitude of me being **poor in spirit**. If I can't yield to You, You won't argue, try to convince me, or try to force me to go with You. Empower me with this **poor in spirit** attitude, so I won't have feelings that interfere with my cooperation with You.

Being Able To Hear Jesus' Voice

Now, the Holy Spirit lives inside the Christian and communicates with them Spirit-to-spirit. Why does God want this? Relationship. God is big on having a relationship with you. In the garden, God was able to walk and talk with Adam and Eve in the cool of the evening. With Moses, God was able to talk to him face-to-face. Now God can talk to His people Spirit-to-spirit. God, getting in direct contact with you, can really open up your relationship with Him. The challenge was getting God's Spirit inside you without killing you.

Jesus, You came, as Emanuel: God with us. You are God's solution for Him walking around with me and not killing me. Then, when Your blood was shed, I started experiencing God's miracle of Him being able to come inside me. You can now communicate and associate with me Spirit-to-spirit. Since the lines of communication are now open, a wonderful relationship can be built. But, help me see that the next big challenge is, getting me to let all this happen. Show me that this process of "letting" these things happen is called being **poor in spirit**.

What Distorts Jesus' Voice?

Rom 8:16 (NIV) The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.

The way you know in your heart that you are saved is the way you know what Jesus is trying to say to you. It is the same process. Just like you know you are saved, you will know what Jesus wants. But, have you ever doubted your salvation? Inadequate communication with the Holy Spirit wasn't why you doubted. It was Satan trying to refute the Holy Spirit's assurance to your spirit. You will know what Jesus is trying to teach you. But, you will also be lied to by the devil. Part of your training will be teaching you how to know Jesus' voice and Satan's voice. Being **poor in spirit** has a special feature. It gives you a submissive attitude, but, only to Jesus' truth.

Jesus, in order for me to walk with You through the Gospels, I will have to be able to hear You, know what You are saying, and be able to do what You are teaching me to do. Help me hear You clearly by Your voice flowing through the power-attitude of me being **poor in spirit**. Help me see that bad attitudes block and confuse Your voice in the spirit realm.

Hearing The Holy Spirit's Voice

John 16:8 (NIV) When He comes, He will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment. You have had a lot of practice *hearing* the Holy Spirit's voice. He has been the One Who spoke to your conscience and made you feel guilty about doing wrong things. However, you have also had a lot of practice ignoring, resisting, and disagreeing with Him. So, being **poor in spirit** will help you realize the Holy Spirit is bringing Jesus and His truth to you. Your life and ministry will grow, as you listen to your conscience.

I'm Not Sure; But I Think You Have A Problem Here.

The greatest aspect of this intimate communicational relationship is creative, transforming power. As you continue to be **poor in spirit**, you start working together with Jesus to put to death the misdeeds of your body. This is the major problem God is wanting to help you with.

Rom 7:15-25 (NIV) I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do--this I keep on doing.

Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God--through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin. (Note: For a detailed study get the **Victorious Christian Living** book.)

This is a new Christian or untrained Christian. You would think that with all these struggles, they would have no problem being **poor in spirit**. They want to do right; but, don't do it. They want to stop doing things wrong; but, can't quit. Did you take this problem to God and ask for His help? Sure! And, God did give you the victory in various areas. However, other areas seemed to be invincible. Your "want to" and "don't want to" was aimed in the right direction. In other words, your will was submitted to the will of God as it related to these issues.

Jesus, because of my struggle, there were times when I doubted that I really wanted to be set free from these misdeeds of my body bad enough. I thought that a strong desire would set me free. But, obviously Paul's will was intensely pointing in the right direction. Yet he said: **"For I have the *desire* to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out."** Teach me that since I can identify with Romans 7:15-25, I do not have a *will* problem. Show me that since I am wrestling against my **sinful nature** with this degree of intensity, I am being faced with a *power* problem rather than a *will* problem.

Chapter Eighteen

Spiritual Component One

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Some Rules Were Made To Be Broken

You Have Two Parts

A little-known aspect of a human's configuration is the fact that you are made up of two major spiritual parts. And, those two parts operate under two different legislative systems.

Rom 7:22-23 (NIV) For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my *mind* and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my *members*.

Jesus, as You and the Holy Spirit work together with me against the law of sin that is at work within my bodily members, help me see that this is where You were working in Your disciple's lives. You taught and enabled them to defeat the law of sin and the inappropriate activities of their body. Show me that the same **poor in spirit** that brought them to You, is the same attitude that heads me in the direction of winning against my **sinful nature**.

The Holy Spirit Uses Prayer To Help You

Rom 8:26-27 (NIV) In the same way, the Spirit helps you in your weakness. You do not know what you ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for you with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches your hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.

As Jesus guides you into the Christian life and ministry, you will see things that He is trying to get you to change. But, you saw in Romans 7:15-25 that this is a real problem for you. Now you have an intercessor that directly connects you to the Father. According to this Scripture, the Holy Spirit is in you helping you with your weakness. Your biggest weakness is your communication with God, which is prayer. You pray for things that are not God's will, you don't pray for things that are God's will, and you pray for things that are God's will; but, you pray for them for the wrong reasons.

Jesus, as the Holy Spirit takes me through the Gospels with You, when I pray the wrong way, I end up doing without the things I desperately need. Thank You for sending the Holy Spirit to come to my rescue. I don't want to just watch You, help me allow the Holy Spirit to put my deepest needs and concerns into intercessions to my heavenly Father. While I am being trained by You, my heavenly Father has been searching my heart, knows what needs to be prayed for, and then accepts the intercession of the Holy Spirit in my behalf. Since the Holy Spirit intercedes for me in accordance to God's will, I will get everything You teach me.

*If you fail to continue to be **poor in spirit**,
you block the communicative skills of the Holy Spirit.*

Action And Prayer Not Through Being Poor In Spirit

James 4:2-3 (NIV) You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

This Scripture gives you a concise description of the prayer problems you have been struggling with. With the Holy Spirit working in you and you working in cooperation with Him, your life is going to change drastically, as you follow Jesus through the Gospels.

Jesus, help me see that Your ministry sets me free from human effort and world training. As You redirect my eyes toward my heavenly Father, I will see that He is my source. Help me see Him with such clarity that I know I don't need to use human effort and world training to get my needs met. Set me free from only believing in me and physical procedures.

How Do I Do Supernatural Things?

It's You; But Not By You

Being **poor in spirit** is the process whereby you learn from Jesus and then give Him permission to do those things in your life. Everything He does in and through you is done with your permission. Being **poor in spirit** empowers you to let Him do His work in and through you. You had to accept His provisions of salvation. And, you have to accept His provisions of sanctification.

Jesus, teach me that even though the Holy Spirit is now in direct contact with my spirit, my life is still built on a cooperative and a permission-based relationship. Show me how Romans 8:13-14 says it. If by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body.... Help me understand that I will see this all throughout Your discipleship training system. I will be living Your life and doing Your ministry through the power of the Holy Spirit.

You Always Get A Choice

John 6:66-69 (NIV) From this time many of His disciples turned back and no longer followed him. "You do not want to leave too, do you?" Jesus asked the Twelve. Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that You are the Holy One of God."

Jesus, help me see that in this Scripture, You are keeping Your disciple's wills involved. You aren't going to start, continue, or finish anything in their lives without their permission and cooperation. Then help me understand that it was them being **poor in spirit** that empowered them to want to stay with You. Help me follow You through this power-attitude in my life.

The Holy Spirit Is Gentle

Eph 4:30 (NIV) And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

The same is true in the Holy Spirit's part of Jesus' discipleship training system. If you cease to cooperate with and give permission to the Holy Spirit, you cut off those current benefits of training. Since Jesus and the Holy Spirit are both using the exact same process for training trainees, looking at the Gospels makes it easier for you to understand what the Holy Spirit wants to empower you to do. Watching Jesus at work with His disciples helps you see, understand, cooperate with, and give the Holy Spirit permission to do the same things in you.

Jesus, since You are training me and showing me how You want me to live and minister, help me give You complete cooperation. And, since the Holy Spirit is my power-source for yielding to Your training, help me give Him complete cooperation as well. Help me yield to You and the Holy Spirit through the power-attitude of me being **poor in spirit**. It works on my attitudes and helps me be teachable in my relationship to Your truths.

No Body Understands Me

1 Cor 10:13 (NIV) No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

No temptation has seized you except what is common to man: Humans typically think their spiritual struggles are unique. You can think that no one understands or can identify with what you are going through. This Scripture is refuting this concept. Being **poor in spirit** means you will let the Holy Spirit empower you to go through Jesus' discipleship training system. Jesus' training of His disciples while on earth is the exact training system everyone needs.

Jesus, help me realize that I am not so unique that I don't fit into Your training system. I go through and need help in all the same areas, as Your disciples did. Show me that this is what makes Your approach so powerful. It deals with temptations that everyone is going to face head on. You didn't miss anything in presenting Your training. By the time I have been trained through the more mature parts of this system, help me see that I will have faced all the issues that any human will ever have to deal with.

He will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it: Another aspect of Jesus' ministry is His ability to teach you were to look for your way out of a temptation. You just have to know how to find them. You must believe that the way out will always be there. When you feel all boxed in, that is the time to realize this and start looking for the outlet.

Jesus, if I don't believe You always provide a way out, I will give in to the temptation. I will think I don't have a choice. As a **poor in spirit** person, help me come and ask You to show me where You provided the way out. Then help me take advantage of it.

Chapter Nineteen

Spiritual Component One

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

You Are Distorting The Issue Here

People See Jesus Through You

If you present a **poor spirit** to God, the Holy Spirit will take the Gospels and through them make it possible for you to put to death the misdeeds of your body. These misdeeds have the same affect in the spirit realm as impurities have on or in glass. The true image can't shine through glass with impurities. People can't see Jesus in your life with these impurities.

*There is an obstruction or distortion in every area of your life
where there is a misdeed of the body.*

Jesus, help me understand that, in an area where I still exhibit misdeeds of the body, people can't see Your true image. And, Your spiritual blessings that You want to shine through me to others are blocked or distorted. For some people, help me see that I am the only source for them gaining an impression of what You are like. If I give them a distorted or blocked view of You and Your character, they miss out on a chance to get to know You.

You Represent Jesus

2 Cor 5:20 (NIV) You are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through you. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

Jesus' life and ministry are showing you how to become a clear channel through which His image and character can flow. Just like He set up natural laws for this earth, He has set up laws in the spirit realm. Light on this planet will pass through certain materials. It will not pass through other materials. In the spirit realm, Jesus' image will pass through certain elements of character. But, other elements of character resist His image.

Jesus, help me see some of the things You and Your ministry are trying to show me. Help me be looking for those attitudes and character that obscure You from other people. Help me realize why You are being so strict in Your message to me. Help me be totally transparent, so people can see You clearly with no obstructions or misrepresentation.

We Do Things Differently Here

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Notice how **poor in spirit** is connected to inheriting **the Kingdom of Heaven**? The Kingdom of Heaven or Kingdom of God is in the spirit realm. The rules for God's Kingdom have to be understood before you can live by the Spirit. It helps you to see how the laws of the Kingdom of Heaven work, by comparing them with the natural laws of this planet.

Jesus, You compared the Kingdom of heaven with principles on earth a lot. You did it throughout the Gospels with Your parables and in many of Your everyday conversations. Help me always keep in mind that the Bible says I can gain special insights into the Kingdom of heaven by observing Your creation.

Jesus Will Be Teaching You Through Earthly Examples

Rom 1:19-20 (NIV) Since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--His eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

Once you start yielding to Jesus' teachings, as you read and study the Gospels, He starts introducing you to the inner workings of His Kingdom. The Holy Spirit will explain Jesus' terminology to you in such a way that you will see more of the parallels between God's creation and His Kingdom.

Jesus, help me understand that in many ways, I need to inherit God's Kingdom now. I know it isn't physically, of course. But, help me start learning and experiencing its spiritual principles. Help me better understand how it works, right now. I know how the kingdom of this world works. But, I know very little about how things work in the spirit realm.

Jesus, help me see that the uniqueness in the spirit realm is why You talked so different. You were always saying things like: **"Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead."** What is that supposed to mean? How are dead people going to bury dead people? Help me see that You were using human words to describe heavenly concepts. As You teach me more and more about spiritual terms and spiritual matters, help me grow in greater understanding of what You are saying.

Your **poor spirit** wants and needs to learn about the Kingdom it belongs to. Your body is having a great time living in its world. From a baby, you started learning how things work in the kingdom of the world. What about this Kingdom of God? What is it like? You are going to inherit it. It would be good to know what exactly it is that you are inheriting.

*The greatest thing about inheriting the Kingdom of God
is inheriting the God of the Kingdom.*

Let's Look At It This Way

James 2:5 (NIV) Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom He promised those who love Him? The world looks at things differently than Jesus does. You have been trained by the world; so, you look at things differently than Jesus does. If you respond to things from Jesus' perspective, you start being willing to become poor, so as to get rich. Make sense? Not to me either. Okay, it makes a little sense.

Jesus, I am going to need a lot of work, if Kingdom concepts are going to become a part of my daily life. A lot of these concepts appear to me and the world to be backward. If I pursue things as a **poor spirit**, that is totally submitted to the training implemented by You, the world is going to consider me to be common and unlearned. They will see my educational training, as something that won't work in the real world.

Jesus, I have been greatly influenced by the world's concepts, opinions, and strategies. Help me understand that a major flushing out of these concepts has to take place before You can really use me. Not only do I think differently than You, often my thinking is diametrically opposed to Your thinking and Your ways.

How Wrong Can You Get?

Prov 14:12 (NIV) There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.

Jesus spent a lot of time on these spiritual issues with His disciples. He had to constantly challenge their way of thinking. In your Spirit-to-spirit relationship with the Holy Spirit, you are going to need to be constantly corrected by Him. He will be trying to get you to let Jesus undo and retrain you in how to live life the Kingdom of God way.

Jesus, as I walk with You through the Gospels, I can see that this is going to be very confusing and often frustrating. I can see that I will have areas of my training, where I will literally be starting all over again. I have had a lot of confidence in my world training. At this point, it does seem to be the right way to do things. The question the world is always asking me is: "How can it be wrong when it feels so right?" Help me see that is wrong no matter how I feel.

The Goal Of Being Poor In Spirit

1 John 2:15-17 (NIV) Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world--the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does--comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.

When you read something like this, you can think in big terms. You can think God is talking about being in love with something so evil it is beyond you. But, this Scripture defines what is being referred to here. Your cravings, lusts from things you see, and bragging are the issues being pointed out. It is the same low-level issues, as with loving "anything in the world." In other words, it can be things you would consider normal ways of life. It is talking about the "everybody does it this" patterns of running your life. How is God going to help you get these concepts out of your life?

Jesus, help me see that You want to use the power-attitude of me being **poor in spirit** to let You deal with things I might not consider all that bad. Help me realize that for You to flow through me, You need to purify me and get me ready for Your type of life and ministry.

Chapter Twenty

Spiritual Component One

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

The Power Source For Poor In Spirit

John 14:26 (NIV) But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. Do you remember what Jesus wanted His next generation disciples to be taught? The answer is in Matthew 28:20.

Mat 28:18-20 (NIV) Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Jesus, teach me that these verses are what the Holy Spirit causes to happen, when I allow the **poor in spirit** power-attitude help me yield to Him. He will empower my life and ministry, so Your discipleship training methods become my educational system. Help me be **poor in spirit**, so I can allow Him to start teaching and reminding me of all You are saying to me.

This Is Having Jesus Teach You

The Holy Spirit-Jesus Team

John 16:13-15 (NIV) But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on His own; He will speak only what He hears, and He will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to Me by taking from what is Mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is Mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is Mine and make it known to you.

As you can see here, the Holy Spirit isn't going to be telling you anything from Himself. **He will bring glory to Jesus by taking from what is His and making it known to you. He will not speak on His own.** He isn't trying to take your eyes off of Jesus and get them on Himself. His objective is to take your journey through the Gospels and make it real to you. He wants to help you build your relationship with Jesus. He wants you to get what Jesus' first disciples got.

Jesus, help me see that this is how I learn to live life and do ministry by the Spirit. As I am going through the Gospels letting You show me what You produced in Your disciples, the Spirit will establish a connection to my spirit. That connection will introduce a close and intimate relationship with me to You and my Father. I will learn to accept Your way of thinking, living, and ministering. Help my *will* allow this by me being **poor in spirit**.

Who Inherits The Kingdom?

James 2:5 (NIV) Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom He promised those who love Him? This is what Jesus is going to be teaching you. He will give you all the various procedures for being **poor in the eyes of the world** and to be **rich in faith**.

Gal 5:16 (NIV) So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. Jesus, show me that as I am being **poor in spirit**, I will be living by the Spirit. As I live by the Spirit, You will teach me how to **not gratify the desires of the sinful nature**. Help me accomplish this goal by taking me through the Gospels with You.

Rom 8:4 (NIV) In order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit. The Holy Spirit can do more than make walking through the Gospels with Jesus real to you. He can empower you with the righteous requirements of the law. He can install Jesus' character in you, so you can live a life and do a ministry pleasing to God. This is what Romans 8:4, Galatians 5:22-25, and Galatians 2:20 are talking about.

Gal 5:22-25 (NIV) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since you live by the Spirit, let you keep in step with the Spirit.

Jesus, help me realize that **the fruit of the Spirit** flow through me, as I become **poor in spirit**. They open my heart to You and the work and provisions of the Holy Spirit. Show me that they are the power that motivate me to do the ministry. They flow in and through my emotions and give me an excitement and joy that people see and want for themselves.

Gal 2:20 (NIV) I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. Jesus, help me see that the Holy Spirit is preparing me, so I can join You in the Gospels and learn how to live Your Jesus-life. As I continue to be **poor in spirit**, I will be taken to a place where You become my life source. The Holy Spirit helps me die out to myself; and, I let You live through me.

I Have The Victory In That Area Of My Life

The first step to salvation is realizing that you have a spiritual need. This can be something you forget. Realizing you have a spiritual need is the first step to everything in Jesus. One of the most important things Jesus is going to teach you is that being **poor in spirit** is a continuous condition. Being **poor in spirit** is a relational attitude toward Jesus. There will *never* be an area of your life where you no longer need His help.

Jesus, teach me that “**blessed are the poor in spirit**” applies to me if I am pastoring a church of a million or are unsaved and looking for a Savior. Help me see what You are talking about, as You address the issue of me remaining. **John 15:5b (NIV) If a man remains in Me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing.** Help me see that, since You are my life-source, my need is continuous. I never become great, wonderful, powerful, God’s answer to mankind, amazing, dynamic, satisfied, perfect, or anything else.

*The moment you cease being “**poor in spirit**” you unplug from Jesus, and stop doing anything godly.*

When Jesus Speaks, The Poor In Spirit Listen

Mat 11:2-5 (NIV) When John heard in prison what Christ was doing, he sent his disciples to ask Him, “Are You the One Who was to come, or should we expect someone else?” Jesus replied, “Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor.”

Isn’t the good news supposed to be preached to everyone? Yes. But only the **poor in spirit** listen and hear it. In the world system, being poor means that a person’s life is extremely limited. They don’t have the resources to do much of anything. It is the opposite for you, who are learning how to live in the Kingdom of God system in the spirit realm.

Jesus, I would have never thought that being **poor in spirit** would be the door into everything valuable. Help me see that, when I start realizing I really, really need You for everything, that I am devoid of anything good and important, and that my situation is intense desperation, it is then I turn to You for all the issues of my life and ministry.

I Don’t Believe I Need That

Heb 4:2 (NIV) For you also have had the gospel preached to you, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith. This faith issue can make or break you. If you don’t realize you have spiritual needs, you will not believe in Jesus for the answer. In every area of your life where you have faith in the fact that you have arrived, got the victory, know the answer, or don’t have a problem; you have ceased to be **poor in spirit** in that area.

2 Cor 3:5 (NIV) Not that you are competent in yourself to claim anything for yourself, but your competence comes from God. Jesus, teach me that being **poor in spirit** is my ability to be receptive to each portion of Your Word. Once it helps me realize that I don’t have these areas of my life settled, I start looking to You. It protects me from spiritual pride. It helps me go through the Gospels with You and be receptive to everything You teach me.

Faith In Anything Other Than God Is Unbelief. It Must Be In God And God Alone.

Chapter Twenty-One

Spiritual Component Two

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted

This requires your realization of a spiritual need that directs you toward other people. What makes you sad? You usually are sad because you need someone or something. Or, you lost someone or something. Most sadness revolves around you and what you don't have. Now, let Jesus show you what made Him sad. This is what you are seeing that is motivating Jesus.

Mat 23:37 (NIV) O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. Jesus, help me be sad for this reason. Help me mourn over the fact that there are billions who do not know You. Help me not be content until I have done the part You are assigning me to do; give me Your compassion.

What Makes Jesus' Disciples Sad?

John 16:19-20 (NIV) Jesus saw that they wanted to ask Him about this, so He said to them, "Are you asking one another what I meant when I said, 'In a little while you will see Me no more, and then after a little while you will see Me?' I tell you the truth, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy.

Jesus, help me have a sadness, when You and I are not communicating together. Help that be my indication that I have walked away from You, at that moment in my day. As I go through the Gospels with You, let our relationship become my lifestyle. Empower me to be constantly discussing everything in my life and ministry with You.

I Tried That Once And It Made Me Depressed

Why should you be sad? You are saved and on your way to heaven. So what there are billions who are lost? Well, no one would say anything like that. But you can be sure of one thing. It will be a natural tendency for you to do everything in your power to not be sad.

Do the people you see in third-world countries concern you? Sure! Do you get sad? You will be tempted to rebuke that sadness in the Name of Jesus! Do people's suffering you read about on the internet try to depress you? Absolutely! Do you mourn? Nehemiah said in 8:10 (NIV), **"Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is sacred to your Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the LORD is your strength."**

Jesus, I don't want to **mourn**! When I see people on television or on the internet, who are suffering from a lack of food or care, I find myself resisting that **mourning** with God's Word. I know You don't want me going around **mourning** all the time. But, help me be so moved by the conditions around me that I obey the Great Commission.

Mourning Sets Your Priorities

Philippians 2:4-8 (NIV) Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross!

Mat 10:38-39 (NIV) And anyone who does not take his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.

You are not going to respond to Jesus' Great Commission unless you allow **mourning** to motivate your actions. Something has to influence your priorities, help you set your goals, direct the way you plan your day, decide who you will and will not talk to each day, motivate your study and prayer life, help you give yourself to full commitment to Jesus, and give you a full desire to expend your life for the needs of a lost and dying world; that's what Jesus is showing you through His life.

Jesus, You are highly motivated by the desire to reach the lost. Help me see that, when You try to interrupt my day because someone needs ministering to, I will resist You, if I don't have a **mourning** attitude. Instead, I will get extremely motivated by the pressures of my own life. Show me that this will often come into conflict with Your plans for me. Let **mourning** help me lose the intensity of my own needs and intensify in my focus and concern for other's needs.

What Happens When You Mourn?

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Psalms 126:6 (NIV) He who goes out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with him. Even when your church has 20,000 people in attendance, you still have not come to a place where you can discontinue the **mourning**.

*It Isn't How Many People Are In Your Church.
It Is More Important How Many Aren't In Your Church.*

There's More Than One Lost Sheep Out There

Luke 15:4-7 (NIV) "Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.' I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

Jesus, I have read this Scripture and am very familiar with it. But, it isn't governing my life. Show me what system of reasoning has negated the principles established in this passage. Help **mourning** for those outside Your provisions to occupy my thoughts, as I walk with You. Help me see what kind of **mourning** in my life and ministry would get heaven excited. Is there one lost person out there that I should be concerned with? Or, do I feel like my situation is much more serious? Help me see that I have a lot to cry about.

The Joy Of Mourning

Acts 20:35 (NIV) In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus Himself said: **"It is more blessed to give than to receive."** There really isn't much that brings Christians joy like leading someone to Jesus. It is a lot like getting saved all over again, when you pray with someone to accept Him into their life. That is where the comforting comes into your life. Jesus rewards your willingness to be pained with the **mourning** attitude. He always responds with some type of special blessing, when you join Him in any suffering. You are never going to out give God.

Jesus, let **mourning** lift my eyes to the people around me. Help me not just go about my day with my eyes set on what I am doing. Show me how to be looking down into the heart of the people around me. Help me respond to those that cross my path. Help me smile, show them kindness, and help them in any way I can. Let me establish a conversation with them, if it is appropriate. If I can see a need, help me ask You what You want me to do about it.

Getting The Obstructions Out Of Your Heart

James 4:8-10 (NIV) Come near to God and He will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and **purify your hearts**, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, **and He will lift you up.**

If you find yourself having difficulty join Jesus in caring for those who are suffering, this **mourning** will help heal it. If you struggle with interrupting your day to help someone, like Jesus is teaching you, **mourning** will help you **humble yourself before the Lord, and He will lift you up.** **Mourning** for healing your own heart can be your first step into starting to reach out to others. As you walk with Jesus, you will see that He has this **mourning** heart.

Jesus, help me spend time fulfilling James 4:8-10. Help me not just take for granted a lack of concern. Help me not let my heart be insensitive to the needs around me. Set me free from excuses, resistive thoughts, and loveless feelings that try to block off my compassion. Take me through this intense process of healing for my life and ministry, so I will treat people with Your love. Give me a compassion that brings **mourning** into my day for hurting people.

Jesus, help me see this **mourning** heart in You. Help me understand that it is what is motivating You to go around healing, preaching, teaching, and training. Help me feel the **mourning** heart in my life. Help me see that it was so intense, it took You to the cross for us.

Chapter Twenty-Two

Spiritual Component Three

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Wow, You Look A Lot Like Jesus

This is a spiritual need for transparency. You need to let the character of God shine through your life. People will learn to love Jesus, as they see Him represent Himself through your life and ministry. As you get out where the people are and start living the life of Jesus, they will want to be around you. You will have great life success; and, you will have great persecution.

Luke 2:52 (NIV) And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

Jesus, I know that everyone didn't end up liking You. Ultimately Your message drove many away. However, no one could completely forget how loving and kind You were to them. The message was tough but You were wonderful. The power of God flowed through You and blessed their lives. The reality of God's great love became obvious to all. Many got caught between You, the Man and Your message. Even those who didn't want to change the way they were living still wanted to somehow fit You into their life.

Setting The Tone For Your Ministry

Mat 11:28-30 (NIV) Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle (KJV: meek) and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.

What a loving and caring attitude! What if you gave your body over to Jesus and let Him use it in this fashion? What if you followed His example and spent your time with people who were weary and burdened and let Him flow through you to give them rest for their souls?

Jesus, You never had a problem finding a crowd to minister to. Even those who had no idea Who You are, still crowded around You and let You touch their lives. There was just something about You that touched their heart. I have experienced this about You. I know You are God, with special and unique powers and positions. But, somehow You don't let all of that get in Your way. Help me keep following You around and seeing this special love.

I Have Weakness In My Meekness

It is this **meekness** issue can really trip you up. You are not God. You may not be anyone of importance. Few people may know your name or be impressed with your accomplishments. And yet, you can feel too important to be **meek**. You would think Jesus would be the One Who would have problems with **meekness**. And, you would recognize how insignificant you are, in comparison to Him, and slip right into it. Nope!

Jesus, help me not feel much too important of a person to be **meek**. Help me not feel like it just isn't my style. No telling how unmeek I would be, if I had actually accomplished something really great. But, if I feel like I have accomplished too many things to be **meek**, help me lay them down before You. Help me see Your **meekness** in spite of Who You are.

Jesus Will Show You What Meekness Looks Like

Zephaniah 3:11-12 (NIV) On that day you will not be put to shame for all the **wrongs you have done to Me**, because I will remove from this city **those who rejoice in their pride**. Never again will you **be haughty on My holy hill**. But I will leave within you **the meek and humble, who trust in the name of the LORD**.

Here you see such words as “**wrongs you have done to Me**”, “**those who rejoice in their pride**”, and “**be haughty on My Holy Hill**.” In contrast you see words like “**the meek and humble**” and “[those] **who trust in the Name of the Lord**”. If **meekness** is like looking at beautiful things through a totally transparent glass, then pride is like trying to view things through a cast iron skillet. Jesus is **meek** because He wants people to be able to see the Father through His life.

Jesus, help me see Your **meekness**, as I walk along with You through the Gospels. Help me see what it looks like, as You work with people. Empower me to see the pattern and identify what it needs to be in my relationships and ministry. Help me give up all pride and selfishness, as I allow Your attitudes and character transform my life and ministry.

Mat 11:27 (NIV) All things have been committed to Me by My Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and **no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him**. This verse is just above the verse “**for I am gentle (KJV: meek) and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.**” Jesus’ **meekness** allows people to see the Father through Him. Your **meekness** allows people to see Jesus through you.

John 14:8-10 (NIV) Philip said, “Lord, show me the Father and that will be enough for us.” Jesus answered: “Don't you know Me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? **Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father**. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in Me? The words I say to you are not just My own. Rather, it is the Father, **living in Me, Who is doing His work**.

Jesus, help me not want people seeing me. Help me want them seeing You. Help people look through my life and see Your work. When people see Your great works flowing through my life, help me live it in such a way that it brings glory You.

Jesus, I know I can't really help needy people. Their needs are much too great for my help to be of any lasting value. I know it is going to take Your miraculous power to help them with their incredible needs. Show me how that is going to happen.

Jesus' Discipleship Training System

The words I say to you are not just My own. Rather, it is the Father, living in Me, Who is doing His work. This is how Jesus' ministry works in and through you. As you watch the Father work through Jesus, you will see how Jesus will work through you. Only **meekness** is going to make this kind of relationship possible.

Jesus, help me watch, listen, learn, and allow the Holy Spirit to add Your life and ministry to my life and ministry. From that point on, the words I say and the deeds I do will not be my own. Rather, it will be You **living in me, Who is doing** Your **work** through me. That will bless everyone involved. That will bring great glory to God.

1 Pet 5:5-6 (NIV) Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourself with humility toward one another, because, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” Humble yourself, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that He may lift you up in due time. Humility introduces you into **meekness**. Once you give up your pride, you are able to humble yourself before one another and Jesus. Once you allow Jesus' humility to start flowing in the through you, you become transparent and people start seeing Jesus.

Jesus, help me to treat with submission, those who have been following You for a long time. Help me see in them how they are yielding to the power-attitude of **meekness**. Help me see what **meekness** looks like in their life and ministry. And, help me treat them with Your **meekness**, as I work with them. Help me **humble** myself, **therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that He may lift me up in due time.**

Meekness With Gentleness

2 Cor 10:1 (NIV) By the meekness and gentleness of Christ, I appeal to you--I, Paul, who am “timid” when face to face with you, but “bold” when away! One of the fruit of the Spirit is gentleness. As you are seeing Jesus in action, you will see Him seemingly verbally attack spiritual leaders. However, don't let that confuse you; it is an intensity-care procedure. It is a life and death surgery on people who will not make it into His Kingdom, if something drastic isn't done to them. Jesus' words may not sound like love, meekness, or gentleness; but, they are coming out of them.

Jesus, as I watch and listen to the way You deal with certain religious leaders, help me understand that You are trying to get them to turn from the errors of their ways. You are telling them what kind of condition they are in. And, You are telling them what they are doing wrong. Help me see Your compassion, as You give them emergency treatment. Help me not misunderstand how You feel about them. You know that, if they don't repent and turn from their wicked ways, they will spend eternity without God.

Chapter Twenty-Three

Spiritual Component Three

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Who Did You Vote For?

Jesus' Earthly Kingdom

This doesn't mean that you are going to spend eternity on earth if you are **meek**. You want to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven for eternity. In this verse, inheriting the earth is talking about now and what is going to happen next in eternity. **Psa 2:7-9 (NIV) I will proclaim the decree of the LORD: He said to Me, "You are My Son; today I have become Your Father. Ask of Me, and I will make the nations Your inheritance, the ends of the earth Your possession. You will rule them with an iron scepter; You will dash them to pieces like pottery."**

Psalm 2:7-9 is a prophecy of Jesus, the only begotten Son of God. Here is the New Testament interpretation of this Psalm: **Heb 5:5 (NIV) So Christ also did not take upon Himself the glory of becoming a high priest. But God said to Him, "You are My Son; today I have become Your Father."**

Rev 20:6 (NIV) Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years. Jesus, help me understand how I will be inheriting the earth. Show me that as I yield to Your power-attitude of **meekness**, You are getting me ready to **be a priest of God and of Christ and will reign with You for a thousand years.** I look forward to that wonderful benefit of this special power-attitude.

Jesus' Kingdom In Your Heart

As it relates to humans, Jesus is now setting up His Kingdom on this earth inside their hearts. Those who "vote" for Him are making a personal decision as to whether or not they will become a part of that eternal Kingdom. In America, you vote for a president. Then the Popular vote is counted and the majority reveals to the Electoral system how the Electoral vote should be expressed. From this system the people decide who will be their next president.

Jesus, help me understand that in Your Kingdom, no one person nor group is deciding whether or not You are going to be King over all the earth; You *will* rule as King. My "vote" only decides whether or not I will be in that Kingdom. No one can "vote" in my place. No one else can decide whether or not I will spend eternity with You. I have one "vote" and that "vote" decides my eternal destination and my eternal destination alone.

Mat 4:17 (NIV) From that time on Jesus began to preach, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.” That is what Jesus meant when He said the Kingdom of Heaven is near. He was starting the process of setting up His Kingdom in the hearts of people. This “**near**” is brought close through the confession of your mouth and the believing in your heart.

Rom 10:8-9 (NIV) But what does it say? “The word is *near you*; it is in your mouth and in your heart,” that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. Jesus, I thank You for bringing Your Kingdom *near* me by making Your words *near* me. Help me show others how close Your eternal Kingdom is to them.

So, This Is How You Are Going To Accomplish This

Mark 16:15 (NIV) He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation....” As you go into all the world and preach the good news, it is a major part of Jesus setting up His Kingdom. This is where **meekness** and inheriting the earth come in. If you are transparent through the transforming power of Jesus found in **meekness**, you will be able to cover the earth with the gospel message.

Jesus, as people respond to Your gospel message and come to You, Your eternal Kingdom is set up in their hearts. The more people allow You to set up Your Kingdom in their heart, the more Your eternal Kingdom will spread over the earth, which will bring it into the process of being inherited. Show me that instead of being concerned with the planet, You care about the people on the planet. Teach me that **meekness** makes it possible for me to reach the people on earth. It makes it possible for You to rule and reign in their hearts and lives, while on earth.

Inheriting A New Earth

Rev 21:1-2 (NIV) Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.

Rev 21:3-4 (NIV) And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and He will live with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

Jesus, help me keep in mind that those I help join You by accepting You as their Lord and Savior, will also rule and reign with You over earth. In its new form, of course. So, as I yield to **meekness**, I will be helping people see You through me. As I walk with You through the Gospels, create more and more of Yourself in me. Then **meekness** will make that visible to the people around me as well.

What It Takes To Reign With Jesus

2 Tim 2:12 (NIV) If you endure, you will also reign with Him. If we disown Him, He will also disown us. There is another aspect to **meekness**. It is you being **meek** *before God*. This is where you make God your final authority on all matters of belief, decision, actions, and behavior. When you are **meek** before God, whatever He says, is what you devote your life to. It is similar to being **poor in spirit**; but, in the case of **meekness**, it deals with what you have already been taught by being **poor in spirit**. Once you find out the truth from God, that is what you believe and how you behave.

Rev 5:10 (NIV) You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth. Jesus, help me see that the way I get here is through being **meek** before God. As I make Him and His truth my final authority, I won't be shaken from my relationship with His truth. His truth will already be settled in my heart and won't be available to be discussed, challenged, debated, argued about, or undermined.

Looking At Your Inheritance

Rev 11:15 (NIV) The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign for ever and ever." At this point, the kingdom of the world and the kingdom of your Lord will all become one. Heaven and earth will all become one Kingdom. And, through Jesus, you will inherit it all. In other words, it is a good idea to let Jesus make you **meek**.

Jesus, help me not only yield to God's power-attitude of **meekness**, help me live a **meek** life. Help me recognize **meekness** as I watch You through the Gospels. Help me pray for it to fill my behavior, once I see it. Help me allow all of the **meekness** You demonstrate to take control over my life and ministry.

Jesus Made You A Co-Heir With Him

Rom 8:17 (NIV) Now if we are children, then we are heirs--heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in His sufferings in order that we may also share in His glory. Jesus paid all the prices, made all the sacrifices, and gave you all your provisions. And then, He generously let you reap the rewards, as if you did it all yourself. Your heavenly Father is also demonstrating His generosity by letting you inherit Him.

If indeed we share in His sufferings in order that we may also share in His glory: Jesus, **meekness** puts me in a vulnerable position. You allowed a lot of demeaning and painful things happen to You. Now I am allowing You and Your ministry flow in and through me. **Mat 10:24-25 (NIV)** A student is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. **It is enough for the student to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If the Head of the house has been called Beelzebub, how much more the members of His household!** Show me that **meekness** will expose me to the suffering of You, my Savior.

Chapter Twenty-Four

Spiritual Component Four

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled

I'm Stuffed

Hunger is caused by a need for food. Thirst is caused by a need for something to drink. Hungering and thirsting, in this situation, are the recognition of a spiritual need for righteousness. The main thing that would keep you from experiencing this hunger and thirst would be because you were already filled with something else.

Setting Your Priorities

Mat 6:31-33 (NIV) So do not worry, saying, “What shall we eat?” or “What shall we drink?” or “What shall we wear?” For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these *things* will be given to you as well.

Jesus, I feel the desire to make sure I have all my physical needs met. Teach me that this Scripture is telling me how to get them through God as my source. As I concentrate on an intense passion for God and His righteousness, help me always be aware that He takes care of me and my physical needs. But, help me also be aware that if I concentrate on the things of the physical, as my first priority, they will crowd out the issues of Your Kingdom and Your righteousness. Make it clear to me that it all depends on what I seek first.

Having Deadly Priorities

In Jesus' parable of the man who sowed seeds in his field, He talked about seeds falling in an area where thorn seeds existed as well. **Mat 13:7 (NIV)** Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Then He gave the spiritual meaning for the seeds that fell among thorns. **Mat 13:22 (NIV)** The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful.

Jesus, if I concern myself about this life and wealth, I can be unfruitful in God's work. Show me that I must focus myself on the issues of righteousness, as my top priority. Let Your Holy Spirit empty me of worldly cares and give me a deep hungering and thirsting for God's righteousness. I believe the Holy Spirit has the power to produce this in me.

I Take Pride In My Humility

Luke 18:9-14 (NIV) To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men--robbers, evildoers, adulterers--or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’

But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’ I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

Just like worldly cares block off your hunger and thirst for righteousness, so does pride. It causes you to depend on your own righteousness. Looking at your own accomplishments, abilities, works of spiritual service, and benevolence keep you from hungering and thirsting for God’s righteousness. If you go against the Bible or your conscience, justifying yourself, forgiving yourself, excusing yourself, or ignoring it, keep you from getting righteousness.

Jesus, help me see that humility opens the door to God’s provisions. It allows me to see my need for God’s righteousness. The more I see that need, the hungrier and thirstier I get. And, the hungrier and thirstier I get, the more I get filled.

Don’t Take It Personal

The person who studies the Gospels in pride, wastes his time. If you are looking at Jesus’ life and ministry and feeling like you pretty much do it that way, you are wasting your time. Humility helps you see where you are going wrong. It shows you One Who is a true expert on righteousness. Humility doesn’t run you down or criticize you. But, it will show you what you are doing wrong.

He who humbles himself will be exalted: Jesus, teach me how to humble myself, so I can hunger and thirst after righteousness. Help me see that I can be shown all kinds of things that I do wrong and not be hurt or damaged. Help me want to get rid of those things that are hurting my life and my ministry. Help me see wrong things that I do, as being my enemy. Help me agree with You about those things that I do or say that are hurting me, other people, and Your plan. Help me not take it personal, when You show me things I need to change.

Went home justified before God: There are two types of righteousness. The first righteousness you get is credited to your record with God. **Rom 4:3 (NIV)** **What does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”** The other type of righteousness is something you do to yourself, other people, and God’s plan. As you allow Jesus and the Holy Spirit to empower you to live a righteous life, it becomes a miracle of God that has been supernaturally infused into your behavior. This is where you start allowing Jesus to live His life and ministry in and through your life and ministry.

How To *Actually* Live A Righteous Life

Rom 8:13 (NIV) For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if *by* the Spirit *you* put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.

Jesus, help me see that I am now at the place where, **if I live according to the sinful nature**, I am not taking advantage of the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit. When I was a new or untrained Christian, I couldn't stop my body from **making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members**. But, You have taught me how to *by the Spirit* to **put to death the misdeeds of the body**, and live.

Raise Your Level Of Righteousness

Allow the Holy Spirit to humble you, He will, through the life of Jesus, help you see all of the character of God, the Father, and all He has to offer. As you compare your life with Jesus' life, you can see the drastic difference. His life helps you see how great your need is for righteousness. Whereas before, you felt you really weren't all that bad.

Jesus, as I see You live life and tell me what God expects of me, help me see myself differently. Before, all I had to compare myself with was other people, who were just as bad as I was. And, some of them were even worse, in my opinion. But, as You and Your teachings become the criteria for a life of righteousness, I suddenly get a sincere hunger and thirst for righteousness. Help me get Your type of righteousness.

What More Could You Ask For?

Rom 3:22 (NIV) This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference. As usual, this righteousness **comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe** in two ways. As before, first it came as a perfect record *with God*. That righteousness didn't help you make more friends. You were still not *living* a righteous life with yourself and other people. So, the second righteousness that **comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe**, is that righteousness that Jesus empowers you to live with yourself, other people, and God's plan.

Jesus, teach me that just as faith in You, as my Savior provided me with righteousness credited to my record, so faith in studying Your life and ministry provides righteousness manifest through my life and ministry. I thank You for this powerful righteousness that has given me a wonderful behavioral change. My relationship with other people has become so much more wonderful.

Chapter Twenty-Five

Spiritual Component Five

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

I Want Justice!

God's grace gives you what you don't deserve--His love and provisions. God's mercy doesn't give you what you do deserve--His wrath and judgment. That is how God wants you to treat others. Aren't you glad God doesn't do what is fair? Grace and mercy are so much better than God being fair. If someone owes a debt, it is only fair that they pay it, right?

Mat 18:23-35 (NIV) Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt. The servant fell on his knees before him. "Be patient with me," he begged, "and I will pay back everything." The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.

But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii. He grabbed him and began to choke him. "Pay back what you owe me!" he demanded. His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, "Be patient with me, and I will pay you back." But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt.

When the other servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed and went and told their master everything that had happened. Then the master called the servant in. "You wicked servant," he said, "I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?" In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. **This is how My heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart.**

You Can Do Better Than That

God has treated you with such awesome love, grace, and **mercy**. Now He wants Who He is to pass through you to others. It is a part of your **meekness** transparency, as you let people see Jesus through your life. But it goes beyond them just seeing Who He is. He can flow through you in such a way that they can *experience* Who He is. **Mercy** takes it to the next level. He isn't just asking you to give them *your* **mercy**. He wants you to be **merciful** with His **mercy**. He has a **mercy** that far exceeds anything you can give out.

Jesus, I have always struggled with things that weren't fair. I wanted people to treat me fairly; and I have always tried to be fair with others. Help me receive God's power-attitude of **mercy**. Help me be willing to give people treatment and things they do not deserve. Help me see that, if someone deserves it, then I am not giving them **mercy**.

Mat 9:27-31 (NIV) As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed Him, calling out, **"Have mercy on me, Son of David!"** When He had gone indoors, the blind men came to Him, and He asked them, **"Do you believe that I am able to do this?"** **"Yes, Lord,"** they replied. Then He touched their eyes and said, **"According to your faith will it be done to you";** and their sight was restored. Jesus warned them sternly, **"See that no one knows about this."** But they went out and spread the news about Him all over that region.

As Jesus teaches you how to let His mercy flow through your life and ministry, you become much more beneficial to those around you. If large quantities of His people make their bodies available to Him, He is then able to fulfill His plan. He wants to be in a lot of places at the same time. When He was only in one body, He was very limited as to whom He could be **merciful**.

Jesus, help me see that the problem You now face with being able to use my body and life to be **merciful** to people, is for me to give You partial submission. If I, as a minister, am only partially yielded to the **mercy** You want to give through me, You are still limited in what You can do. Let my faith and trust in You be complete, in order for You to show total **mercy**.

I Found Another One

Acts 8:17-21 (NIV) Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money and said, **"Give me also this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit."** Peter answered: **"May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money! You have no part or share in this ministry, because your heart is not right before God...."**

This case makes it pretty easy for anyone to see what the heart problem was in Simon. And, it was keeping him from being able to be used by Jesus. He wasn't motivated by **mercy**; he wanted to sell the things of God. As you have probably seen, there are ministers like that today.

Jesus, help me see that this is a good example of how my heart can keep me from being used by You. Teach me that there are a lot of heart issues that aren't as easily diagnosed, as Simon's. You saw them in Your disciples, pointed them out, and dealt with them one by one. By the time they reached the end of Your ministry and the beginning of the Holy Spirit's ministry, they had been transformed into usable vessels for the ministry. From that time on God's **mercy** flowed out of them like a river. As I walk through the Gospels with You, do that work in me. Put God's power-attitude of **mercy** in my heart, so I can be **merciful**.

What's The Plan?

Rom 9:15 (NIV) For He says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” It does not, therefore, depend on man’s desire or effort, but on God’s mercy. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh: “I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display My power in you and that My name might be proclaimed in all the earth.” Therefore God has mercy on whom He wants to have mercy, and He hardens whom He wants to harden.

God *could* have designed His plan for humans any way He wanted. So, He decided to design it where Salvation was provided for all mankind and **it does not, therefore, depend on man’s desire or effort, but on God’s mercy**. No one got a choice in the matter, no one could influence it with their **desire or effort**, but it was based on God’s mercy. **2 Cor 5:14-15 (NIV)** For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that One died *for all*, and therefore *all* died. And He died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for Him Who died for them and was raised again.

Jesus, thank You for being **merciful** to all mankind. Regardless of what I **desired** or **efforts** I put into sin, You died for me anyway. But, help me always keep in mind that I and everyone else do get a choice, as to whether or not we accept it. You have already been **merciful** to us all. Now You are honoring our God-given free will about what we will do with that **mercy**.

It's A Plan Of Mercy

John 3:16-18 (NIV) For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. Jesus, help me understand that even though my **desires** or **efforts** can’t cause this **mercy** or keep it from being made available, it is always in my control whether or not I will take advantage of this **merciful** act of You dying for me. It is all mankind’s responsibility to believe in You.

John 3:17 (NIV) For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him. Jesus, help me see that in God’s statement, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” He decided to have **mercy** and **compassion** on the whole world through You. Help me yield my body to Your life and ministry, so as many as possible will get this message.

John 3:18 (NIV) Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son. Jesus, help me fully understand this plan of **mercy**. Help me see that You were incredibly **merciful** to me and all mankind. Help me demonstrate Your **mercy** through my life and ministry, so everyone will see how You treat people.

Chapter Twenty-Six

Spiritual Component Six

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Well, I sure want that one! None of us want to miss seeing God!

A Pure Heart Is Different From A Pure Life

A lot of confusion seems to exist among Christians about the difference between having a **pure heart** and living a pure life. There are three provisions of God that deal with purity. They are salvation, justification, and sanctification. Salvation provides you with a **pure heart**. Justification provides you with a pure record with God. Sanctification starts you on the journey to a pure life.

- Salvation deals with the *penalty* of sin. Your past sins can no longer cause you to experience the wages of sins, which is the eternal death penalty.
- Justification deals with the *presence* of sin. Even though you do currently and periodically sin because the presence of sin is always with you, justification keeps your record with God pure.
- Sanctification deals with the *power* of sin. Jesus gives you, who are involved in sanctification, the power to stop sinning! Sanctification is spiritual growth; as you grow spiritually, you also grow in your Bible knowledge, understanding, wisdom, and life in the Spirit. Jesus teaches you how to use all these things to defeat sin.

Jesus, teach me step-by-step, through the Holy Spirit, about and deliver me from the powerful hold sin has over various areas of my life. Teach me that salvation handles my relationship with God. And, sanctification works on my relationship with people. Help me understand that sanctification starts producing evidence of a **pure heart** in my relationships with myself and others. Even though these **pure heart** evidences may be infantile, I, as a true Christian, will start exhibiting them.

Jesus, help me see that a pure life is dealing with perfection. Show me that the only way I have a perfectly **pure heart** is because You have credited perfection to my record. But, help me keep in mind that even though sanctification starts me on the process of living that perfect life, it isn't possible that I will ever reach that perfection in this life. But, help me keep that goal, because it is still what You want me aiming at it.

Here is how Paul puts it, concerning his life:

Phil 3:12 (NIV) Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.

People Don't Like You Very Much

God is nice enough to consider all your friend's past, present, and future sins covered by Jesus' blood. However, people don't appreciate any of their sinning against them. They don't like them doing it in the past, present, or future. People, who don't see this difference between a **pure heart** credited to their account with God, and a **pure heart** lived out in a pure life, think your Christian friends are a bunch of hypocrites. This hurts Jesus' representation. It is vital to see how Jesus handled these issues with His disciples. It is also important to read all the letters to the churches. They also deal with these spiritual growth issues and how to handle them.

Jesus, when my friends just start out in the sanctification process, as new Christians, help me explain to them that God is happy with them; but, not very many people will be. Even though they try to act like the older Christians, they *will* fail. And, when they do, they must *always* go back and make it right with those they hurt. Help me teach them how to live the Romans 7:15-25 life, so they will be trained properly for growing into the Romans chapter eight life.

Jesus, the older Christians see the new convert's failures and doubt the reality of their conversion. They don't understand what is wrong with these baby Christians. They can see that they don't walk, talk, eat, poop, or pee like a true Christian. They have to wear spiritual diapers just to cover up their inability to control themselves. Help me teach these adult Christians how to love, understand, and care for these new and untrained Christians.

Got Milk?

1 Cor 3:2-3 (NIV) I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men?

I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Modern men and women may not understand this milk analogy. You may think of milk, as just being a liquid food. The truth is, a mother's milk is regular food, that the mother has eaten, digested, processed, and manufactured into the perfect diet for a baby. Spiritual milk is like that. Someone has to eat the steak of the Word, digest it, process it, and manufacture it into the perfect diet for a spiritual baby. That is what Jesus wants to show you how to do, through His ministry in the Gospels.

Jesus, teach me that spiritual babies have a **pure heart**, because God made them innocent. But, make me ready for them to fail, as a mature Christian. All the spiritual body parts are there. They just don't do much as a Christian. Show me that they can't walk in the Spirit or even crawl in the Spirit. If I don't keep them diapered, they *will* poop all over my church.

Indeed, you are still not ready. You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men? Jesus, help me see that this sounds like most of these people are diaper less. What a mess! But, teach me that this is normal life with new and untrained Christians; they must be parented.

Who's In Charge Of The Nursery?

All you need now is to leave these people in this untrained state, grow them up to adult size, and let them start having babies. Do that and you have yourself a Corinthian type church. Have you ever attended one of these? You, like many, have probably pastored one of these. You can see them everywhere. Wouldn't it be great if one of these Corinthian type churches became a church planting church? They could put together some of their best disciples and get two or three hundred new Corinthian type churches started. Ask Paul if this sounds like a good idea. He found just having one of these churches to be pretty time consuming.

Jesus, help me see that You present a better answer to the problem of infant churches being run by infants. Rather than spending all my time going around putting out fires in these "worldly" churches, You started them with solid foundations in the leadership. You insisted that their salvation "**pure hearts**" move into sanctification "**pure hearts.**"

Jesus, show me what would have happened to the Corinthian church, if they hadn't had Paul as a part of their leadership. He had a **pure heart** that went beyond the **pure heart** of salvation. Help me see that his sanctification moved him into a **pure heart** that manifest itself in real life. Teach me how to live and minister like Paul and his **pure heart**, that allowed him to **see God** now.

I Am Doing Weakness Exercises

2 Cor 12:9-10 (NIV) But He (Jesus) said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Jesus taught you about the *transparency* of **meekness**. Then He showed you the *flowing* characteristics of **mercy**. Through being **meek**, you become transparent and people can see Jesus. Then, through you being **merciful**, people start getting things from you they don't deserve, that causes them to experience the flow of Jesus' character. The process of sanctification **purifies** your life and ministry and makes these two characteristics of **meekness** and **mercy** function. Jesus is teaching you how to get obstructions out of your life.

Jesus, thank You for crediting me with a **pure heart** on my record with God. As I follow You through the Gospels, reveal things to me that keep You from *shining* through **meekness** and from *flowing* through **mercy**. Show me that just like impurities in glass obstruct light from *shining* through, and just like impurities in pipes obstructs liquids from *flowing* through, You must **purify** my life and ministry. Teach me that sanctification removes these impurities and **purifies** my life and ministry. Help me understand that the more You remove the impurities, the more the people around me will see God through me.

Chapter Twenty-Seven

Spiritual Component Seven

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.

You Started It!

Sometimes, after you have had your complete say in a matter, isn't it then that you are willing to become a peacemaker? From that point on, isn't that when you say that you are not going to argue about it? Can't you then pretend that they are the one who is being argumentative? But, if you were really interested in being a **peacemaker**, wouldn't you just drop it and not say any of those things? If you don't, isn't that like being a hit-and-run **peacemaker**. **Peacemakers**, who have grown to mature levels, don't start arguments and don't engage in arguments. Mature **peacemakers** don't even try to finish arguments. They stop them and move into mediation.

Jesus, as a growing **peacemaker**, when I start an argument or join someone in one, let Your Holy Spirit make me feel miserable. Since conflicts hurt Your reputation because me, Your representative, empower me to stop, because I am not showing love. Others can't see You through me, when I break peace with them. Help me see that peace is one of the channels through which You flow out of me. Like **mercy**, **peacemaking** helps others experience You. Show me that, as a mature **peacemaker**, I am really special. When I am in a situation where most people would lash out, I exhibit love and demonstrate peace even in a volatile situation.

Let's Get Down To The Real Issues Here

Prov 15:1 (NIV) A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

Jesus' life and ministry, in the Gospels, are constantly dealing with this issue of **peacemaking**. He gave many examples and applications in this sermon. He drew out some specific incidents and procedures for **peacemaking**. Why? Because these are the people God calls His sons. **Peacemaking** is a vital part of Christianity.

1 John 1:6 (NIV) If you claim to have fellowship with Him yet walk in the darkness, you lie and do not live by the truth. Jesus, help me see that this is a person claiming to be a Christian; but, they are using false teachings and misapplied Scriptures to sin on purpose. Help me always be aware that the true Christian is a **peacemaker** at heart. Even the new and untrained Christians, described in Romans 7:15-25, demonstrate this. **Rom 7:15 (NIV) I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.** Help me warn any friends I have that are struggling with doing things on purpose.

This Is Not Optional

The Bible presents concepts like this all through it. Jesus also presents scary truths like this in His teachings. He said things like:

Mat 7:21-23 (NIV) Not everyone who says to Me, “Lord, Lord,” will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of My Father Who is in heaven. *Many* will say to Me on that day, “Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?” Then I will tell them plainly, “I never knew you. Away from Me, you evildoers!”

John 14:27 (NIV) Peace I leave with you; My peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. Jesus, help me understand that **peacemaking** is something I need to be constantly studying and praying about. Help me see that my relationship with people exhibits my being yielded to You. Help me keep in mind that I can't produce this on my own. I must get this power through You.

Right after this, Jesus talked about the difference between those who hear His words and those who hear His words and do them: **Mat 7:24 (NIV) Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.** This is why the Holy Spirit is so important. He takes Jesus' words, as you walk with Him through the Gospels, and empowers you to live them. He keeps this journey from being a site-seeing trip. You grow into a **peacemaker** through the natural process of study and prayer.

Luke 6:46 (NIV) Why do you call Me, “Lord, Lord,” and do not do what I say? Jesus, it is so wonderful that You have taught me how to get those things You say and do, into my life. I am so thankful that I can yield to Your Holy Spirit and He will empower me to live and minister those things You present. Help me keep my eyes on You and Him, so I can live by faith and not by sight. I believe in the power of Your life and ministry.

It's Immature; But, It's A Start

1 John 2:9-10 (NIV) Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness. Whoever loves his brother lives in the light, and there is nothing in him to make him stumble. The beginning aspects of **peacemaking** can't be one of those things you grow into later. It is a natural manifestation of salvation. In other words, a brand-new believer is an aspiring **peacemaker** or they are not a brand-new believer. They may not be very good at it. But, they will have a heart for it. When they generate conflicts with others, they will go get it straightened out with God and their brother.

Jesus, teach me that **peacemaking** is a manifestation of love. Hate causes people to destroy relationships of peace. Show me that this Scripture is saying that those who are not trying to be in a peaceful relationship with their brother are not Christians. I know Christians aren't perfect and I will, from time to time, get into some sort of conflict with others. But, make it clear to me that this doesn't mean I hate them.

Jesus, when I get into conflict with others, help me always feel bad about it. Let Your Holy Spirit convict my conscience and cause me to feel the need to make things right. Teach me that those who aren't really Christians don't feel any such conviction. They have hardened their heart against You and the Holy Spirit's convicting influence on their conscience.

You Just Can't Admit Your Wrong, Can You?

1 John 1:9-10 (NIV) If you confess your sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive you your sins and purify you from all unrighteousness. If you claim you have not sinned, you make Him out to be a liar and His word has no place in your life.

When God says something is wrong, be willing to agree with Him. When the Holy Spirit causes you to feel conviction of guilt, admit you sinned, repent, and make things right. Beginning **peacemakers** typically fail a lot at first. Having to apologize every time you get into a conflict is really embarrassing. But, it won't empower you to stop making mistakes. Always repent, ask for forgiveness, tell Jesus you are sorry you hurt His reputation, ask Him to empower you to never do it again, and then go make it right with those you hurt.

Jesus, I have been embarrassed a lot. Having to apologize to people is a real pride crusher. Which is a good thing. I would think that all that embarrassment would cure hot heads like me; but, it doesn't. While the apologizing and repenting brings me into a closer relationship with You, help me see that it doesn't make me a mature **peacemaker**. Teach me that only through asking You for forgiveness, for growth and for power to yield to the Holy Spirit, in that area, will make me more of a **peacemaker**.

*Experiences, good or bad, cannot bring maturity into your Christian life.
Only seeking after Jesus will do that.*

John 16:33 (NIV) I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world. The big issue with **peacemaking** is the peace that you have in your heart and mind. Philippians 4:8 says: **Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things** Phil 4:8 (NIV).

Jesus, show me that this verse isn't giving me a suggestion. And, it isn't giving me instructions for me to try to carry out. It is speaking the power into me to **think about such things**. Help me realize that what I am thinking affects the emotions in my heart. If I am thinking on Philippians 4:8 things, the fruit of the Spirit flow through my heart in peace. If I think things that don't qualify in Philippians 4:8, they blocks off the fruit of the Spirit and deprive me of peace. Help me obey this verse and yield to the power You spoke into me.

Chapter Twenty-Eight

Spiritual Component Eight Part One

**Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**

Was It Something I Said?

Being persecuted because of stupidity or because some sin you committed against someone is different than being persecuted because of righteousness. As was said earlier, people found it hard to persecute Jesus. He was so loving, gracious, and merciful that even those who hated His message still tried to figure out a way to include Him in their life. Here's one example:

Disagreeing On Doctrine

Luke 7:36-39 (NIV) Now one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, so He went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. When a woman who had lived a sinful life in that town learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster jar of perfume, and as she stood behind Him at His feet weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them. When the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, He would know who is touching Him and what kind of woman she is--that she is a sinner."

As you know, Pharisees really didn't like Jesus. But they just couldn't leave Him alone. There was something special about Him. Jesus knew that Pharisees hated sinners. He also knew they really hated prostitutes. Jesus, on the other hand, loved repentant sinners. He even loved repentant prostitutes. But, Jesus was at the house of an important man. If He was going to keep the peace, He needed to send the repentant prostitute away in order to be accepted by the popular group. What was the righteous thing to do?

Luke 15:7 (NIV) I tell you that in the same way there will be *more rejoicing* in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine *righteous* persons who do not need to repent.

Jesus, the money, possessions, positions, prestige, popularity, power, pleasure, and accomplishments are best obtained by pleasing the Pharisees. There could be poverty, obscurity, rejection, insignificance, persecution, and a loss of reputation with people like prostitutes. People with great needs often can't support me or give me the notoriety I need in order to feel like I am really accomplishing great things. Help me understand Your priority.
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Who Invited You?

Even though this woman was hurting His reputation, Jesus did the righteous thing. This kind of thing generated persecution and ultimately precipitated His death. Many times you know the righteous thing to do and can't bring yourself around to doing it. Where are the people who are looking for spiritual help? Where is God currently working around you, calling and drawing sinners to Himself? That is where you need to be. Much of the time they aren't very important or very impressive. A lot of the time they don't have much money. But, whether they are rich or poor, if they are seeking God, you must give them the message they need.

Here is how the rest of this Pharisee-prostitute event played out: **Luke 7:40-48 (NIV)** Jesus answered him, **“Simon, I have something to tell you.” “Tell me, teacher,” he said. “Two men owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he canceled the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?” Simon replied, “I suppose the one who had the bigger debt canceled.” “You have judged correctly,” Jesus said.**

Then He turned toward the woman and said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give Me any water for My feet, but she wet My feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You did not give Me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing My feet. You did not put oil on My head, but she has poured perfume on My feet. Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven--for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little.” Then Jesus said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.”

Jesus, help me see that whether this brought persecution or not, You made sure everyone got the message they needed. I don't like rejection. I want people to like me. I will even lie sometimes just to keep from losing a friend. A lot of opportunities to minister present themselves and I can't quite open my mouth to give everyone the message they need.

Jesus, You ministered everywhere. There were times when You dominated the conversation. You were constantly teaching spiritual things; and, You still grew in influence and popularity. It wasn't usually with the prestigious, influential, powerful people. Most often it was with people that no one considered important. Help me set that as my priority. Empower me to start ministering like You. Help me be looking for those who are receptive to Your truth.

So, what created the persecution Jesus faced?

*Whether it made Him popular or not,
Jesus told people what they needed to hear.*

Paul Helped You Find Jesus

Except for Jesus, Paul made some of the greatest contributions to you. He *desired* to be a World Changer, *studied* so as to excel in the truth, *prayed* for help to make sacrifices, looked to Jesus for His faith, so he could *believe* for those things he needed in order to be a World Changer, yielded to God's *love*, so he could be motivated to do what it took to reach those who ultimately told you about Jesus, took *faith-action* and lived the life of a World Changer, and then was totally *thankful* for the privilege of being able to suffer for the people that would take the message down through time to you. Here was his commitment to Jesus and to you.

A World Changer's Commitment

Phil 3:7-9 (NIV) But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for Whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ--the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.

Phil 3:10 (NIV) I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.

We Are All Looking Forward To This!

2 Cor 11:23-28 (NIV) Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move.

I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches.

Jesus, let this be my welcome into the worldwide Christian movement. Show me that this is what it takes to maintain and further such a movement. Help me see that it will take disciples who are willing to lay down their lives for You. I can see that this is going to hurt me. It is going to hurt all of us a lot. I thought that being part of a worldwide Christian movement really sounded glamorous. That was, until I looked at all the records. A person could get killed doing something like this. But, I am still interested. One thing is for sure; I am going to have to be greatly influenced by Your life and ministry or I will quit and go home.

Chapter Twenty-Nine

Spiritual Component Eight Part Two

Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Over My Dead Body

It is hard to believe that something like this would be a moment for rejoicing. Why in the world would you be glad when people insult, persecute, and falsely say evil things against you? How is that going to get the Christian movement moving forward? While there are all kinds of people who are desperately seeking the answers to life, there are also people out there fighting truth. Satan has his people, whose life-work is to stop others from finding out about Jesus. If you are going to reach those seeking Jesus, you are going to have to go through the Jesus haters.

Jesus, help me have such a love for the lost, that I don't allow what happens to me to stop me. Show me that this is a hard attitude to come by. Help me see that few people are willing to face whatever comes against them, so they can reach people who want to hear about You. Multitudes are out there waiting for their chance. But, it means I must suffer to help them. That is what You were talking about, when You told me to take up my cross and follow You.

What A Chicken!

Have you got to the place of even feeling mildly good about this aspect of Jesus' ministry in and through your life? Rejoicing and being glad is a condition that may be a long way off. What is going to happen to you in all this Gospel studying that is going to bring excitement about you suffering? You probably hate sore muscles when you do something hard like sweeping out the garage. You may even get depressed, when someone doesn't say hi to you, as you walk down the street. What is going to make you ecstatic, when people start persecuting you? Peter struggled with this issue. But, later he seemed to have overcome it.

Peter With Jesus' Training

Mat 26:69-74 (NIV) Now Peter was sitting out in the courtyard, and a servant girl came to him. "You also were with Jesus of Galilee," she said. But he denied it before them all. "I don't know what you're talking about," he said. Then he went out to the gateway, where another girl saw him and said to the people there, "This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth." He denied it again, with an oath: "I don't know the man!" After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter and said, "Surely you are one of them, for your accent gives you away." Then he began to call down curses on himself and he swore to them, "I don't know the man!" Immediately a rooster crowed.

Ever heard a rooster crow during your ministry? A lot of ministers have.

Peter With Jesus' Training And The Holy Spirit's Power

Acts 4:16-20 (NIV) “What are we going to do with these men?” they asked. “Everybody living in Jerusalem knows they have done an outstanding miracle, and we cannot deny it. But to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn these men to speak no longer to anyone in this name.” Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John replied, “Judge for yourself whether it is right in God’s sight to obey you rather than God. For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.”

Yep, Peter does seem to have gained a little backbone in his ministry. Many attribute it to Peter receiving the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. And, no doubt that had a lot to do with it. However, a lot of people had the same thing happen to them at Pentecost and they didn’t take on the high priest, the captain of the temple guard, and the Sadducees. Too many people fail to give Jesus the credit He deserves in all of this. The Corinthian church had the Holy Spirit moving in their life and they didn’t look like Jesus’ disciples after Pentecost. You aren’t going to face persecution head-on unless you let Jesus train and prepare you for the Holy Spirit’s power.

Jesus, help me understand that the Holy Spirit also honors my God-give free will. He won’t do anything that I don’t let Him do. But, if I let Him, He will control my life and ministry every moment on every issue I yield to Him. He is God; and He lives by the same permission-based relationship that You do. Help me see that it wasn’t until You prepared Peter to yield to You that he knew how to yield to the Holy Spirit.

Let Me Help You With That

Here are the works that Jesus did in Peter’s life just in the area of fearing persecution so much that he would deny his Lord:

Mat 26:31 (NIV) Then Jesus told them, “This very night you will all fall away on account of Me, for it is written: ‘I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’ But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee.” Peter replied, “Even if all fall away on account of You, I never will.” “I tell you the truth,” Jesus answered, “this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times.” But Peter declared, “Even if I have to die with You, I will never disown You.” And all the other disciples said the same.

Peter thought determination would get him through this issue. He couldn’t imagine, in his wildest dream, him denying Jesus. Declarations and promises you make to God are always based on you. You don’t have the power to fulfill that promise to God.

Jesus, in a situation like You telling the disciples that they are going to run, I may not like what I hear; but, what You say is always the way it is. Show me that I can ask You to change me and the situation. However, if You say “no,” I might as well get ready to experience what You say is going to happen. If I need to change, help me do what it takes to change.

Jesus Gives Peter A Powerful Solution

Mat 26:36-41 (NIV) Then Jesus went with His disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and He said to them, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with Him, and He began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then He said to them, “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with Me.”

Going a little farther, He fell with His face to the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from Me. Yet not as I will, but as You will.” Then He returned to His disciples and found them sleeping. “Could you men not keep watch with Me for one hour” He asked Peter. “Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.”

At this point, Jesus made sure Peter got a chance to see how He dealt with impending **persecution**. Jesus prepared by spending time with the Father. He laid out His request before Him. Then He submitted His own will to the Father. Peter was close enough to see and hear all of this. Jesus even made sure Peter was given the principles for preparing for **persecution**. They are “**watch and pray**.” Jesus also told Peter why it took more than determination. “**The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.**”

Jesus, teach me the two parts to the word “watch.” Teach me that the first part is to examine myself to see if there are any openings in my life where weakness to **persecution** will let it through. Teach me that the second part is watching for the event or source that the **persecution** is coming from. Help me see that I will never be ready for the external aspects of a **persecution**, if I am not prepared for the internal issues. Then You introduced the concept of prayer. Peter opted for sleep instead. Help me be ready for **persecution** Your way.

Equipped But Not Protected

Peter moved forward toward **persecution**, with Jesus’ very descriptive warning still ringing in his ears. It helped Peter be aware when he failed. Without the warning it would have been possible for Peter to deny knowing Jesus and not really notice. Sometimes you fail and you aren’t even aware of that failure.

Jesus, teach me that, after so many years of living life a certain way, I get used to my lifestyle. I don’t stand up for You, sometimes, and I don’t think anything about it. You helped Peter see how important it was for him to be ready for **persecution**. And, You gave him enough information, so he could see the failure when it happened. I typically gravitate toward the path of least resistance. Help me see that something has to shake me up enough to get me feeling the need for a life change.

Chapter Thirty

Spiritual Component Eight Part Three

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

I Thought I Just Had To Believe In Myself

Jesus warned Peter and Peter indicated that Jesus didn't know him as well as Peter knew himself. Jesus warned Peter again giving greater details of how he was going to fail. But, Peter stuck with self-esteem and self-confidence. Then, in the garden, Jesus gave Peter the tools for dealing with **persecution**; but, Peter slept through his preparation time. Now, Peter faces **persecution** and he isn't ready.

Mat 26:73-75 (NIV) After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter and said, "Surely you are one of them, for your accent gives you away." Then he began to call down curses on himself and he swore to them, "I don't know the man!" Immediately a rooster crowed. Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken: "Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times." And he went outside and wept bitterly.

Jesus, when I fail, help me go out and weep bitterly, but, the right way. Teach me that Peter's kind of weeping wasn't with spiritual understanding. He was very disappointed in himself. He probably hated himself. He didn't see this mistake as being one isolated event. This failure seemed to be all inclusive. Because of that belief, he probably thought he was no longer worthy to be one of Your disciples. Help me realize that this weeping is based on condemnation that Satan uses to try to convince me I am no longer a candidate for salvation.

Persecution is a powerful weapon against you. Even if it only involves a fear of losing a friend or relative. It can keep you from saying anything spiritual. It can keep you from sharing Jesus with those around you. You must **watch and pray**.

Jesus, help me come to the end of myself. Even when I feel like I would have to be heartless, to treat You a way You are indicating I will, help me believe You. Help me see how insulting it was for Peter to be diagnosed with unfaithfulness. Show me how I would react in situations like that. If I get into any situation where my esteem and confidence are being questioned, help me not try to protect them with human determination, commitment, or dedication.

You Failed To Fail Completely

Jesus has been buried now and some ladies decided to prepare His body with burial spices. But, when they got to the tomb, here is what they saw: **Mark 16:5-7 (NIV)** **As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed. “Don’t be alarmed,” he said. “You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, Who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell His disciples and Peter, ‘He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see Him, just as He told you.’”**

The angel had special orders. He was instructed to include Peter’s name in the invitation. Why? If the angel had just said: “go, tell His disciples”; Peter probably would not have shown up. Peter more than likely didn’t think he was a disciple anymore. Jesus was making sure Peter knew he was invited, *as a disciple*.

Jesus, lock this principle in my relationship with You, and, in my friends. Help me see that Peter didn’t *want* to deny You. He just hadn’t learned how to live on the basis of Your power. He hadn’t learned how to ask You to empower him. He hadn’t learned how to remove his faith from himself. Help me see that I have a lot to learn. Therefore, when I make mistakes, help me not make any assumptions. Help me go to You and let You tell me what to do.

Basing Your Life On Your Own Evaluation

Peter decided to pick up his old trade. He was a failure, as a minister of Jesus, he thinks. He concluded that the only thing he was good at was fishing. But, not only did Peter go fishing, he dragged his old fishing buddies back into their old trade. Then Jesus showed up.

Jesus, help me learn from the rehabilitation plan You had for Peter, using a love check. Teach me that the question was, had Peter ever stopped loving You? No! Show me that Peter loved You, even at the moment when he was denying You. Even though that is hard to believe, help me see that it was true. It was true Peter loved his own life more than he loved You; but, he loved You a whole lot. Help me see my failures from this perspective.

Jesus’ Love Test

John 21:14-19 (NIV) **This was now the third time Jesus appeared to His disciples after He was raised from the dead. When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you truly love Me more than these?” “Yes, Lord,” he said, “You know that I love You.” Jesus said, “Feed My lambs.” Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you truly love Me?” He answered, “Yes, Lord, You know that I love You.” Jesus said, “Take care of My sheep.”**

The third time He said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love Me?” Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love Me ?” He said, “Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.” Jesus said, “Feed My sheep.

I tell you the truth, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go." Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then He said to him, "Follow Me!"

Jesus, when You do a love-test on me, help me see that first, like Peter, You will deal with my trade. Do I love You more than my old source of income? Sure, no problem there. Like Peter, I will be happy to report that I really do love You, when asked the first time. The problem is, even if I feel a confident commitment concerning love, it isn't enough here.

Jesus, if You ask me the second and third time, like You did with Peter, I will get the impression You have doubts about my love. This will hurt me, like it did Peter. It would seem like You are doubting my commitment. But, as usual, You always have a purpose. You are trying to bring me back into a faith in the love of God that was poured into my heart.

Jesus went into a prophecy concerning Peter's future. He was saying that Peter was going to be His disciple and a martyr. Then Jesus said: "Follow Me!" This "follow Me" took on a whole new meaning from the first "follow Me." This time it meant "take up your cross and follow Me." Up to this point, Peter had been afraid of suffering persecution and dying. He had been unable to stand up for his Lord because he was unable to put his body and life on the line. He had denied even knowing Jesus just to keep from being **persecuted**. Jesus spoke power into Peter, so he would be ready to even die for Him in the future.

If That Hadn't Happened, Then This Couldn't Have Happened

No doubt that the Holy Spirit entering into Peter on a Spirit-to-spirit level at Pentecost did some awesome things to Peter's heart. But, there is also no doubt that without Jesus' challenge to Peter prior to that and all Jesus' previous ministry in Peter's life, Peter wouldn't have been much of a factor in Jesus' worldwide Christian movement after Pentecost. Which is more important? Neither!

That is why the Holy Spirit doesn't speak about Himself. That is why the Holy Spirit takes the things that belong to Jesus and shows them to you. That is why you have to ***go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.*** You and your trainees are not going to be bold enough, in love enough, and obedient enough to suffer persecution and death without *all* of this.

Jesus, help me yield to You and the Holy Spirit in a complete way. Help me understand that I won't be ready for **persecution**, if I don't allow You to train me and empower me. You know where my weaknesses are; You know what I need to do to get ready; You know when I am starting to believe in myself rather than You. Help me listen to Your diagnosis and turn to You for the help I need. Help me **watch and pray so that I will not fall into temptation.** Help me always keep in mind that **the spirit is willing, but the body is weak.**

Chapter Thirty-One

You Lack The Right Ingredients

You have finished the “Beatitudes,” which are God’s Eight Power-Attitudes. Now Jesus is going to break them down into more understandable parts, as He continues His sermon on the mountain. He is going to approach these issues from numerous different angles. But, keep in mind that every one of them will have to do with these eight power-attitudes of God. He is showing you what they look like in real life.

Mat 5:13 (NIV) You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. Salt is an influencer; it dissolves in liquids and makes them salty. It adheres to outside of meats and keeps them from spoiling. If given a chance, it will expend itself and become a part of whatever it is exposed to. That is you, as a World Changer.

Rom 12:2 (NIV) Do not conform *any longer* to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is--His good, pleasing and perfect will. Jesus, help me always be aware that I am to be the influencer. Except as it relates to You and Your Word, I am not to be influenced; or, I will lose my **saltiness**.

You Are The Salt Of The Earth

It is all about character, commitment, relationship, and influence. Salt has a purpose in the typical household. In order to fulfill that purpose the salt has to have the right character, commitment, relationship, and influence.

1. Character: What is the salt made out of? Is its chemical-makeup correct, so as to truly be salt?
2. Commitment: Will the salt stay salty until it is needed?
3. Relationship: Will the salt go into the soup and lose itself and make the soup be salty? Or, will it refuse to melt and be like sand in the soup?
4. Influence: Will the salt influence the soup with saltiness or will the soup so dilute the salt that it loses its saltiness?

Jesus, teach me that, as spiritual salt, I have a specific purpose in the Kingdom of God. God has me around, so I can fulfill His purposes in the people I am to minister to. I am Your salt; and, I must have character, commitment, relationship, and influence. Help me be a World Changer type salt that influences people with all You have to offer.

You Are Quite A Character

Your Spiritual, Chemical Composition

- **Character:** Poor in spirit, mourner, meek, hungering and thirsting for righteousness,
- **Commitment:** Merciful, pure in heart, peacemaker, ready for persecution.
- **Relationship:** Love the Lord your *God* with all your *heart* and with all your *soul* and with all your *mind* and with all your *strength*. The second is this: Love your *neighbor* as yourself.
- **Influence:** Therefore, go and *make disciples* of all nations, *baptizing* them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and *teaching* them to obey everything I have commanded you.

Most people know what the chemical composition of salt is. Sodium-chloride, right? How many know what components create spiritual salt? It is composed of God's power-attitudes, in Matthew 5:3-2, the golden rules in Mark 12:30-31, and the Great Commission, in Matthew 28:19-20. If you can believe your chemistry professor, you don't want to salt your soup with sodium or chloride by themselves. If poured into your soup, one will blow your face off and the other will poison you. But, once they are properly bonded together, they become taste enhancers and facilitate proper functioning of your body's system.

Jesus, help me understand that spiritual salt has to be properly bonded together. None of these characteristics are optional. The Holy Spirit must bond them together in correct proportions. Then once they are working in unity, I am ready to start salting soup. But, help me not start salting people's soup prior to that unity. Show me that many have had their ministry blow up and others have been poisoned by it.

Jesus, I know I am not going to be perfect in any of these areas while on earth. So, help me have an even and steady growth taking place throughout all the days of my life. As I go through each day, help me be continually yielding to the Holy Spirit in all these areas at all times. If I mess up and hurt someone, empower me to go to them and straighten it out.

Here's What I Think

You will start out saying the wrong things, feeling the wrong things, thinking the wrong things, and doing the wrong things. Just look at the disciples. They didn't seem to be able to say anything right in the beginnings. They had to be corrected and exhorted almost every time they opened their mouths. It wasn't until much later in their training that Peter finally came up with the fact that Jesus was the Son of the living God. But that didn't last long. Right after that he was being rebuked for resisting Jesus' going to the cross. That error didn't go well for him. What was keeping the disciples from saying the right things? And, what did cause Peter to come up with the right answer?

Mat 16:17 (NIV) Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by My Father in heaven.

This was not revealed to you by man: Jesus, help me understand the importance of this statement from Jesus. This is what You were wanting to start coming out of the mouths of Your disciples. It wasn't something from the human brain that helped Peter get this one right. As long as he kept thinking it through, Peter was going to keep on thinking, feeling, saying, and doing the wrong things.

But by My Father in heaven: Jesus, help me see that this came to Peter by means of the Father. Peter consulted Him and got the right answer. Help me let Your Holy Spirit give me the right answers by me including Your name in the questions I think in my mind. Help me think: “Jesus, what should I do in this situation?” Help me not just think: “What should I do in this situation?” Help me believe this will make a big difference in the results.

Are You Ready For Teaching, Rebuking, Correcting And Training In Righteousness?

2 Tim 3:16-17 (NIV) All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. As you open up these Beatitude issues, the Holy Spirit will start pointing out a lot of errors in your daily life. You just have to trust God that He will get you to a point where this magnitude of correction isn't needed quite so much. It seems like it. But, He isn't trying to perfect your behavior. He is trying to teach you how to listen to the Father and yield to Him as your thought source.

Jesus, help me look to the first four of God's Eight Power-Attitudes for getting me ready for being able to stand **teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness**. You will be saying things that go against many of my beliefs, principles, and personal desires. Help me understand that most of what I think is right and most of what the world taught me, You will be speaking against. Get me ready by empowering my mind and heart with these first four power-attitudes.

Jesus, open my heart and mind in a complete and total way to Your truths. No matter how much I disagree with what You are saying, no matter how much I don't feel like what You are saying is fair, no matter how much I think Your principles won't work in the real world, help me yield to these four power-attitudes of God, so I can completely embrace Your teaching.

Mat 5:3 (NIV) Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Mat 5:4 (NIV) Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Mat 5:5 (NIV) Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Mat 5:6 (NIV) Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Chapter Thirty-Two

Getting Ready For Major Change

2 Tim 3:16-17 (NIV) All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

You think wrong things, say wrong things, feel wrong things, and do wrong things. All of this failure represents aspects of your character. The Holy Spirit is trying to get you to connect to the power source that changes all this. Once you become spiritual salt, you have the ability to “be” on the inside and influence others on the outside. It is all credited to your record with God; but, you and the people around you aren’t experiencing it in your behavior. So, how do you start experiencing it in your behavior, so you can **be the salt of the world?**

Jesus, give me Scriptures that will tell me what to do. Where do I start in getting the beatitudes to influence my life? How do I yield my life to the beginning and continuing elements of these components? As You have already taught me, it isn’t by me trying harder. Nor does it come by me making up my mind that this is the way I am going to live. Help me see that it is going to come through You giving me Scriptures for me to ask for.

Making Salt Salty

2 Cor 10:5 (KJV) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

Casting down imaginations: Jesus, empower me to do this. When I imagine things that aren’t Biblical, help me cast it out of my mind. Help me do that by forcing a spiritual counterpart in its place. Give me a thought that is spiritually opposed to the thought Satan was pushing on me. Give me a Scripture that empowers me to believe against that evil **imagination.**

Casting down...every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God: Jesus, help me recognize **every high thing** that comes into my mind that is exalting **itself against the knowledge of God.** Help me examine every thought I have to see if it is in agreement with the Bible. And, if it isn’t, help me use the Scripture that it is opposing. Help me put my entire faith in that Scripture, so I can destroy that antibiblical thought.

And bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ: Jesus, show me that You have given me the power, through the Holy Spirit, to make my mind conform in **obedience** to Your thoughts. Help me realize it, just as soon as a rebellious, doubting, fearing, or opposing thought comes into my mind. Help me catch it faster and faster. Give me the goal of asking You to empower me to respond instantly, when a thought isn’t from You.

Salt Thoughts

Phil 4:8 (NIV) Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things. Jesus, teach me that these are the thought-types that I am to use to cast **down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God.** If a thought doesn't conform to this list, then I am to use the power You have given me to cast it down by thinking a thought that does conform to Philippians 4:8.

Salt Emotions

Gal 5:22-23 (NIV) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Jesus, help me realize that my thoughts influence my emotions. If I start feeling emotions that aren't conforming to this list, then I am to cast **down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God** that are causing the emotional problem.

Jesus, let the Galatians 5:22-23 list be my warning letting me know when I am allowing antibiblical thoughts to be entertained. When I feel a feeling that isn't in this list, help me immediately check my thoughts. Help me understand that, if my emotions aren't filled with the fruit of the Spirit, then my saltiness will cease to cause people to want what I have.

Poor In Spirit, Mourning, Meek, And Hunger And Thirst For Righteousness

1 Cor 1:25 (NIV) For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength. It doesn't help for you to belittle or punish yourself for not living the Jesus life. No amount of guilt or pain is going to move you into the things of God. Only you asking for the four power-attitudes of God to be yielded to, will you win. Jesus has heard your prayer for these four power-attitudes. Now it is time for you to take advantage of them.

Condemnation

Rom 8:1 (NIV) Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Jesus, when I feel a guilt that seems to be taking away my right to repent and get forgiveness, help me realize that it is Satan. Help me start thinking about the fact that I have to want to be separated from You. Help me **cast down that imagination.** Your wisdom and power have kept me in You.

Repentance And Humility Keep You Salty

1 Pet 5:6 (NIV) Humble yourself, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Jesus, teach me about humility and repentance through Your parable about the tax collector, who came to You with a humble attitude.

Use This As Your Warning System

Luke 18:9-14 (NIV) To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men--robbers, evildoers, adulterers--or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’

But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’ I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home *justified* before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

Jesus, how can humbling myself before God get Your power-attitudes functioning in my life? Teach me that being **poor in spirit** is the state of being humble. Show me that when I come before You like this tax collector, that is a manifestation of it. If I start sounding like the Pharisee, let that be my warning that I am not being **poor in spirit**.

Being Salty Means Great Miracles

When God does something awesome in and through your life, you can get to thinking that it means you are someone special. Then Jesus has to humble you, and you have to start all over again. But, if you use this parable to show you when you are in pride, you can humble yourself before God and stay in being **poor in spirit**.

Jesus, just as soon as the Father revealed to Peter that You are the Son of the living God, he felt qualified to decide whether or not You should go to the cross. From there You had to lead him back to humility. And, no one can humble Peter and I better than You can. Teach me that spiritual salt isn't spiritual salt, if it doesn't have every component of God's Eight Power-Attitudes bonded together in appropriate amounts. Show me that this can only happen when I don't make a move without consulting You first.

How Do You Humble Yourself?

John 16:8 (NIV) When He (the Holy Spirit) comes, He will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: When the Holy Spirit speaks to your conscience, since He is God, He speaks to it with creative power. When you weren't born again, He just warned you. But now that you are a child of God, when He warns you, He also empowers you to do the right thing.

Jesus, help me believe that the Holy Spirit, speaking to my conscience, is giving me power to do the right thing. If I feel rebellion, a lack of desire, or a desire to go against Him, help me remember that I have the power to humble myself before Him and obey. Help me not see rebellion, a lack of desire, or a desire to go against Him, as being more powerful than the power He is giving me. Help me live by faith and **cast down** those bad attitudes.

Chapter Thirty-Three

I Can See The Truth!

Mat 5:14-16 (NIV) You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see *your good deeds* and praise your Father in heaven.

Jesus has talked to you a lot about light shining through glass. Now let Him teach you about *being* the light. You are responsible for helping people see the truth about God. Having darkness requires no power. Dispelling darkness does take power. The world is in darkness and desperately needs light, so they can see what is going on. Only Jesus has enough power to dispel the darkness in the human heart.

Jesus, help me continue to be the clear, transparent globe You shine through. Help me see that You are that light, that power that lights up and shines through my life. You are the reason people see my *good deeds* and praise my Father in heaven.

Light Hidden In A Church Building

Luke 11:33-36 (NIV) No one lights a lamp and puts it in a place where it will be hidden, or under a bowl. Instead, he puts it on its stand, so that those who come in may see the light.

Every Christian is called to get involved in their community, city, or town. The only way they are going to see *your good deeds* and praise your Father in heaven is for you to take your light out of the church building and set it up in a prominent place where everyone can see it. If a congregation doesn't have pretty much one-hundred percent participation in some kind of weekly exposure to their community, then their light is **under a bowl**.

Jesus, help me realize that people seeing my *good deeds* isn't me being a friendly, nice person. Show me that I have to do *good deeds* and then let them know they were made possible through You. I must be actively involved with the lost sheep rather than spending all my time with the ninety-nine that are already in the church. Help me train the new and untrained Christians by taking them with me. Then on special times, help me teach them the things that are in this sermon on the mount.

Types Of Spiritual Receptivity

Control What You Look At

Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eyes are good, your whole body also is full of light. But when they are bad, your body also is full of darkness. See to it, then, that the light within you is not darkness. Therefore, if your whole body is full of light, and no part of it dark, it will be completely lighted, as when the light of a lamp shines on you."

Spiritual And Physical Receptors

Your eye is the lamp of your body: Your human eyes are the source for getting physical light into your body. Your spiritual eyes are for getting spiritual light into your spirit person. Jesus is trying to teach you how to see in the spirit realm. As your spiritual eyes and ears work together, He is expecting you to comprehend what you are being exposed to.

Jesus, help me understand that I can be blind and deaf, in the spirit realm, if I don't allow You to heal me. Make it clear to me that this is all about me being a child of God, who is learning how to function in my world. Help me use the natural world to learn how the spirit realm works. But, help me understand that the natural realm is just to be a tool for training me. Help me not get distracted by the tool and miss the point of what it is trying to explain to me.

Spiritual Receptors Affect The Physical

When your eyes are good, your whole body also is full of light: What would be some things that would make your eyes good? Eyes that are able to see God's light, must be healthy eyes, eyes not obstructed by other things, and eyes looking in the right direction.

Jesus, help me understand that the light of God goes into me through my spiritual eyes. Just like my physical eyes are the light source for my body. Show me that my spiritual eyes are the light source for my spirit. If my spiritual eyes are going to receive the light of God, help me realize I must have healthy eyes, eyes not obstructed by other things, and eyes that are looking in the right direction. Show me what the Bible has to say about each of these conditions.

Healthy Eyes

Prayer Enlightens Your Heart's Eyes

Eph 1:18 (NIV) I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints.

Jesus, help me pray Ephesians 1:17-21 for myself and others on a regular basis. I need the light of God shining in me. Teach me that just like there are a lot of types of light in the world, so is there in the spirit realm. Some light, such as lamps, help me see the things around me. And some lights, such as a television screen, can be looked directly at. Help me understand that God's light does both. People can look *into* my life, and can *see* the difference You make. When I read my Bible, **Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path (Psa 119:105 NIV).**

Healed Eyes

Rev 3:18 (NIV) I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.

Jesus, teach me that when my Father draws a person to You, a special power heals their eyes, so they can *start* to see Your truths. As I minister to them, they comprehend what I am saying. Show me that the Father, the Holy Spirit, and I work together to bring them to You. Teach me that this is done on a one-on-one basis; and, that spreads Your message out to all the world helping multitudes to *see* for the first time.

Opening Multitudes Of Eyes

Acts 26:14-17 (NIV) We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’ Then I asked, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ ‘I am Jesus, Whom you are persecuting,’ the Lord replied. ‘Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of Me and what I will show you. I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’

Jesus, help me keep in mind that I was able to see the light of truth, allowed it to enter me, and then can let it shine out of me to others. This is not growth by addition, growth by multiplication, it is exponential growth. Show me that it is like lighting candles. In a large auditorium, one person with a lit candle can light the candles around them. Then those people can light those around them. Before long, everyone in a huge auditorium has a lit candle. Help me see that a short time before, only one had a lit candle. That is what You did and are now having us do now. Help me get involved in exponential growth around the world.

Eyes Looking In The Right Direction

2 Cor 4:18 (NIV) So, we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. Spiritual eyes see what human eyes can’t see. If your spiritual eyes are looking the same place that your natural eyes are looking, you are going to suffer in your spiritual life and ministry. Only through the Holy Spirit are you going to look in the right direction. Your physical eyes can’t see into the spirit realm. Jesus is trying to help your spiritual eyes be healthy, able to recognize spiritual things, and then focus in on them.

Phil 4:8 (NIV) Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things.

Jesus, help me understand that You have given me the power to live by Philippians 4:8. Show me that, if I am thinking on those things, that is where my spiritual eyes will be. When You said, “**think about such things,**” You spoke the power for me to focus in on those things. But, I still have to right to resist that power. Make it clear to me that my thought-life controls my physical *and* spiritual eyes. And, it influences the Galatians 5:22-23 fruit of the Spirit emotions of my heart. Help me take advantage of Your power in my thought-life.

Chapter Thirty-Four

Healthy And Unhealthy Eyes

There are three major causes of people having unhealthy eyes who cannot see Jesus' light.

1. Satan Blinding A Person's Eyes (Mind)

2 Cor 4:4 (NIV) The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. Jesus, help me be aware that this is the most common condition I will run into. Satan is blinding their eyes, trying to keep them from coming to You. Teach me that this condition can only be cured by the Father drawing a person. **John 6:44 (NIV)** No one can come to Me unless the Father, Who sent Me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day.

If you share the gospel to such a person, it won't speak to their heart; it won't mean anything to them. It isn't until the Father opens the eyes of their heart, that they become receptive to the gospel message. In the parable of the Sower and the Seed, Jesus illustrates this condition.

2. People The Father Hasn't Drawn

The Illustration

Mat 13:4 (NIV) As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up.

The Explanation

Mat 13:19 (NIV) When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path.

Jesus, teach me that in the Three Keys To All Of Christianity found in Matthew 7:7-11, the knock key keeps me from spending a lot of time with people the Father hasn't drawn. It opens doors of opportunity for me to share the gospel to those whose hearts are prepared. However, if You have made me an Evangelist, the Great Commission requires me to present the gospel to everyone. Even those who hear it, don't reject it, but don't understand it.

3. People Blinding Their Own Eyes

Mat 13:15 (NIV) For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise, they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.

This is a condition that is self-inflicted. A person, once drawn by the Father, has to decide whether they are going to see and respond to His marvelous light. You can expose them to all the wonderful things of God. You can answer any questions they have. But, they will ultimately make the final decision.

This condition starts out as an obstruction, which Jesus will teach you later. It starts out as an eye disease, which didn't happen by their own will. However, if they continue to respond to the things of God in this manner, it will turn into a permanent condition based on their will. That permanent condition is what you are looking at right now.

Jesus, show me that these people have *seen* much of the things of God and have rejected You over and over again. Now their heart has become hardened and they no longer *want to* open their eyes. Help me understand that I can tell, as I work with them, that they know a lot about what I am talking about. However, they also know a lot about the objections that the lost use to challenge whether or not Christianity is real. The lost use these challenges because Satan has lied to them. These people use these objections because they no longer want to know.

How To Become Totally Blind

Heb 6:4-6 (NIV) It is *impossible* for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age, *if they fall away*, to be brought back to repentance, *because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting Him to public disgrace*.

Jesus, this list makes it clear what the spiritual steps are for becoming **enlightened**. And, it makes it clear what it takes to make it **impossible...to be brought back to repentance**. Help me keep in mind that these people know what they are doing; they are making a willful, knowledgeable decision. They have seen, tasted, and shared the things of God. Show me that the average sinner, who hasn't been drawn by the Father, is in a totally different condition.

God-Ordained Blindness

1 Cor 2:14 (NIV) The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because **they are spiritually discerned**. If a person were to understand the gospel message before they were spiritually ready for that responsibility, that wouldn't be fair. If a baby was able to know right from wrong before they were mature enough to be responsible for such decisions, is wouldn't be fair. So, God controls all of those things and makes the right and just decision.

Jesus, teach me about people not drawn by my Father. Help me realize that they are making decisions based on lies of Satan. They think they understand what life is all about, but don't. To them, Christianity is nothing but a bunch of fake rituals and meaningless information. When I talk to them, they don't understand a thing I am saying. The decisions they are making aren't based on any rejection of the truth. They are still innocent of the law.

Jesus, also teach me about this “**once been enlightened**” person. Help me see that they are making decisions based on *more than adequate* information. When they reject You and Your things, they do so while knowing *fully* what they are rejecting. Their eyes, which once saw it all, are now becoming totally diseased. They saw, they made a knowledgeable decision, and lost their ability to see anymore.

The Decision Has Been Made

Rev 1:7 (NIV) Look, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced Him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of Him. So shall it be! Amen.

Jesus, this is a scary moment for everyone involved. I want to be ready and I want others to be ready, when You come. Sometimes I just want to shake them and make them face reality. I would like to keep working with them, until they make the right decision. However, make it clear to me that I have a bigger problem I must consider.

Keep Looking For Healthy Eyes

Mat 9:37 (NIV) Then He said to His disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.”

John 9:4 (NIV) As long as it is day, you must do the work of Him Who sent Me. Night is coming, when no one can work.

Jesus, keep me moving forward. Everyone must get a chance to make a decision concerning the light. Show me that, if I give an inordinate amount of time to a few and neglect the rest, I am failing at the Great Commission. Saving them isn’t my job. Giving them the gospel message is. But, help me also accept the responsibility of making sure they remain. **John 15:16 (NIV) You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit--fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in My name.**

1 Cor 3:7 (NIV) So, neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. Jesus, help me keep in mind that my faith must be in You. Help me be at the right place, at the right time, doing and saying the right things, to the right people. Help me understand that by using the knock key and asking You for open doors of opportunity to share my breakthroughs with other, I will be working with the right people.

Chapter Thirty-Five

Who Should You Work With?

God Blinded Their Eyes

John 12:39-43 (NIV) For this reason they could not believe, because, as Isaiah says elsewhere: **“He has blinded their eyes and deadened their hearts, so they can neither see with their eyes, nor understand with their hearts, nor turn--and I would heal them.”**

Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus’ glory and spoke about Him. Yet at the same time many even among the leaders believed in Him. But because of the Pharisees they would not confess their faith for fear they would be put out of the synagogue; **for they loved praise from men more than praise from God.**

Rom 11:8 (NIV) As it is written: **“God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes so that they could not see and ears so that they could not hear, to this very day.”** And David says: **“May their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution for them. May their eyes be darkened so they cannot see, and their backs be bent forever.”**

Jesus, teach me that, once God decides a person has had enough time to make a decision, He can close the door on their opportunities. I know there are some very “religious” people who look a lot like Christians but do not belong to You. Show me that it would be easy for me to try to involve them in Your work. Help me realize they often know a lot about the Bible and You. Some know how to talk the talk. But, if I look into their life, they don’t walk the walk.

Jesus, I have noticed that the word “spiritual” is taking on a unique meaning among these people. They tell me that they aren’t Christians. But, they say they are a very spiritual person. Help me be able to see, if they have made a final decision against You or have just been lied to by Satan. Help me only spend time with those who can be helped.

Eyes With An Evil Focus

1 Tim 4:1-2 (NIV) The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, **whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron.** These are very dangerous people. Because of their seared conscience, they can kill you or do damage to you without even feeling a twinge of guilt. They *are* psychopaths.

Mat 7:6 (NIV) Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, **and then turn and tear you to pieces.** Jesus, help me heed this serious warning. I *will* run into people who are totally devoted to the devil. Teach me the entirely different way You treated these people. Show me that there *is* a message for them. But, teach me that it is a message of warning and judgment. Make it clear to me that they will ask me great spiritual questions. But, their motive is to trap me, not to learn. Help me let the Holy Spirit empower me to identify them and avoid them.

Eyes Not Obstructed

Mat 13:15-16 (NIV) For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise, they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them. But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear.

Jesus, teach me that there is a special attitude in those who are ready to see Your things. They really want to know about You and Your ways. They are teachable, they ask sincere questions, they apply themselves, and they have some level of understanding of what I am saying. Show me that these are the people You spent Your time with.

Jesus, teach me how You found out what kind of a person You were dealing with. Show me that, like the rich young ruler, You would throw out a test to see where they were. If they failed the test, You moved on. If they, like Zacchaeus, passed the test, You took the next step toward salvation for them.

As you work with people, the big question you must always ask is: "Do they have eyes that can see and ears that can hear?"

A Progressive Look

Eyes Obstructed By The Will

Mat 13:15-16 (NIV) For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.' But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear.

Here, their eye lids are obstructing their ability to see. The eye lids represent their will. They obstructed their own view, but, not with something of the world. They just don't want to see the things of God the way God wants them seen. They have made God be the way they want Him to be. And, they don't want to find out that God isn't the way they have changed Him.

Jesus, help me see that this can happen to me. I can start out with the basics of Christianity and then add my own concepts to it. For the most part, it is Christianity. It just has a few personal twists to it. When I read my Bibles or hear a sermon that disagrees with what I have decided to believe, I reject it. Protect me from this deadly procedure.

Rom 10:2-3 (NIV) For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. As you saw when you studied Matthew 13:15-16 above, this can turn into a permanent eye disease that creates total spiritual blindness. The only preventative that can keep this from happening is a sincere heart. The test of a sincere heart is whether or not you are willing to see if you are wrong. The insincere heart will not check to see. That is having your eyes closed.

Jesus, since I have a sincere heart, I don't want to believe false doctrine. But, I can believe I will be protected by trusting what the mainstream denominations believes. And, that can help protect me to some degree. But, show me what happens, if a denomination gradually changes over a long period of time. It was originally on track biblically and then gradually made minor changes here and there over the years. Show me that I may not notice my eyes are gradually closing to vital issues of God's Word. Help me see that personally studying the Bible, with the Holy Spirit, is the only way my sincere heart can be totally protected.

Eyes Obstructed By Spiritual Pride

Mat 7:3 (NIV) Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? Those with specks and those with planks both have obstructions. Obstructions keep you from being able to see clearly. Partial obstructions (specks) keep you from seeing all that God wants to show you. Complete obstructions (planks) stop you from going any further in the things of God. You are blocked off from God's light. And, you can't help anyone else to see God's light.

Mat 7:4-5 (NIV) How can you say to your brother, "Let me take the speck out of your eye," when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. You *always* have the plank, as far as you are concerned. Jesus wants you to see yourself as having the plank, and the person you are trying to help, as having the speck.

Jesus, teach me that a critical attitude is always a plank. But, help me also see that wanting to help someone always starts me out with a plank. When I see a problem in someone else, that problem I see in them must be considered by me to always be a speck. Teach me that I must never start, in my relationship with others, as if I am in a superior spiritual condition. Just before I go straighten someone else out, help me first get the plank out of my own eye.

Jesus, teach me that the plank is the pride I feel, when I see someone with a problem. I automatically feel superior to them. I always assume I already have that problem solved in me. I assume they need someone like me with special spiritual skills and accomplishments to help them with their problem. Help me realize that I am in pretty bad spiritual condition myself. The *only* reason I feel so spiritually accomplished is that You haven't revealed all my problems to me yet. So, help me first get the plank of pride out of my own eye, so I **will see clearly to remove the speck from my brother's eye.**

Chapter Thirty-Six

Eyes That Can See Into The Spirit Realm

Seeing Deep Things Of God

1 Cor 2:9-10 (NIV) However, as it is written: “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him”-- but God has revealed it to us by His Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.

It would boggle your mind, if you could see all that God has prepared for you. More importantly, it would revolutionize your life. Even though it is going to be wonderful to see these things after you leave this planet, it is more important for you to see as many of them as is possible now.

But God has revealed it to us by His Spirit: Jesus, let Your Holy Spirit reveal as many things that You have prepared for me as is possible. Let them help me be motivated to press on to Your highest goals. Help me be so motivated by these things that they keep me from being distracted by the cares of this world. Let them help me yield to Your goals for my life.

Trusted With God's Mysteries

2 Cor 12:2-4 (NIV) I (Paul) know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know--God knows. And I know that this man--whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows-- was caught up to paradise. He heard inexpressible things, things that man is not permitted to tell.

Do you think an experience like that would affect your Christian efforts and ministry? Yes, it would! The reason the Holy Spirit is revealing so much to you right now, is so you can let them inspire you and others to be willing to put all you have into the effort.

John 8:32 (NIV) Then you will *know* the truth, and the truth will set you free.” Jesus, help me be included in the wonderful plans you have for me. Take me to the place where the truths of the Bible, that You revealed to Paul, are clear to me. Help me mature, so I can comprehend Your great truths that will set me and my friends free. Show me that I suffer in all those areas where I don't **know** Your truths yet.

Included In The Plans

John 15:15 (NIV) I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. Servants aren't allowed to get in on the big picture. They are told what to do. But, they don't know why until the project is complete. Jesus is letting you see the finished product in advance. True it is only a glimpse. It is, however, enough to get you excited about His work. You just have to ask Him to help you keep your eyes fixed on the Kingdom of God (the spirit realm).

*The worldwide Christian movement
loses its momentum, when we lose our spiritual perspective.*

Jesus, I can get to thinking that this world is a wonderful place to live. I can put down roots and set up shop. I can start seeing death as being the end of fun, excitement, pleasure, and happiness. Or, at least something less than what I have now. I can think I am going to be sitting on a cloud, playing a harp and being bored.

Jesus, I can look at the disease, wars, suffering, hunger, and death and figure that at least heaven won't have those things in it. Help me see how sad it is concerning how little I know about the awesome aspects of eternity. Show me that heaven isn't just good because it has the absence of bad things. You, Who invented this life, are the Creator of something far better. As I look at this earth, You created, I start thinking that it looked like this, when You created it. I forget that sin and the fall of man had a horrible effect on it.

See Beyond The Frustrated Creation

Rom 8:19-23 (NIV) The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For **the creation was subjected to frustration**, not by its own choice, but by the will of the One Who subjected it, *in hope* that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay **and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God**. You know that **the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth** right up to the present time. Not only so, but you yourself, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as you wait eagerly for your adoption as sons, **the redemption of your bodies**.

The fall of mankind affected the whole creation. God made an awesome planet with incredible fun, happiness, joy, and pleasure which got corrupted by sin. He hasn't changed. That is still His plan. Sin just postponed the greatness of your life. **You yourself, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as you wait eagerly for your adoption as sons, the redemption of your bodies.** This attitude comes from eyes that can see what the Holy Spirit is showing all who have their eyes fixed on the unseen. This attitude will affect your enthusiasm as you present the Gospel to the unsaved.

Jesus, help me understand that, if my eyes are focused on my future, then my present gets shaped by it. Help me see that I have future goals that must be motivating me to do now what will take me to that goal. Let my goals be shaped by You, so my current activities are bringing about the fulfillment of my eternal goals. Bring my goals under Your control.

Eyes Fixed On Jesus

Heb 12:2 (NIV) Let us **fix our eyes on Jesus, the Author and Perfector of our faith**, Who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. It was a dynamic goal; it was worth the sacrifice and pain; it totally motivated Jesus' decisions; and, He reached it with great power and success.

Jesus, I can see that the place You prepared for me must be really awesome or You wouldn't have paid such a price for it. I thank You for getting me ready for something that cost so much. Help me with my spiritual blindness that keeps me from seeing clearly what all my goals should be. Transform my eyes, so I can see and be inspired to total commitment.

Distraction Causes You To Sink

Jesus started the provisions of your salvation and He will be the One Who puts the final production together. You need to keep your eyes on Him at all times. If you, like Peter, get your eyes off of Him onto the wind and the waves of life. You will sink. Life's problems look insurmountable when observed through human eyes. When you fix your spiritual eyes on Jesus, nothing looks impossible.

And sat down at the right hand of the throne of God: Jesus, show me that by spending my time, in this study and prayer time, I am fixing my eyes on Your earthly life and ministry. However, help me see that Your life and ministry on this earth isn't all of it. You are now seated at the right hand of the throne of God. As Author, You did Your earthly ministry. As Perfecter, You preside over Your Church. Teach me that the Church, worldwide, makes up the whole of Your Body, past, present, and future.

Start Seeing The Big Picture

Eph 4:15-16 (NIV) Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into Him Who is the Head, that is, Christ. From Him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. When your eyes only see your little part of the work of Jesus, you get a very limited view. You aren't just taking up your cross and following Him into a personal ministry in a small area of the world. You aren't alone like you sometimes feel you are.

Jesus, help me realize that if I don't *see* myself as a part of Your worldwide work, selfishness, detachment, narrow thinking, and limited ministry will start to set in. *Show* me that I am "joined and held together by every supporting ligament." I am a "part" doing my work together with every other "part" of Your Body. We are *all* working in a worldwide Christian movement that was authored by You and is being perfected through You; and I am a "part."

Move Your Eyes To Jesus' Body

What is Jesus doing in the other churches in town? That are other "parts" of what you are a "part" of, doing? What is Jesus doing in other ministries in America? Who all are a "part" of those you are praying for?

Jesus, teach me that when I share sermons, resources, prayer, time, and effort with other Christians and ministers, I am fixing my eyes on You and Your Body. I am starting to *see* the big picture. Help me get my eyes off of myself, my ministry, my accomplishments, my goals, and my calling. Help me see Your ministry, Your accomplishments, Your goals, and Your callings. Help me share all I am doing with all You are doing everywhere.

Help Your Friends With Their Eyes

Your Friend's Eyes

1 John 2:16 (NIV) For everything in the world--the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does--comes *not* from the Father but from the world. Most of the people you will be dealing with will be in this condition. Even some of your new and untrained Christians will be looking in this direction a lot of the time.

The World's Eye Doctors

2 Pet 2:14 (NIV) With eyes full of adultery, they never stop sinning; they seduce the unstable; they are experts in greed--an accursed brood! Many of your friends will be victims of these people. They have gained control of education, entertainment, corporations, psychology, sociology, and the mental health organizations. **Rom 1:22 (NIV)** Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools

Jesus, help me ask my friends: "How long does it take for you to watch others commit adultery before it contaminates *your* heart?" Help me explain that no one decides to become an adulterer, addicted to sex, or addicted to pornography. Help me show them that the way to commit adultery, get addicted to sex or porn is to start looking. Help me teach them that the human eyes are what started sin in the world in the first place, through Adam and Eve.

Eyes Caused The Fall Of Mankind

Gen 3:6 (NIV) When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

Jesus, help me take my friend to this event and teach them that Eve had to look. Help me show them that, once she took a good look, she "**saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food.**" She wouldn't have felt the hunger had she not looked. But, when she turned her eyes toward the forbidden fruit, she *saw* that it was "**pleasing to the eye.**" Let them understand that she wouldn't have felt the pull to continue looking had she not looked in the first place.

Jesus, help me teach my friend that, like Eve, once they use their eye muscles to view the "fruit" of sin, they will see that it is "**desirable for gaining wisdom.**" Just like Eve, they will be lied to and convinced of things that aren't possible. Help me show them it was suggested to her before she looked. So, when she looked, the suggestion took substance. Help me explain these things to them, so they can understand the importance of controlling their eyes.

Jesus, some of my friends have exposed their eyes to things that are extremely dark. These days are exposing them to more than they should be seeing, just while watching advertisements. Help me teach them that, if the muscles in their eyes aren't under the Holy Spirit's control, they are going to qualify as being the person mentioned in this Scripture. **Mat 5:28 (NIV)** But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

Chapter Thirty-Seven

How To Be Great In Heaven

Mat 5:17-19 (NIV) Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

It's Still The Word Of God

Isa 55:11 (NIV) So is My word that goes out from My mouth: It will not return to Me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it. Some believe that the Old Testament is closed and that the only things you are responsible for are the things in the New Testament. Some say that if tithing isn't in the New Testament, for example, then you are not responsible for it. This theory is saying that only those parts of the Old Testament that are repeated in the New Testament are still in effect. However, only those parts in the New Testament that *replace* concepts in the Old Testament are no longer in effect.

Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets: Jesus, help me see that You are putting the full responsibility on me for everything in the Old Testament. But, show me that it is just in a different form. Help me understand that You are taking the Old Testament and fulfilling it. Make it clear to me that, as You bring the Old Testament into the New Testament, I get a chance to see it in its true, original form and purpose.

Getting Additional Help

A lot of Paul's ministry is involved in bringing the Old Testament into New Testament Christianity. The Holy Spirit is making every aspect of the Old Testament a reality that is motivated by love. The most revolutionary concept in all the Bible is presented by Jesus as He sums up the entire Old Testament in these next four verses.

Mat 22:37-40 (NIV) Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” That is “all” you have to do and you will have fulfilled all the righteous requirements of the law.

Whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven: Jesus, help me understand the law's true form and purpose. Help me do what it takes to practice and teach these commands. Help me be a person who can be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

You Still *Cannot* Break These On Purpose

- **Exo 20:3-17 (NIV)** You shall have no other gods before me.
- **You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below.**
- **You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.**
- **You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.**
- **Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore, the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.**
- **Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you. You shall not murder.**
- **You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal.**
- **You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.**
- **You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.**

Now, can you have as many gods as you want, make idols and worship them, use God's name however you want, forget the Sabbath, dishonor your parents, murder, commit adultery, steal, give false witness, covet your neighbor's house, possessions, or wife? No, that hasn't changed. You still can't break these commandments. But, you still are not under the law.

You Are Under A New Law

Rom 8:1-6 (NIV) Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.

For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so, He condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.

Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but *those who live* in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace. So, what has changed? Are you no longer under the law?

Jesus, help me realize that **the law of the Spirit of life** set me free from the law of sin and death. Make it clear to me that I am still under a law. But, teach me the difference between ***the law of sin and death*** and ***the law of the Spirit of life***. Help me see that the **righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, *who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit***. So, teach me how to ***not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit***.

For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature: Jesus, teach me that being under the law didn't change anything for those under it. And, it couldn't do anything for me either. Just because the law says don't murder, doesn't stop people from murdering. But, help me see that love, put in my heart, *will* stop me from murdering.

You Are Living In A New Covenant Or Testament

Jer 31:33-34 (NIV) “This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time,” declares the LORD. **“I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ because they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest,”** declares the LORD. **“For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.”** This is your message; but, it must come from your life.

Jesus, show me that the rules didn't change much, I still can't break the Old Testament laws. But, they had to be removed from me, or I wouldn't be able to gain access to You, Who have the power to empower me to treat myself, other people, and You the way those laws were requiring me to live. So, help me see that You first had to remove the power of the laws from me. Then You gave me the same *basic* rules, but under ***the law of the Spirit of life***.

You Still Need This

Rom 3:20 (NIV) **Therefore no one will be declared righteous in His sight by observing the law; rather, through the law you become conscious of sin.** There is a lot of confusion about what sin is. Many, who have decided that the law no longer has *any* affect on their life, are living in total disobedience against God. Jesus is saying that the law is still in existence. God still hates sin. And, the law defines what sin is. However, humans didn't do a very good job of telling people what it said, what it meant, and how to apply it.

John 16:8 (NIV) **When He (the Holy Spirit) comes, He will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment.** Jesus, help me see that, when You came to earth, You found the law being misused, misunderstood, mistaught, and people being abused. The “spiritual” leaders were totally mishandling the Old Testament word. So, help me see that You have taken it away from us being the ones who are in charge of it. You have given the Holy Spirit control over the law, as He speaks it into our consciences.

Chapter Thirty-Eight

*All that has happened in the New Testament
is a defining of how you are going to go about living victoriously.*

Jesus is still teaching you about: “**Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.**” Your ministry and your eternal success is being worked on, so you can be a very dynamic World Changer. As He addresses this issue, you can see how it is setting you up for greatness in His Kingdom. He is telling you what to live and what to teach.

The Law Is Warning You

Rom 7:7 (NIV) What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed, I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, “Do not covet.” In the Old Testament, the law was making you responsible for what it said. It was a law! If you broke it, you became a sinner. Now the law only has the power to warn you. When it warns you, you are being directed to apply the power of the Holy Spirit to the situation. You aren’t responsible to live the law; you are responsible to turn to the Holy Spirit to empower you to live the law.

Rom 8:13-14 (NIV) For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if *by* the Spirit *you* put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. Jesus, when Your Holy Spirit warns me about some aspect of the Old Testament law, help me turn to You to help me yield to Him and His power. Help me not try to keep from sinning. Help me see that, that is me going back to **the law of sin and death**. But, show me that the law still defines what sin is. You haven’t changed Your mind about that.

The Law Is Training You

Rom 7:13 (NIV) Did that which is good, then, become death to me? By no means! But in order that sin might be recognized as sin, it produced death in me through what was good, so that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful.

That is a lot of what is missing today. People have developed a skewed attitude toward sin. Even though Jesus’ blood covered all your sins, and, righteousness has been credited to your account. You still have to see sin as being utterly sinful. **You who brag about the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the law? As it is written: “God’s name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you (Rom 2:23-24 NIV).”**

Jesus, show me that I can do the same thing in Christianity. When people look at my life and the people I am ministering to, they must see You living in and through them. Sometimes we are the only information they get concerning what Christianity and You are all about.

The Law Brightening Your Light

Mat 5:16 (NIV) In the same way, let your light shine before men, that **they may see your good deeds** and praise your Father in heaven. The law points you to **good deeds** that you, your friends, your associates, and even your enemies can appreciate or at least respect. But, it does not empower you; it only informs you.

Jesus, help us not be satisfied with the fact that we are going to heaven. Help us want to influence others to go with us. Help us live such a life that others want what we have. We are the salt and light that influences their life toward You. We **are the light of the world** that shows them how great You are. Teach us how to live this life by being empowered to do all these things You are teaching me. Make sin **utterly sinful** to us.

The Law Is Powerless

The Law Can't Make You Obey

Rom 8:3a (NIV) For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending His Own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. Jesus' sin offering took care of past, present, and future sins with God. But, what are you going to do about the way you live sometimes? You hurt yourself, other people, and God's reputation. There may be times, when it would be best not to let people know you are a Christian. But, since **you are the light of the world**, that can't be your answer. You must live a life that demonstrates Who Jesus is. You must live a life that others want.

Jesus, as You take me through the Gospels and help me learn how to live this Christian life and share it with others. Help me see what needs to be done in order for me to be an example of Who You are and what You stand for.

The Law Is Written On Your Heart

2 Cor 3:3 (NIV) You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. First, you have to know what is right and wrong. When you first started out with Christianity, that was clear. But, as you did things that the Holy Spirit and the Bible spoke against, if you justified them, forgave yourself for them, ignored them, tried to explain them away, as not being all that bad, you did damage to your heart, your mind, and your conscience. So, second, you need to come to Jesus and allow Him to bring you back to God's power-attitude of **mourning**.

Jesus, if I am not telling the whole truth, if I am misleading people, if I am not doing things that are in their best interests, if I am being selfish, if I have taken or want things that aren't mine, if I am doing things that are sexually immoral, or anything else that You, the Holy Spirit, and the Bible are speaking against, help me bring it to You, so You can start me on the journey of becoming pure light for the people around me.

The Law Helps You Have A Healthy Fear Of God

Rom 3:18 (NIV) “**There is no fear of God before their eyes.**” Maybe you no longer believe you can do anything to lose your salvation. Maybe you feel like all you have to do, after sinning, is to tell God you are sorry. Maybe you believe God grades on the curve and what you are doing isn’t all that bad, or, at least not as bad as other people. Maybe you have convinced yourself that there isn’t a judgment day with eternal consequences. Or, maybe you no longer are concerned about how you are living and are just living and not thinking about it.

Heb 10:26-27 (NIV) **If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.** Jesus, if sin has ceased be exceedingly sinful, help me accept this warning and get a renewed **fear of God before my eyes**. Help my heart, mind, and conscience be healed, so I can feel concern for an inconsistent life. Set me free from being casual about Your eternal judgment. Help me look at these things and repent and go in the opposite direction. Give me a sincere heart before You.

The Law Can Be Lived

Psa 111:10 (NIV) **The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow His precepts have good understanding. To Him belongs eternal praise.** What if you are passing a speed limit sign and a police car is following you. Right in your rear-view mirror you see them mile, after mile, after mile. There is no question whatsoever. You are going to be late for that meeting. God is like that with the law; He is everywhere. Once you read the speed limit sign (the Ten Commandments), He is going to be ever watching you. Is that scary, or what? Do you want to hear something really scary? God knows what you are thinking.

Jer 17:10 (NIV) **I the LORD search the heart and examine the mind, to reward a man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve.** Jesus, help me realize that I can get a ticket for just wishing I could speed. Help me see how important it is for me to know how to be empowered to live the victorious Christian life. Help me see that it isn’t for me to try to lessen Your requirements; it is for me to learn how to live a powerful, victorious, winning life. You are greater than sin, temptation, the devil, and the world’s devices.

Scriptures To Apply To The Law

1 John 4:4 (NIV) **You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the One Who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.**

Eph 6:10 (NIV) **Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power.**

2 Cor 10:4 (NIV) **The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.**

Rom 8:37 (NIV) **No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him Who loved us.**

Chapter Thirty-Nine

Explaining The Sin Issue

What's Wrong With Sin?

Your friend may not be aware of what sin is all about. No doubt they know the term; but, why is sin a sin? Why does God make things that feel good a sin? Why does there have to be such a thing as sin? And, why won't God accept a person into His eternal Kingdom without being sin free? Since sin is such a big issue with God, your friend must be clear on the sin concept. If you just start out dealing with the fact that Jesus forgave them of all their "sins," you may be ignoring their major spiritual educational need.

Rom 3:22-24 (NIV) This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. Jesus, help me back up and help my friend understand that everyone has disqualified themselves from being able to enter Your eternal Kingdom. Help me explain that sin is a highly contagious, very deadly spiritual disease. And, help me show them that one, small sin being allowed into Your eternal Kingdom would destroy it.

What Makes Something A Sin?

James 4:17 (NIV) Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins. Since God is all about love and good relationships, this is His rule of thumb on what makes something a sin. However, Jesus is going to be breaking this down into actual life-situations. He will be taking you into all kinds of scenarios and telling you how to keep it from turning into a sin. Some of them are extremely difficult for the human to understand or agree with. But, with Jesus' power, help, and heart-healing, they become doable.

Jesus, as you sum up the ten commandments into the issue of love, help me see how You explain what it looks like in real life. Help me be ready to include this message into the training of my friends. Help me have all these legal issues functioning in my life, so I won't be a hypocrite who is *acting* like I am living it.

What Does The Christian Life Look Like?

Luke 10:30 (NIV) In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. Here is an obvious need; no one could see this situation and not know this person was in trouble. He was naked, beaten, and **half dead**. It is true that you and your friend can't take care of everyone's needs. But, this is the kind of need that must be met or it is a sin.

Jesus, help me see why You did Your ministry out where the people were. Out there You were able to *show* Your disciples those things they needed to be taught. You were able to give them object lessons rather than just teaching them with words.

Useless Religion

Luke 10:31 (NIV) **A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side.** When your ministry consists of things that make you and your friends too busy to get involved in other's spiritual and physical needs, it is a sin. The priest involved himself and those he ministered to in a lot of study of the Scriptures. He structured his and their lives in such a way that they appeared to be living a godly, righteous life. But, in this parable, it is obvious that his ministry is powerless, loveless, and useless.

Jesus, help me understand that I must take my trainees where the needs are. Then, while we are working with the needs, help me share the Biblical principles. Help me be sharing Your truths with those we are helping. And, help me be giving more advanced training to my trainees. Show me that this is Your *method* of presenting Your *message* and *ministry*.

Loveless Ministry

Luke 10:32 (NIV) **So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.** This was a person who helped people get rid of their sins. They understood the sacrifice of all those animals and birds that paid the price for people sinning. Yet, they didn't understand what made sin wrong. He didn't understand that sin is doing wrong, bad, or evil things to people. *And*, it is *not* doing right, good, and righteous things to people.

Jesus, help me see that a lot of my Bible study has been irrelevant. Rather than studying the Bible, as it related to my relationship with people, I studied it trying to learn concepts. I broke it down into its finest meaning, memorized verses, taught passages and principles, and made people aware of Old Testament heroes. Help me see that You are all about love and how it is manifest in and through my life to the people around me.

A Nonreligious Person

Luke 10:33 (NIV) **But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him.** Love is putting yourself in someone's place. Love is seeing other's needs and doing what you would have others do for you, in that situation. Love is inconveniencing yourself, and taking time to help others. When you see people with *obvious* needs where *they can't help themselves*, it is your ministerial responsibility to treat them like they are Jesus. And, it is your ministerial duty to make sure your trainees see you doing it.

Jesus, You taught this lesson out where the people were. You went where the crowds were and answered spiritual questions from the people, while your disciples were listening. You were addressing the "spiritual" leaders, your disciples, and the people who were in need of being born again. Help me start out small; go where the lost are; start up conversations; and make sure my trainees are watching and listening.

A Nonreligious Generous Person

Luke 10:34 (NIV) **He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him.**

There are all kinds of needs around you that the person cannot help themselves with. They are obvious, sincere, and unsolvable by the person. It is expensive, inconvenient, time-consuming, and maybe even labor-intensive. But, while you are doing these things for these people, you are letting them know it is all coming to them from Jesus. And, you are involving your trainees in the process. You are helping your trainees see what the Jesus-life is all about.

Jesus, there are churches teaching Your principles; and, there are organizations meeting people's obvious needs, but not sharing Your message. Help me get involved in both. Let my ministry get involved in helping people solve their physical, financial, relational, emotional, and spiritual needs. Help me start providing every kind of ministry that addresses every kind of need. Then help me expose my trainees to all the Biblical truths that these ministries are addressing. In this sermon on the mount, You are teaching Your disciples these principles.

A Nonreligious Consistent Person

Luke 10:35 (NIV) The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.' This is where you involve other ministries in your ministry. You can't work with everyone's financial, physical, relational, emotional, and spiritual needs. There will be areas where Jesus wants you to concentrate. But, it is your ministerial responsibility to *connect* to every other ministry and teach your trainees to do the same.

1 Cor 12:20-21 (NIV) As it is, there are many parts, but one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" Jesus, help me understand that Your physical Body has changed. Whereas You have a heavenly, glorified body sitting at the right hand of God, You also have a large collection of human bodies being your Body and doing Your work on earth. Help me join in, unify, and work together as a part of Your Body, in my community. Let us cooperate, minister, love, and support one another.

A Nonreligious Biblical Person

Luke 10:36 (NIV) Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" This is a breakdown and illustration of what loving your neighbor looks like in real life. This isn't a presentation for those back then. This is an answer to a question that a confused person asked Jesus, while He was ministering out where the people were. His ministry didn't consist of a platform, a lecture stand, and Sunday sermon. It was interactive, relevant to real life, and extremely Biblical.

Mark 12:31 (NIV) The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these. Jesus, help me see that You were teaching people how to live the law in real life. Show me that You were raising the standard to a level where they would realize that they needed more than the law, in order to live the law. You were enforcing the law, so they would be ready to turn to You for help and power. Help me not water down the law or people will start trying to use human effort and world training to live it.

Chapter Forty

The Good Samaritan

Now, let Jesus take you back to the beginning of the parable of the Good Samaritan. The issue is, first of all, Jesus is not doing away with the law. As a matter of fact, the sermon on the mount raises the bar to a whole new level. If you aren't overwhelmed with His requirements, then He will finish the job with His statement in Matthew 5:48: **Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect (Mat 5:48 NIV)**. No, He's not kidding. He is demanding this.

Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. Jesus, make it clear that You aren't trying to do away with the law in me, You are trying to **fulfill them** in me. You are how I am going to stop having as many gods as I want, making idols and worshiping them, using God's name however I want, forgetting the Sabbath, dishonoring my parents, murdering, committing adultery, stealing, giving false witness, and coveting my neighbor's house, possessions, or wife.

Gal 2:20 (NIV) I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me. Jesus, help me see that You haven't changed Your mind on this. I still can't break these commandments. But, You have come up with a way for me to not be under the law and not break them. I have died to the law through Your death, so that I am not the one trying to live the law. But, You still want me treating myself, other people, and You the way the law draws it out. So, You now live this impossibly holy, godly, righteous life through me.

Who Is Being Taught This?

Luke 10:25 (NIV) On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" You can't have this kind of a dialogue in church. This has to be a totally different type of meeting. But, this was the kind of meets Jesus typically had. If someone had a question during Jesus' sermon on the mount, if He considered it to be a question that was on topic and going in the direction He wanted to go, He would stop and address it. That is the kind of meets you must have.

Jesus, help me be willing to be interrupted. Help my objective be to lead people into the truth. Help my objective be to help them understand the truth. And, then help my objective be to help them live the truth. Deliver me from monologue presentations where I just want to make my point. Help me have open meetings where I ignore those who are asking irrelevant questions. But, let me stop and address questions that will help most everyone in the group.

The Holy Spirit Will Help You

Luke 10:26 (NIV) "What is written in the Law?" He replied. "How do you read it?" This isn't just a discussion about the weather. And, it isn't about some obscure or irrelevant subject. It doesn't matter to Jesus, if the person is being argumentative or unteachable. He will address any comment or question that can be used to teach His disciples and the crowd.

Jesus, set me free from the fear of not knowing the answer to an issue or question. Set me free from the fear of disorder or interruptions. Help me be willing to make mistakes and have to go back and correct my response. Help it not be about me and my reputation; let it be about them and their spiritual growth. Help me learn to allow You to think, feel, and speak through me, so I will keep growing in my ability of let You answer their questions.

An Interactive Teaching

Luke 10:27 (NIV) He answered: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind;’ and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” You need to know where people are spiritually. Because most ministry is done from a dominate perspective, a lot of “spiritual help” isn’t helpful. People get answers they aren’t asking or needing. If a person doesn’t know they need a spiritual answer, they won’t listen. And, even if they do listen, they won’t remember the answer. Your objective *must be* to help people grow spiritually.

Jesus, there are people I have ministered to that I had no idea where they were spiritually. I have given them information that I wanted to give them. I presented things that I decided they needed. Help me start asking a lot of questions, so I can find out what their interests are, what their needs are, and what they would be willing to do. Help me get to the point in their life where they can and will grow spiritually. Help me use individuals to help the rest of the group grow in their life.

A Complementary Teaching

Luke 10:28 (NIV) “You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.” You may have a million other things to add to a person. But, you *must* appreciate where they are currently in their relationship with God. If they have the slightest glimmer of spiritual growth, help them see it, so they can praise God for it. Teach them to be looking for miracles in their life and praise God for them. You aren’t bragging on them; you are helping them be thankful for any and every thing God does in and through them.

Jesus, help me appreciate the way You allowed people to talk with You. Help me see Your methods, so I can follow them just as much as I follow Your message and ministry. Help me see that, if I don’t follow Your methods, I won’t be working with people like You worked with them. I won’t get opportunities to converse with them like You did.

An Effective Teaching Method

Luke 10:29 (NIV) But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” You may face people who are mad, argumentative, insincere, or trying to trap you. Don’t let them drive you away from this Jesus-method. If someone says something or asks you a question from a negative attitude, turn your eyes away from them and answer the question or address the issue to those who are listening and growing. Jesus used all kinds of people’s words to help His disciples and the crowd grow spiritually.

Jesus, help me either ignore or take advantage of a comment by someone who is trying to trap me or argue with me. If I address the issue, help me just concentrate on those who are open and receptive to the information. Give me words that will help them grow. And, help me not say anything to the person who is trying to cause trouble. Help me not argue with someone who isn't listening. But, if needed, help me refute what they said, so the sincere aren't misled.

A Powerful Teaching Method

Luke 10:30 (NIV) In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead....” The question from the man trying to justify himself led into the parable of the Good Samaritan. This shows you that no matter what is thrown at you, Jesus will give you vital information for the sincere. Jesus didn't let His esteem or confidence get in the way. Whether the man was helped or not, it got put in Jesus' Bible and has helped millions of people. You just have to allow these kinds of opportunities to take place for others.

Jesus, help me see how powerful this type of ministry is. People can sit in congregations for years and not get the answers they need for their spiritual growth. I can speak for years and not address those major issues that would bring healing to the individuals in a congregation. Help me be willing to go into places where there will be pushback, persecution, difficult questions, and opportunities to really bring powerful healing to hurting people.

The Impossible Assignment

After Jesus' parable, He asked the man who was trying to justify himself: **“Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”** The expert in the law replied, **“The one who had mercy on him.”** Jesus told him, **“Go and do likewise (Luke 10:36-37 NIV).”**

This sermon on the mount is going to raise the bar on living the law. Jesus is going to show you a life that is way over your head. He is going to show you a life that He will insist that you live. But, it will be impossible for you to live. If you do what is typically being presented, you will dilute it down to a place where you and the people you are ministering to will start thinking they are living the Christian life but aren't.

Jesus' life can only be lived by Jesus.

John 15:5 (NIV) I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in Me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing. Jesus, help me see that I must live and present the truth that Your legal standards are beyond human ability. Help me know how to **remain in** You, so I and my friends will be able to live a life that brings people to You. Help me fulfill all the requirements of Your sermon on the mount, so that I am treating even my enemies with incredible love and power.

Chapter Forty-One

What Kind Of Righteousness Do You Have?

Mat 5:20 (NIV) For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.

Get Jesus' Righteousness

Saying that to these people was like saying that Billy Graham or Mother Teresa didn't go to heaven. As far as anyone could tell, the Pharisees and the teachers of the law were the godliest people on the planet. Not only did they seem to be living the law, they had developed special systems where they looked like they didn't even get close to breaking one of God's laws. How could Jesus say that they weren't good enough to go to heaven? And, if they weren't going to make it, where did that leave everyone else?

Rom 10:2-3 (NIV) For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. Jesus, check my zeal for You; help it be based on knowledge. Help me know the righteousness that comes from God, so I won't try to establish my own and not submit to God's righteousness.

Trying To Establish Your Own Righteousness

Sought to establish their own: You can do this by setting up your own rules for living a righteous life. You can try to see to it that your good outweighs your bad. You can compare yourself with others and decide you aren't as bad as them. You can do things that are wrong, bad, or evil and forgive, justify, excuse, or ignore them. You can decide what you think is wrong and what is right. You can do wrong, bad, and evil things with the plan of always repenting after you have done them.

Rom 7:15 (NIV) I do not understand what I do. For what I *want* to do I do not do, but what I *hate* I do. Jesus, help me see that if I don't have this Romans 7:15 attitude toward what *You* call sin, then I am trying to **establish** my righteousness. Help me realize that my definition of sin must be Your definition of sin. And, my attitude toward sin must be that I want to do right, good, and righteous things toward myself, other people, and Your plan.

Trying To Live A Righteous Life

Gal 3:3 (NIV) Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort? Most Christians start out being saved by faith and then move into the Romans 7:15-25 life. Since they came to Jesus only knowing what the world taught them, if they don't have a mature Christian there to teach them, they will move right into human effort, human reasoning, and world training. That is when they get into great confusion.

Rom 7:24 (NIV) What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Jesus, help me always be aware that I live the Christian life by praying rather than trying. Also, show me that my friends with automatically start out living the Romans 7:15-24 life. If I don't teach these things to them, they will only know what they have experienced as a human and what they have been taught by the world. Help me learn these things thoroughly, so I can help them become proficient in living by faith.

Just Do Good

James 4:17 (NIV) Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins. All you have to do is do right, good, righteous things to yourself, other people, and God's plan, then you are living the Christian life. But, what is good? The first rule of thumb is the Golden Rule: **So, in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets (Mat 7:12 NIV).**

Jesus, help me understand that this would be a simple rule, if I didn't have a **sinful nature** in my body. My body fights any righteousness I try to live. So, help my friend and I to apply Your Christian and ministerial training to our lives, so we will be able to, **in everything, do to others what we would have them do to us.** Help us follow You like Your disciples did, so we will be ready for the Holy Spirit to come on us, like He did in Acts chapter two.

As If You Were Them

Do to others what you would have them do to you: You may want people to tell you good things about yourself. You may feel loved, if some one does something special for you. Or, you may feel cared for, if someone gives you a special gift. Doing **to others what you would have them do to you** requires a transformation in your mind and heart. It takes you being willing to do one more thing.

Mark 12:31a (NIV) The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' Jesus, teach me that love helps me be willing to get to know the person I am doing things to. Show me that, if I don't love them and I do to them **what I would have them do to me**, then I won't care what makes them feel valued. I will just do to them what makes *me* feel good. I won't care what they need; I will just do to them those things I typically need. But, if I love them as myself, then I will do to them **what I would have them do to me**, if I were them.

You Must Listen

James 1:19 (NIV) My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry. Jesus is going to be telling you all kinds of things that you are to do or not do to those around you. But, the only way you will be able to apply them, is to get to know the people around you. How much to you ask questions, so you can find out about those around you? How good do you listen, when people are telling you things about themselves? When you are in a conflict with someone, are you **quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry?**

For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven. Jesus, help me see that these people were reading all the right Scriptures. But, their application was obeying the law as a ritual. They applied the law to themselves and others, so they could feel superior to others. It wasn't a matter of them looking at the law and seeing how important it was to treat people in a loving, kind, and righteous way. Help my righteousness be a behavior that comes out of a true love and compassion for others.

A Surpassing Righteousness

Unless your righteousness surpasses: As you know, righteousness is you doing right, good, and loving things to yourself, other people, and God's plan. It is also not doing wrong, bad, or evil things to yourself, others, or God's plan. But, Jesus is the only One Who qualifies for deciding what right or wrong, good or bad, and righteousness and evil are. What He was doing, in His sermon on the mount was, clearly defining what they are.

Jesus, help me understand that I must first identify what righteousness and unrighteousness are. Help me listen carefully and prayerfully to everything You teach. Help me not see these things as laws that I must produce in order to please You. Help me see them as love messages to the people around me. Help me see beyond all these rules You are laying out. Help me view them as power-relationships that show others Who You are and what You do.

Unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law: In the Gospels, Jesus will clearly lay out for you, what was wrong with **the pharisees and the teachers of the law**. Let Him show you a few of them:

Mat 23:13 (NIV) Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the kingdom of heaven in men's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to.

Mat 23:14 (AKJV) Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayer: therefore, you shall receive the greater damnation.

Mat 23:15 (NIV) Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are.

Jesus, help me see what caused these people to become who they became. Show me how it was possible for them to be constantly exposed to Your Word and not let it transform their life. Teach me how to avoid the errors they made in their life and ministry. Protect me from all the motivations and philosophies that they embraced. Help me be clear how You saw them, so I can fix my eyes on You and keep growing in my righteousness and in my ministry.

Chapter Forty-Two

The Righteousness Standard Was Raised

Mat 5:21-22 (NIV) You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’ But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, ‘Raca,’ (Amp: speaks contemptuously and insultingly) is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell.

You have heard that it was said to the people long ago: Jesus wasn’t quoting someone’s opinion from long ago. He was quoting the Old Testament Bible. So, when He said, “**But I tell you**”, He was exerting His authority over the Bible. He was actually taking the Old Testament law and making it stricter. So, “**anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment,**” was added to” **anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.”**

Jesus, help me realize that not only are You *not* doing away with the law, You are adding a finer interpretation to it. Now: **anyone who says to his brother, ‘Raca,’ (Amp: speaks contemptuously and insultingly) is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell.** Help me see that You really want my relationship with myself, other people, and You to be holy.

Jesus Isn’t Making This Easy

Anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell: This is not good news. We thought that as long as we didn’t kill anyone we were in a good relationship with God. Now you are finding out that the Ten Commandments were just scratching the surface. Jesus is now saying that you are in danger **of the fire of hell** even when you go into a continuous anger or call someone a fool. What is going on here? If you didn’t get depressed about the Pharisees not living a good enough life, this last piece of news will push you over the edge.

Jesus, thank You for making it clear to me that **apart from You, I can do nothing.** Help me realize that You can make it as hard as You want and You won’t have any problem living it in and through me. Show me that I need to live this kind of life in my relationship with myself, other people, and Your plan. Teach me that calling someone a fool assassinates their character and damages their esteem.

You Don’t Establish The Definition Of Hate

1 John 2:11 (NIV) But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness; he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded him. You may not feel like this verse would ever apply to you. But, you never thought “**You shall not murder.**” would apply to you either. When you read the Bible, ask Jesus which verses apply to you. Let Him help you pray and ask for help with verses that you might typically ignore. Let this sermon on the mount change your approach to Christianity.

Jesus, there have been times when I decided what I believe. I would tell people what I thought the Bible was saying. I had an opinion on a lot of Bible facts. Somehow, I thought that I was the authority on what I was going to be judged on in eternity. Set me free my arrogance and pride; help me realize that what I think about the Bible doesn't change the facts. Help me humble myself before You, so I can get the truth on all matters.

Jesus Controls Bible Content

You have heard: The Bible is very powerful; but, Jesus is more powerful and authoritative. **Mat 28:18 (NIV) Then Jesus came to them and said, “*All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me....*”** What you read in the Old Testament still holds its Jesus-authority until Jesus changes it. So, as you are going through the Gospels, if you read something Jesus said that sounds different from what you read in the Old Testament, you are reading the latest edition of that concept. Otherwise, you are still responsible for the Old Testament version.

Jesus, help me read Your words carefully; help me see that You left some of the Old Testament in place and changed some of it. Help me not feel free to ignore any of the Old Testament until You give me permission. Also, help me understand that some of it You changed by fulfilling it. Show me that it stayed in effect for as long as the fulfillment hadn't taken place. So, in those cases, help me embrace the fulfillment and drop the prototype.

But I tell you: Once Jesus says something that used to be one way is now another, the old is dropped and the new is the final authority. There are people who are still trying to enforce things that Jesus changed. That is a major mistake! You must accept Jesus, as the final authority that is even greater than the Bible itself. So, when Jesus says something in the Gospels, it is the only way to base your life. He is in control of every Scripture in the Bible. Everyone and all Scripture must submit their authority to Him.

Mark 13:31 (NIV) Heaven and earth *will* pass away, but My words *will never* pass away. Jesus, I bow my knee before You and Your authority. Help me obey every Scripture You didn't change and every new one You did change. Help me be **meek** before You and accept You as the final authority on all truth. Let Your Holy Spirit show me any changes You made, so I can make the adjustments. Empower me to obey every one of them to the letter.

Relational Rules

But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Jesus is dealing with conflict in relationships. He is expecting you to look to Him for emotional stability. You don't know everything; as you are having a discourse with someone, you don't have all the facts. Jesus wants you to stay open to more information, at all times. You are probably angry because of some missing piece of information.

Jesus, help me not jump to conclusions. Help me keep asking questions, while yielding to the Holy Spirit's fruit of the Spirit. Help me understand that once I get mad, my mind is pretty much made up. Help me not get to that place until I have permission from You to do so.

Verbal Rules

Again, anyone who says to his brother, ‘Raca,’ (Amp: speaks contemptuously and insultingly) is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell: This is dealing with what kinds of words you cannot use. It is in your best interest to not call people any kind of derogatory name. When you try to label them or say negative words against them, you are judging them. You are pronouncing a verdict on them that will come back to you.

Jesus, it is when I get mad or start trying to defend myself that I start saying negative things to people. The fruit of the Spirit are powerful to influence my emotions. Let them flow through my heart like a river. Empower me to allow them to motivate my conversations with everyone. Help me *feel* the love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, during every conversation I have with people.

Verbal Intent

Rom 2:1 (NIV) You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things.

You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else: You can evaluate people, when you are diagnosing them for counseling, mentoring, or ministry. In that case, you are looking inside them, so as to help them and bring healing. But, if your evaluation is to decide who they are rather than what they are doing, you are moving into an evaluation that is permanent and not fixable.

Jesus, give me an incredible ability to evaluate people accurately. Help me be able to see what is hurting and damaging them. Give me revelations of what You have that could provide them with a cure for that issue. Give me a powerful ability to give people an evaluation in such a way that it isn’t offensive or judgmental. Let my words be presented with such love that they are inspired with faith that You are going to set them free.

For at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself: Just like a surgeon makes sure they are germ free, you must make sure you are guilt free. You don’t want to start working on someone else, only to find out that you have been doing the same or similar thing. Before you go to counsel, mentor, or minister to someone else about a word or deed from them, be sure to allow Jesus to check you out first.

Mat 7:3-5 (NIV) Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye. Jesus, help me bring my “plank” before You, so I will be able to see clearly to remove the speck from my brother’s eye.

Chapter Forty-Three

It's All About People

Mat 5:23-24 (NIV) Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.

Things That Hinder Your Prayer

Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar: Whether it is a gift of money, praise, or dedication, your relationship with other people can stand in the way of God's blessings. People who are having major conflicts with other people can be seen in church with their hands raised high "praising" God. People who give considerable financial gifts can feel like they are really serving God, while doing all kinds of dishonest things to others.

1 John 4:20 (NIV) If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. Jesus, help me see that my relationships with other people are very important to You. If I and my ministry aren't dealing with attitudes and character, then I am failing myself and others. Show me that You are all about relationships. And, this sermon on the mount is giving me specific procedures for maintaining the kind of relationships You desire.

God Reminders

And there remember that your brother has something against you: Jesus doesn't leave you confused or misunderstanding. If there is something between Him and you, He will see that you know about it. But, the problem is, you think about a possible issue and dismiss it. When something pops up in your mind, don't evaluate it yourself. Let Jesus tell you whether it is an issue or not. He won't keep warning you about things that you decide aren't that important.

Jesus, when You bring something into my mind that may be a blockage between You and me, if I feel like I don't want to have to deal with it at that time, help me bring that attitude to You. Help my lack of willingness to address issues not develop a breach in our relationship. Help me not try to evaluate it, justify it, excuse it, forgive myself, or ignore it. Help me ask for Your power to go to the person that **has something against me.**

God Commands

Leave your gift there in front of the altar: This is saying that you might as well forget about trying to move forward with God from that point on. If you are struggling with leaving your **gift there in front of the altar**, or trying to praise and worship God, or trying to get a request answered, then you need to stay before God until you are ready to **leave your gift**. The only business God is open to, is the issue of **leaving your gift**. It's not a suggestion.

Jesus, help me not try to talk God into going on with other issues, when He has already given me an assignment. Help me see that I can get this breakthrough and **leave my gift**, if I will just stay before You until I get healed and empowered to obey this command.

God's Priority

First go and be reconciled to your brother: But, before you go, there is one more thing you can and should do with God. **Mat 7:5 (NIV) You hypocrite, *first* take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.** The Bible is one unit; the only way you can keep a verse in context is to keep it inside the Bible. Reading a few verses before and after a verse isn't enough. You must allow the Holy Spirit to bring verses from all over the Bible and make them a part of that verse.

Jesus, help me **go and be reconciled to my brother** with a **pure heart**. Help me see myself as the one with the plank and then with the speck. Show me that I can't be **reconciled to my brother**, if I go with contention, judgmental attitudes, pride, or self-justification. Help me see that **"be reconciled to your brother"** isn't a suggestion either. Empower me with love, forgiveness, and wisdom, so I can do whatever it takes to establish that reconciliation.

God's Steps To Relationship With Him

Then come and offer your gift: This is saying that you can't come back until this has been accomplished in some way. If you try to come back, thinking you are **reconciled to your brother**, but God doesn't agree, you will come back empty. While you are there, with **your brother**, you must allow the Holy Spirit to tell you how you are doing. You may think that all you have to do is go say you are sorry. But, God may want you to do a lot more than that.

Jesus, You can accomplish a lot more than reconciliation. When I go sit down with a **brother**, open my mind and heart to *all* the possibilities. Show me how to accomplish God-sized, supernatural, miraculous things in that relationship, while I am there. Help me not be just trying to get this accomplished, so I can get back to the altar and give God my gift. Reveal to me that You are wanting my heart to be filled with love for my **brother**. Help me see that everything I do, while with my **brother**, is a part of my gift to God.

Looking At The Big Picture

Don't Miss The Principle

This is setting a principle for you to allow to fill your heart and mind. Your relationship with God is built on your relationship with yourself and other people. But, when you are a new or untrained Christian, you can't fix your relationship with yourself and others. That is what Romans 7:15-25 is all about. **Rom 7:15 (NIV) I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.** The things you **want** to do are: Doing good things to yourself, other people, and God's plan. The things you do that you **hate** are: The bad things you are doing to yourself, other people, and God's plan.

Rom 7:18 (NIV) I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the *desire* to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. Jesus, help me see that the perfect record You purchased for me with God had a lot to do with people. But, without me having a perfect record with God, I couldn't get Your power to make any changes in my relationships with people. So, even though my relationship with God was good, my relationship with myself and people were filled with me *wanting* to do good things and *hating* the fact that I was doing bad things.

Your Final Exam Is About This

Mat 25:40 (NIV) The King will reply, "I tell you the truth, *whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of Mine, you did for Me.*" The major aspects of your demonstration to Jesus, as to how much you love Him, is in how much you demonstrate love for others. Since this is going to be the major issue on your final exam for eternity, you need to let your treatment of others be your gauge or indicator of your love for Jesus. Your best rule of thumb is, treat people like they are Jesus, because He is taking personal your treatment of others.

Jesus, I can see some real hinderances in my life and ministry. I haven't seen how much my love for You has been demonstrated by how I treat other people. Make it clear to me that this is why You are constantly working on my attitudes and character. But, help me see that I have to get my attitudes and character healed by You *before* I can treat others better. So, guide me in how to look to You for how I demonstrate love for others.

Praying A Vital Prayer

John 14:15 (NIV) *If you love Me, you will obey what I command.* If Jesus doesn't empower you to **obey** His **command**, you won't be able to **obey** it. If you try to **obey** it, you won't be able to **obey** it. But, if you make it a constant matter of prayer, you will go through the Gospels while praying over every **command** Jesus makes. That is why there is a paragraph discussing the **commands** of Jesus and then a prayer asking for that **command** to be installed in your life and ministry. This approach invites Jesus into every truth you need applied to you.

Jesus, empower me to **obey** every **command** You make. As I go through these **commands** You are making in Your sermon on the mount, help me pray in faith that You are hearing and answering my prayer. Help me bring to You any **command** You make that I am struggling with. Help me believe that You will help me **obey** it. Help me not move on to Your next **command**, if I am struggling with a previous **command**.

John 15:12 (NIV) My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Jesus, this **command** is far beyond anything I am capable of doing. Help me always keep in mind that Your Bible, Your teachings, and Your **commands** are always on a God-sized, supernatural level. Show me that this is why I have to live the Christian life through praying and asking You to fulfill these things in my life and ministry. Help me see that all my previous efforts, without prayer, were fatiguing and useless. Help me see that I will no longer fail in those areas I did before. You will be making them happen for Your glory and honor.

Chapter Forty-Four

Things Don't Matter

Mat 5:25-26 (NIV) Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still with him on the way, or he may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison. I tell you the truth, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny.

You Could Be Confused

Settle matters quickly with your adversary: If you want to be treated fairly, you may not be able to do this. If you are protecting your reputation, you may not want to **obey** this **command**. If you are protecting your assets, you may want to draw the issue out to the last point. But, if you are trying to show people Who Jesus is and what He stands for, then you will go to Him and ask Him to empower you to **settle matters quickly with your adversary**.

Phil 4:19 (NIV) And my God will meet all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus. Jesus, empower me to give up trying to be treated fairly, trying to protect my reputation, my assets, or any *thing* else. Help my priority be to live and minister You and Your reputation, assets, and truths. Help me address **adversaries** with the goal of leading them to You. Help me see that, if anything else is motivating me in my relationship with them, then my life and ministry are failing at that moment.

This Is A Public Matter

Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court: When you read about Paul in various court proceedings, he uses them as opportunities to share Biblical principles and the message of Jesus. If your mind is on what is fair, protecting your assets, or protecting your reputation, then you will miss opportunities that Jesus was setting you up for. Paul went through two years of major suffering so he could stand before rulers and share Jesus with them. Pray and ask Jesus to help you give up all your reasons for going to court.

Jesus, help me get my priorities straight. Help me see that You allow certain things to happen to me that I could misunderstand. Help me not be busy looking at the circumstances and make assumptions as to why You allowed it to happen to me. Help me not be offended that You did allow it to happen to me. Help me immediately come to You with an open heart and mind. Let me understand what Your plan was in the matter. Then empower me to yield to that plan with a complete revelation of how You want it to be handled.

Jesus-Mediation

Do it while you are still with him on the way: This **command** is a process of trying to engage in mediation. This is your opportunity to show your **adversary** all kinds of Biblical principles. It is a moment where you can explain what Jesus is teaching you. You can tell them what He is expecting of you, how He wants you to treat them, what He has helped you to accept as more important, and what He would like for you to do with them.

Jesus, bring my focus in on Your goals for **adversaries**. Help me see why they are an **adversary**. Help me look inside them and understand what is causing them to be **adversarial**. Help me get distracted by the issue. Help me always remember that people are much more important than things or issues. Help me never forget what I, as a Christian and a minister, am on this planet for. Bring my attention to the reason You are allowing this to happen. Help me realize that this is a unique opportunity for me to spend time with this person.

Reasoning With Adversaries

Or he may hand you over to the judge: When people think they are justified in the way they feel, they become zeroed in on their goal. The issue can be forgotten and the “principle of the matter” will become their focus. If you do things that motivate them to lock in on a goal, they will become unreasonable. If they are already unreasonable, then the matter is in Jesus’ hands; there is nothing you can do about it. But, if there is any possibility that they are still reasonable, then this **command** must be **obeyed**.

Jesus, help me always treat Your **commands** as mandatory. But, help me not just respond to them as something I have to do. Help me love You and the people around me enough that the **command** is **obeyed** because I want to. Help me see that You issue them as **commands**, so I won’t get confused as to their importance. You are **commanding** them, so I will give them my top priority. They are **commands** because they are things that must be fulfilled or I, others, and Your plan get damaged. They are mandatory because they are eternally important.

Caught In The System

And the judge may hand you over to the officer: There is a legal system that flows in a set order. Once you get caught in the system, you just become a number. The system is preprogrammed to follow a certain pattern. Jesus can break the system and get you out. But, Jesus is telling you, that He is trying to help you stay out of the world’s legal system. However, if after you have done everything Jesus has **commanded** you to do, should you still end up in the system, find out how Jesus wants you to respond.

Acts 26:27-29 (NIV) “King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you do.” Then Agrippa said to Paul, “Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?” Paul replied, “Short time or long--I pray God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains.”

Jesus, if I ever get caught in a legal system, help me follow the procedures of You and Paul. But, help me not get caught in it because I failed to obey your command. Help my life and ministry to embrace all this training You are giving me through Your sermon on the mount. Show me how to listen to You, as I go through life. Show me that these specific commands are addressing all kinds of possibilities I may have to face at some time in my life. Help me believe You are hearing and answering these prayers and getting me ready for them.

Avoiding Prison

And you *may* be thrown into prison: Jesus isn't telling you that this *will* happen, if you get caught in the system. But, you can see that He is showing you what kind of attitude and character may keep you out. If you don't flow in the fruit of the Spirit all during an event like this, you **may be thrown into prison**.

Jesus, give me the Philippians 4:8 thought-life and the Galatians 5:22-23 fruit of the Spirit emotion-life. Help me see that there will be many events, that will come my way, that will turn out based on whether or not they are flowing like a river in and through me. Let the events of my life and ministry, be governed and regulated by these power-thoughts and power-emotions.

You're Not Getting Out

I tell you the truth, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny: If you were to find yourself in this situation, you may be praying for Jesus to get you out. And, if you hadn't been obedient way in the beginning and tried to negotiate with your **adversary**, you may be wondering why He isn't getting you out. But, the answer had been given to you during your Jesus-training through the Gospels. Jesus' training is vital for life and ministry.

Jesus, help me see this principle. If I fail in the beginnings of an issue, then I *will* pay the consequences at the end of the issue. Help me see how You think on these spiritual matters. Teach me how to evaluate the beginnings of a command, so I will understand why You commanded it. Help me give special attention to the command, so I won't end up with bad, hurtful, and damaging results.

Look At The Big Picture

Mat 5:25-26 (NIV) Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still with him on the way, or he may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison. I tell you the truth, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny.

Jesus is trying to detach you from things. You are on this planet for eternal issues. The circumstances you face are life-classes. They are orchestrated by Jesus to give you the training you, as a child of God, need for being the best there is in Him. He is trying to help you reach your full potential. If you get caught up in the cares of this life, you will fail, when something like this happens to you. You may not end up in a physical prison. But, you will probably end up in a financial, emotional, relational, or spiritual prison.

Jesus, there are so many possible pitfalls in life and ministry. Help me see how all this study and prayer are so valuable for helping me avoid them. I can see that I could have missed so much difficulty, if I had studied and prayed over these things sooner. Help me appreciate what You are doing in my life and ministry. You are getting me ready for all possibilities.

Chapter Forty-Five

Prevention Is Better Than Cure

Mat 5:27-28 (NIV) You have heard that it was said, ‘Do not commit adultery.’ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

Jesus Is The Final Authority

You have heard that it was said: Once again, Jesus isn’t quoting from someone’s opinion; this is a quote from the Old Testament portion of the Bible. In this case it isn’t getting changed or fulfilled; it is being added to. *And*, this addition is just as binding and mandatory as the original. It is a **command** of Jesus that must be **obeyed**.

Jesus, help me understand that when you say something like this, You are about to change, fulfill, do away with, or add to a command. Help me start basing my life on the change. Help me understand that You are the total authority on all commands. Your commands are completely mandatory and must be obeyed.

Only Jesus Can Change Or Discontinue A Command

You have heard that it was said, ‘Do not commit adultery:’ Jesus wasn’t taking this command away; it is still intact. He was just referring to it, so as to add additional aspects to it. He is dealing with the procedure that leads to **adultery**. The Old Testament approach simply made commands. Once a law was set, it was up to the person to make sure they didn’t break it. But, with **the law of the Spirit of life**, every effort is put into helping you live all commands.

Jesus, I thank You for giving me **the law of the Spirit of life**. As was described in Romans 7:15-25, I would never be able to fulfill the law on my own. Thank You for not leaving us lawless. That would have left us in chaos. Help me take advantage of all Your provisions for living **the law of the Spirit of life**.

This Is Jesus Making A Command Change

But I tell you: This is when you need to pay special attention to what Jesus is about to say. A command that has been in effect for hundreds of years is about to be changed in some way. The moment this statement was made, the new change or new command immediately went into effect. From that moment on, if anyone broke the command, they were guilty of the breach.

Jesus, as You raised the bar on some of the Old Testament Commandments, without You making provisions for a better way of fulfilling them, You would have doomed us. But, since you were showing religious leaders their failures, who thought they had produced ways for fulfilling Old Testament law, this raising of the standard was vital.

This Is Jesus Providing Prevention

But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully: The preventative for not committing adultery is to not be exposing yourself to things that tempt you. So, now that even a look is being regulated, you are made aware that such practices are deadly. If you thought you were safe by only looking, Jesus is making it clear that, that was the door into abusing a woman and leading her and yourself into sin. This is like washing your hands before eating. You can't see any problem on your hands. But, if someone teaches you to always wash them, they have saved you from potential danger.

Jesus, help me not just see the commandments as getting stricter. Help me see them as being made clearer. Since their purpose is to save me from danger, pain, disappointment, and failure, the clearer and more precise they are, the safer I become. Help me appreciate what You are doing for me. Show me that these are commandments of love.

The Adultery Incubator

Anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart: You don't want to, all of a sudden, find yourself in an **adulterous** affair. You don't want to be there wondering how you got there. Jesus is trying to protect you from confusion and surprises. Jesus is making it clear to you that, if you allow yourself to look at pornography or a person who isn't your spouse with the purpose of exciting your sexual drives, it a sin.

Jesus, thank You for revealing to me that the look is as deadly as the act. Thank You for making the preparation to sin to be a sin in itself. Show me that when I set myself up for failure, the process is a sin. I am doing what it takes to *get* involved in a sin. Help me with what I look at, what I think about, and what kind of plans I make. Show me that there is a road to sin that I must take in order to commit the sin. Keep me off of that road.

Committed adultery with her in his heart: Jesus, help me realize that it is in my **heart** that visual and auditory sins are committed. When I entertain things with my eyes and ears, I am contaminating my heart. When I think things that are **adulterous**, I am feeding my heart with **adultery**. Show me how these things work, so I won't be setting myself up for sinning. Empower me to take advantage of this training, so I can live a pure life and do a pure ministry.

Look At The Big Picture

Mat 5:27 (NIV) You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. You need to live a preventative life; you don't want to be sinning and then having to repent. When you sin, it has consequences. **1 Cor 6:18 (NIV) Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body.**

Jesus, help me see that You are trying to help me live a life that doesn't do damage to me or to those around me. You have provided deliverance from all the sins I have committed in my past, present, and future, so I can have access to You and Your power to fulfill the law that point me in the direction of a pure heart and pure life. I now have Your power and your commandments that direct me toward a marriage relationship that is also pure.

Looking In The Right Direction

Eph 5:24-25 (NIV) Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her. A man and a woman are able to establish a love relationship that is pure, honest, faithful, committed, and lasting. They are able to provide a home for the children that is safe, secure, loving, and caring. With Jesus' commandment protecting them from dishonesty, unfaithfulness, a lack of trustworthiness, and failure, the family is surrounded with stability, peace, and unity that lasts a lifetime.

Jesus, help me see the benefits of Your commandments. They are removing the chaos, uncertainty, disappointment, hurt, and lovelessness. Because Your commandments come with Your power and Your love, they are laws that actually transform lives. They only restrict me in those areas where I and those around me would be devastated. I am living in an environment where great joy and happiness abound. Thank You for the life You have provided that solves the human dilemma of a sinful nature that destroys lives.

Jesus' Power To Do The Right Thing

Eph 6:1-4 (NIV) Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother" --which is the first commandment with a promise-- "that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth." Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

These are wonderful rules; but, in the world you are told that "rules are meant to be broken." So, what good are rules that can't help anyone. What good does it do to have rules, that if lived, would make you and those around you the happiest people on the planet, if they just exist to be broken? This sermon on the mount just sounds like the laws of the Old Testament, but they aren't! When Jesus speaks, He speaks words of creation. They have transforming power that brings the love, joy, peace, patients, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control that creates a wonderful Christian family.

John 6:63 (NIV) The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are Spirit and they are life. Jesus, Your words are so much more than just instructions, commandments, and laws. You speak into me **Spirit and life**. Help me see that, as I go through these Gospels with You, You are speaking the power to live those things You are saying. Your creative power spoke the universe into existence. And it is creating a whole new power-life in me. Help me read these things with faith, so I can be transformed.

Chapter Forty-Six

Do Whatever It Takes

Mat 5:29-30 (NIV) If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And, if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.

This is one of those, if nothing else works, do this. If Jesus hadn't provided you a better way, then it would have been in your best interest to use this procedure. If the only way to heaven and the only way to keep from going to hell was to follow these instructions, nothing should stop you from doing anything, so you could go to heaven and escape hell.

Jesus, help me see how serious it is for me to do what it takes to spend eternity with You. Help me read these verses and let them give me a complete understanding of what I am dealing with here. Let this presentation bring me into a total commitment and appreciation for what You have done for me. I thank You that this isn't Your plan of salvation for me.

Would You Do It?

If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away: This is a difficult concept; but, it is one of the best illustrations for how important spending eternity with God is. If your only way to make it into heaven was to do this, would you do it? Don't just read this, be glad that isn't necessary, and move on. Jesus didn't say this to be funny. Nor did He say it to be gross. This *is* a shock treatment; but, it has a sincere purpose.

Jesus, if my eye was going to drag me into hell, help me have the kind of resolve to be willing to do what it took to stop it. Help this challenge be scary enough to sober me up and bring me into an understanding of how important it is to miss hell. Help me see myself standing there with a knife trying to do what it took to save my soul from hell. Let this powerful presentation show me how important it is to do what it really takes to miss hell and join You.

Do You Agree?

It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell: Now, with **gouging out** an eye in mind, is there anything in your life that is jeopardizing your eternity with God? If **gouge it out and throw it away** is something that would make sense, so you wouldn't go to hell, is there anything else that is too big of a sacrifice? Put gouging your eye out on one side of the scales and whatever it is you are struggling with giving up on the other. Then see if the actual sacrifice you need to make is too much. Let this help you put things into perspective.

Jesus, help me understand that there is nothing worth spending eternity in hell for. Help me take the importance of an eye and compare it with the importance of giving up a sin, a misdeed of my body, or a worldly care that is jeopardizing my eternity.

And Be Glad You Did

If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away: If you are right-handed, then use this as your example. If you are left-handed, then use it. Take the most important hand you have and lay it on the chopping block. Then see yourself going into heaven one-handed. As you are entering into eternity, would you be sad you had to spend your temporary life on earth one-handed? Or, would you enter into heaven feeling like it was the best decision you have ever made?

Jesus, sometimes I spend my days casually concerning eternity. There are little, insignificant things that I give into that aren't nearly as important as giving up one of my hands. Change my eternal perspective and help me teach those I minister to in the same way. Let this illustration have the kind of impact that You intended it to have. Help me rethink my priorities in my life and ministry on earth.

Jesus Knows There Is A Hell

It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell: You may struggle with the concept of hell. You may have decided that it is just an illustration or object lesson rather than a real place. However, if you really listen to how Jesus is making this presentation right now, He isn't giving you any indication that this is a fictitious place. He is going all out with His warning of how important it is for you to not go to hell. When Jesus says the same thing twice, it means it is a very important concept. It was the Hebrew way of making sure a person knew how important what they were saying was.

Jesus, help me not fictionalize Your words. Help me not care whether or not this is a popular concept. Show me that if I water this down, my life and ministry are neglecting things You made important. This is a very challenging illustration You have made. It is very sobering to read. Poking out an eye or cutting off a hand must be accepted as a vital message from You. Help me accept the fact that You are telling me that there *is* a hell. And it *is* very important that I and others do what it takes to not go there.

The Final Judgment

Rev 20:11 (NIV) Then I saw a great white throne and Him Who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from His presence, and there was no place for them. The content of this judgment and the criteria for who goes to be with Jesus and those who will go to hell are presented in Matthew 25:31-46. All those things Jesus is presenting to you in His sermon on the mount has to do with getting you and those your minister to into heaven and away from hell.

Jesus, sometimes I lose focus concerning why I am doing what I am doing here on earth. Help me get reoriented about what matters and what doesn't. Help me get serious about getting people ready to stand before You on this judgment day. Help me listen and obey all those things You are presenting to me, so I will live the life and do the ministry that Your words are empowering and training me to do.

Everyone's Life-Record

Rev 20:12 (NIV) And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. Jesus' blood erased so many things from your record. By you helping people take advantage of Jesus and His provisions, they are getting all those things off of their record that would have condemned them to hell. As you stand there, all these things Jesus is teaching you will make perfect sense. But, it is vital they make perfect sense now, because now is when you can do something about it.

Jesus, You aren't asking for my permission for how You are setting all these things up. You aren't influenced by what the popular opinion is for what people believe will happen after death. You are God of the universe and You set the rules; You set the plans; and You decide what will happen in eternity. Help me really accept You as my Lord and my God. Help me fully understand that things are and will be just like You say they are.

This Is The Way It Will Be

Rev 20:13 (NIV) The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done.

The big issue about being **judged according to what you had done** is in John chapter three.

John 3:18 (NIV) Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. This is what you and those you minister to want to be judged on. You want to be judged on the basis of the fact that **whoever believes in Him is not condemned**.

Jesus, thank You that my record has been settled. Thank You for making it possible for me to believe in You and not be condemned on the judgment day. No wonder You said it would be better to poke out an eye or cut off a hand than go to hell. As I stand looking at this judgment event, it totally makes sense that I should do anything it takes to spend eternity with You.

Base Your Life And Ministry On Truth

Rev 20:14-15 (NIV) Then death and Hades *were* thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire *is* the second death. If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he *was* thrown into the lake of fire. This is being presented matter-of-factly. There is no discussion about what is going to happen. No one is going to be allowed to debate the issue. If some believe the wrong thing, they will suffer the consequences of not listening to Jesus. He is making it clear how things are and what will come next. It is your responsibility to help people know the facts, so they can make a knowledgeable decision.

Jesus, help me yield to Your presentation. Help me see all these Scriptures that are telling me what is going to happen and why. Prepare my life and my ministry based on all these truths. Help me listen to You, as I go through the Gospels, so I will live and minister based on Your truth. Give me a new sincerity, commitment, dedication, and trust in You and Your ministry.

Chapter Forty-Seven

The Main Human Relationship

Mat 5:31-32 (NIV) It has been said, “Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.” But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery.

It has been said: God let Moses say that. But, now that you have the Holy Spirit’s power available to you, Jesus took **the law of the Spirit of life** back to the place where it was supposed to be. Jesus is making it clear to you that Christianity can only be lived through Him.

Mat 19:36 (NIV) Some Pharisees came to Him to test Him. They asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?” “Haven’t you read,” He replied, “that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’? So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.”

Mat 19:7-9 (NIV) “Why then,” they asked, “did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?” Jesus replied, “Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. *I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery.*”

Jesus, help me understand that this is Your command. I will be judged by this law from the moment You said it. Help me see that You are trying to protect the marriage and family from being broken apart. You are all about relationships; I, my spouse, and family are very dependent on intimate, loving, and caring relationships. Children are very fragile and need to be in an environment where they are loved and raised with care. Help me cooperate with this and allow You to empower my spouse and I to love and respect each other deeply.

Making Sin Easy

Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce: This is the way the world wants it. Rather than looking to Jesus for healing their relationship, they decide they married the wrong person. They decide that they have just grown apart. They decide they just need to make a clean break and start with a new fresh relationship. But, God made them **one flesh**. They are no longer two people; they have become one person.

Jesus, help me and those I minister to, to realize that something supernatural happened when we got married. Help us look beyond the world’s teachings and views. Marriage is God’s creation; and a man and woman got involved with Him at marriage. **So, we are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.**

Jesus Is God

But I tell you: Once again, Jesus is demonstrating Who He is. **Luke 4:36 (NIV)** **All the people were amazed and said to each other, “What is this teaching? With authority and power He gives orders to evil spirits and they come out!”** The type of relationship you have with Jesus will be determined by Who you see Him and His words as being. Eve saw God’s words as being something open for debate. How do you see Jesus’ words.

John 1:1 (NIV) **In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.** Jesus, help me realize that I must respect You as my God. Help me embrace Your words as eternally powerful and enduring. Help me know Who You are, so I can live and minister based on truths that I can quote, present as final, and use as the facts of life. As I live and minister, help me not say or do anything that I don’t back up with Your Word.

This Is What You Are Basing Your Life On

Luke 21:33 (NIV) **Heaven and earth *will* pass away, but My words *will never* pass away.** So, when you read, memorize, quote, and base your life on Jesus’ words, you are embracing the laws, rules, commands, and principles of eternity. Your life is built on an eternal security that ***will never* pass away.** You must not enter into eternity based on anything else. You need to know that your future is established in Jesus and His words.

Jesus, a lot of eternity is a mystery to me. I am heading into it with a lot of missing information. You are only allowing me to get glimpses of what it holds. So, help me get prepared for something that I can’t anticipate all that is involved. But, in spite of the fact that it seems like I understand this life better than I do eternity, help me see that eternity is much more important for me to prepare for. Help me do what it takes to get ready for it.

The Marriage Command

But I tell you that *anyone* who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress: The issue is the word “causes;” you are putting your spouse in a situation where they are in a relationship that God cannot bless. And, you are doing things to them that God cannot bless you for. It isn’t a sin that God can’t forgive; but, it is a sin that you will reap the side effects of. Where you were in a relationship with your spouse that had issues that God was wise enough and powerful enough to heal, now you are in a relationship that He can’t bless; and, so is your former spouse.

Gal 6:7 (NIV) **Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.** Jesus, help me understand that I can’t just do wrong, bad, or evil on purpose, with the plan that I will go ahead and do it and then repent. I know that, in most cases, You will forgive me. But, You won’t keep me from reaping what I have sown. And, if necessary, You will discipline or punish me for doing it on purpose. Help me be clear on the fact that You **cannot be mocked.** I cannot do wrong, bad, or evil things on purpose and get by with it.

Encouraging Discipline

Heb 12:5-6 (NIV) And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: “My son, do not make light of the Lord’s discipline, and do not lose heart when He rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those He loves, and He punishes everyone He accepts as a son.” If you have gotten divorced or are thinking about it, you need to consider what your life is or will be going the way it is. Your activities of life have results and consequences. Living Jesus’ way has blessing and going against Him has consequences.

That word of encouragement: Jesus, discipline and punishment don’t sound like something encouraging. But, help me understand that anything You do to help me spend eternity with You is wonderful. If I need discipline or punishment, help me accept it with **encouragement**. Help me be **encouraged** that You love me enough to do whatever I need to get me into eternity with You. But, help me take the discipline, as a warning that I need to change.

You Can’t Do These Things On Purpose

1 Cor 6:9-10 (NIV) Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. Sometimes things can get so bad in a marriage that you just want to end it. Divorce seems like a solution, a healing, and a path to a better life. But, sin is never an answer, no matter how much life is causing you pain.

Jesus, help me see that **inheriting the Kingdom of God** is more important than producing some kind of temporary solution to pain here on earth. Plus, You are a miracle working God. You can do those things that seem impossible. Help me live a life of faith in You that trusts that You have sinless solutions that will work better than anything I can come up with.

Remember Past Solutions

1 Cor 6:11 (NIV) And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. Prior to your salvation, you got a chance to see how your, the world, and the devil’s solutions worked out for you. The mess you were in and the pain you were experiencing came from solutions that didn’t come from Jesus. He isn’t putting these laws, rules, and commandments on you and leaving it up to you to fulfill them. When He tells you not to do something or it will be a sin, He has awesome answers for how to obey and be blessed mightily.

Jesus, I have been in situations before where I was sure I had the solution. I have already put my skills to the test for solving my problems. I remember what my life was like, when I was following my guidelines and the world’s systems. Plus, I have seen numerous other people, who have tried all their procedures for solving life’s problems. And, I have seen what all of us have ended up with. Help me keep my trust in You. You have already demonstrated that You know how to best run life. Help me be so sure of Your way that I help others see my faith and confidence in You and follow my example.

Chapter Forty-Eight

Your Word Is Your Bond

Mat 5:33-37 (NIV) Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not break your oath, but keep the oaths you have made to the Lord.’ But I tell you, do not swear at all: either by heaven, for it is God’s throne; or by the earth, for it is His footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. Simply, let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No;’ anything beyond this comes from the evil one.

Contractual Honesty

Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not break your oath, but keep the oaths you have made to the Lord:’ Jesus doesn’t want you being forced to be honest. He doesn’t want you having to swear to tell the truth, in order for people to believe you. He wants your attitudes and character to speak for themselves. If it is a stranger, who is doing their first business deal with you, of course they need some kind of assurance. But, they should soon learn to trust you, according to your word.

Jesus, help me never lie, mislead, stretch the truth, have to use words that are indicating I am now telling the truth, or need to swear to tell the truth. Help me treat people with such love, care, kindness, and respect that they automatically trust me. Show me how to talk in such a way that I don’t indicate that I need to give people proof that I am telling the truth. Help me speak with such clarity and straightforwardness that people can tell I am being truthful.

Swearing To Tell The Truth

But I tell you, do not swear at all: If you are in a court proceeding and it is the law that you swear to tell the truth, that is just to put you in accountability to that law. You aren’t trying to prove your honesty. You are making yourself liable to the law. Jesus is dealing with you going around swearing to tell the truth to cause people to trust you. It is a procedure where you use swearing or making an oath to make yourself look honest. If you need that device, then you are trying to manipulate and fool people.

Jesus, I have seen habitual liars use this system to try to get people to trust them. They will spend time telling me how truthful they are. Rather than just doing what it takes to demonstrate their honesty and integrity. They try to hide their dishonesty by swearing to tell the truth. Show me that these are deceitful people, who are using contracts, making oaths, and swearing to tell the truth as a way to try to get me to trust them. They are trying to get my guard down, so they can swindle me.

Creating An Illusion

But I tell you, do not swear at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne: If you try to find the most sacred thing you can think of to swear by, then you are using something holy to make yourself look holy. Since people trust **God's throne**, you would be hoping that its credibility would give you credibility. Jesus wants you to live a life of credibility. He doesn't want you to *look* credible; He wants you to *be* credible.

Jesus, help me not try to use the throne of God to make me look good. Help me see that looking good is a façade. I am trying to create the *illusion* of being good. I am trying to get people to see me through the guise of something that is obviously good. Help me live a life of good, so I can *earn* people's trust rather than trying to create it.

Truth Through Love

But I tell you, do not swear at all: ...or by the earth, for it is His footstool: You probably haven't heard anyone swear by the earth. But, what Jesus is trying to tell you is, all those things that you might use to give you credibility, they all belong to God. They don't give you credibility, they give God credibility. He created them, not you. This procedure is to try to find something that would put you into accountability. You would be saying something that is similar to something you might be more familiar with: "If I'm lying, I'm dying."

Eph 4:15 (NIV) Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into Him Who is the Head, that is, Christ. Jesus, help me not use things that make me look like I fear You as proof of me telling the truth. Help me not try to prove to people that I would be afraid to lie to them. Show me that if I have to subsidize my words with a fear of You, then truth isn't coming out of me through love. Help me demonstrate truth through God's love that has been poured into my heart. Help me want to be honest with them because I love them.

Honoring A Contract

But I tell you, do not swear at all: ...or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King: As you can see, people back in Jesus' time were working hard trying to get people to trust them. But, if the only reason you are being honest is because you signed a contract, then you aren't getting Jesus' message here. If you are being honest because you have to, because it is in your best interest, or because you might get caught, then you aren't where Jesus wants to take you.

Jesus, work a miracle in my heart. Help me be honest because I am honest. Help me not consider how I might get out of an agreement. Help me constantly remember why I agreed to do it in the first place. If it turns out that I didn't take everything into account before I made the agreement, help me be willing to suffer the consequences. Help me be a pure and righteous representative of You. Empower me to do what is right, even if it hurts.

Something Dear To You

And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black: Your head is something you can't live without. If you are lying or being dishonest and God makes something bad happen to your head, that would be a horrible thing. So, you would assume that no one would lie or be dishonest, if they were putting their head in jeopardy. Swearing on your mother's grave, swearing on your life, or swearing on anything that is special to you, is all a scam of trying to prove something that should be obvious. If your life, the way you treat people, your past history, and your relationship with Jesus aren't enough, then you need to take it all to Jesus for healing and transformation. Jesus doesn't want any swearing to do the job.

Jesus, help me see that all of this has to do with honesty and integrity. You are dealing with artificial things that I might use to establish who I am. Show me that I have to win people's trust not talk them into it. If I am dealing with a stranger, help me be willing to sign a contract or provide collateral, so I can start them on a journey of learning to trust me. But, help me not just involve myself in business deals. Help me build relationships that share You.

Simply, let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No:' If it is "yes, I swear," then you are breaking Jesus' command. If you are talking to someone and you raise your hand or cover your heart, as an indication that you are telling them the truth, Jesus doesn't allow that. If you say things like, "trust me, I know what I am talking about," these are the things Jesus wants you to pray and ask Him to set you free from. You are using world systems to try to get people to believe you. Jesus only wants the way you treat people be the way they feel about you.

Jesus, I am glad You are directing me into *being* rather than trying to *act like*. Set me free from using artificial methods for creating trust. The world taught me to smile, call people by their name, dress for success, and all kinds of tools for trying to get people to trust and believe in me. Help me dress for being a representative of Who You are. Help me smile because the fruit of the Spirit is flowing like a river in and through me. Help me call people by their name because I respect and love them. Help me be honest because You have made me honest.

Anything beyond this comes from the evil one: It's evil to manipulate, try to *get* trust, try to *prove* you are honest, or try to *cause* people to believe you. Jesus wants to change your attitudes and character, so you are trustworthy, credible, and honest. Prior to you getting people to trust and believe in you, Jesus wants you to be doing so many wonderful, kind, and loving things to and for them that it is automatically built. Even in business relationships, Jesus wants you to try to take them into a friendship, a ministry, and a Christian family member.

Jesus, help me not just go about my day doing what I did when I was unsaved. Help my eyes not only look at groceries on the shelf, the sidewalk I am walking on, or the cashier, as only someone I am paying my bill to. Help me build relationships, trust, friendships, and Christians. Help me go about my day smiling, being friendly, helpful, loving, and mentoring. Show me what you are trying to set me free from. Help me see that swearing can only help me establish business relationships and not relatives in Your family.

Chapter Forty-Nine

Don't Get Even

Mat 5:38-42 (NIV) You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

This Is Old Testament Scripture

You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' Just because Jesus changed some to the Old Testament Scriptures, doesn't mean the Old Testament is invalid. This rule Jesus changed, was a way for people to take things to court and get justice. It was a way to keep people from having chaos, anarchy, and tyranny. Until the kings were brought into the Jewish government, Israel was governed by God. They were under a theocracy. These were legal rules for making sure the nation was functioning properly.

Jesus, teach me that the Old Testament wasn't just a book dealing with spiritual growth. It was also a governmental system for helping people get along with one another. Show me that You are removing me from human governmental systems and putting me under Your rule. You are now my Lord, my King, and my God. Even though I still belong to a human government, my main governmental system is being enforced by You. You are laying out my temporary and eternal governmental rulership as a child of God.

Jesus Is Supplying Your Needs

But I tell you, do not resist an evil person: The relationship you now have with an evil person was changed. You were to take them to court and get them punished for what they did to you. You were to try to convince the civil court to get you compensated for all you suffered and lost. Jesus is commanding you to not take matter into your own hands. He used sheep as examples. They lack the intelligence, the defense mechanisms, the ability to flee, or the ability to fight. Their *only* hope for survival is with their shepherd. That is the relationship Jesus wants to have with you. Your Shepherd is the most powerful, capable, and caring person in existence.

Jesus, help me not get into a battle, a dispute, or a struggle with an evil person. Help me see that You want me to try to disengage from them as soon as is possible. Since they are evil, help me understand that they may not be redeemable. I may not be able to salvage them in any way. So, help me do what it takes to get out of their focus and go on about my life.

Stay On Target

If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also: This event can distract you, change your goals, redirect your efforts, and damage your heart and mind. Jesus wants you to do what it takes to go with the flow. He wants you to stay on assignment with Him.

Jesus, help me realize that being slapped on the cheek can create all kinds of thoughts, feelings, plans, strategies, and goals in my life. If I allow a person like that to reorient my schedule and plans for the day, it gives Satan an opportunity to take control of them. Help me not be brought under the influence of an evil person, who is typically working for Satan. I am on task with You; we are doing things that You want done for the day. You want to remain in control over my schedule, my activities, and my goals. Help me keep my eyes fixed on You.

There Is A Lot More Where That Came From

And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well: This is where you try to agree with your adversary through mediation. But, if you end up in court, let them win the civil suit and then add something else to their win. Throw in a bonus, so they can see that Jesus is your source. Be a representative of Him, so they can see that you love people rather than things. Show them where your faith and trust are.

Jesus, help me see a court proceeding as an opportunity for me explaining how Your monetary system works. Help me explain that the more I give, the more You bless me with spiritual growth and physical blessings. So, as I give my adversary a bonus gift, help me explain to the court why I am doing it. Let me present Biblical principles to them, so Your Word is spread everywhere. Help me teach as many principles, as they will allow me to share.

Take Advantage Of Opportunities

If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles: The first mile is taken by force. The second is a gift. This helps demanding, forceful people to see the love and forgiveness of Jesus. While you are going two miles with them, it may give you an opportunity to teach Jesus' Biblical principles to them. Since they see your loving cooperation during the first mile, and then see your generous gift during the second, they may be wondering why you are so different.

Jesus, this really helps me with my life and ministry. You are helping me see how to not be distracted, how to not change my goals, and how to not allow my attitudes to be contaminated. You are showing me ministerial opportunities, where You may be allowing things like this to happen, so I can minister to someone I wouldn't typically be able to speak into their life.

Keep This In The Whole Bible's Context

Give to the one who asks you: There is a case where a beggar asked Peter for money and he told the beggar that none of the money he had was his to give. But, he explained that he had special spiritual provisions to give him. So, in that case, Peter demonstrated that what you give may not be what was asked for. Someone may ask you for things that don't just belong to you. They may be jointly owned. Also, it may be asked by someone that your gift would do harm to them if you gave it to them. Professional beggars may need to get a job.

Jesus, help me see that this isn't the only Scripture in the Bible. Help me not just isolate it and treat it like it requires me obey it as all-inclusive command. But, help me not just explain it away or ignore it. Help me to, as much as is possible, be generous with my things.

Additional Obligations

Do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you: Let's say you loan something to someone who is taking advantage of you and your resources. If you just apply this principle and ignore the other Scriptures in the Bible, you will neglect this person's spiritual needs. They, in this case, are a cheat and a thief. It isn't your job to force them to stop cheating and stealing. But, it is your job to point out where they are headed, if they don't repent.

Jesus, help me see the ministerial opportunities that are presenting themselves in these commands. Help me see that me cooperating with these people isn't always enough. Help me not just hope they get the point. Help me verbally explain the points and principles to them. When an abuser wants to borrow from me, help me not allow anything to keep me from using that opportunity to share Your greatness to them, while I have their attention.

What Does This Look Like In Real Life?

John 15:12 (NIV) My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Don't forget what Jesus was doing in the sermon on the mount. He was giving you actual, specific examples of what loving **each other as He has loved you** looks like in real life. He isn't willing to just let you decide what you think to **love each other as I have loved you** looks like in real life. Your life and ministry can't be based on what you think life should look like. It has to be based on what Jesus says it is. He will be everyone's eternal judge on That Day.

Jesus, help me see that my life and my ministry aren't being left up to my opinions. They aren't left up to anyone else's opinions either. You haven't left anything to chance. You are making everything clear to me, as to what You want me to be praying for and allowing You to install in my life and ministry. Help me see that these are things that You will give me and my friends, when we pray for them. You are making Your will clear concerning them. Help me see that every one of these commands are things I must pray for in life and ministry.

And, What Does This Look Like In Real Life?

John 15:7 (NIV) If you remain in Me and My words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. How do you **remain in** Jesus and His **words**? This is also being revealed and explained to you. These are Jesus' words. These are the things you are to be praying that He will empower you to **remain in**. He is bringing you to a place where you can **ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you**.

Jesus, help me always be aware of what Your goals are in exposing me to these things. Show me that Your discipleship training is designed to transform me, so You can work in and through me. You are working on my attitudes and character. And, you are helping me join You in Your life, ministry, message, and methods. Help me see that if I can't **ask whatever I wish, and it will be given** me, my life and ministry will be uneventful and powerless. Help me yield to all this training and transformation. Help me accept each word You speak, as creative words that bring power and supernatural change in my life and ministry.

Chapter Fifty

Love Is Very Versatile

Mat 5:43-45 (NIV) You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

Mat 5:46-47 (NIV) If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And, if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?

Making Rules You Like

You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy:’ These are the kinds of rules that are popular. It may be a little hard to love your neighbor; but, hating your enemy is something you would be glad for God to require of you. But, that isn’t what God told them to do. **Exo 23:4-5 (NIV) If you come across your enemy’s ox or donkey wandering off, be sure to take it back to him. If you see the donkey of someone who hates you fallen down under its load, do not leave it there; be sure you help him with it.**

Jesus, help me not embrace the rules of the world that I like. They tend to tell me what I want to hear. Help me see that You tell me what I need to hear. Show me that I can start out with a person being my enemy and eventually find that they aren’t like I thought. Help me realize that You have ways of taking two enemies and helping them work out their differences. Help me follow Your commands, so You can achieve those supernatural things that I can’t.

Addressing The Potential

But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you: Just because someone mistreats you or hates you, doesn’t mean Jesus can’t transform their life. Saul, who became Paul, was such a person. Before a person is born again, they can be very evil. Plus, Jesus wants you to be guiltless. He wants you to show everyone Who He is and what He is like. If your enemy never accepts Jesus, you did your part to make it possible for them.

Jesus, help me see that You aren’t telling me to be nice to my enemy. You are telling me to love them. If someone is persecuting me, empower me to look beyond myself and see what I would want them to do, if I were the persecutor. I would want them to love me and pray for me, so I would turn from my wicked ways and come to You. Help me put myself in their place, as it relates to their eternal destiny.

Working On Your Final Exam

Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven: As you can see, your eternal destiny is an issue here. “**That you may be**” is talking about your final exam. Whatever you do to the least of these, you do to Jesus.

Jesus, help me understand that I must yield to Your power in my life. Teach me that these aren't suggestions You are presenting. But, as difficult as they seem, remind me that this isn't Old Testament law. You have put the Holy Spirit in me, so I can be empowered to live the Christian life. Help me see that my main issue is wanting to. If someone persecutes me, help me come to You, so You can empower me to love and pray for them. Help me never read anything in the Bible and think I can do it. And, help me never read anything in the Bible and think it is impossible.

Pray To Be Like Your Heavenly Father

He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous: Why does He do that? Shouldn't He just be nice to those who are good? But, if He did that, how would they see Who He is and What He does. If evil people only saw God's goodness coming to you, then it would be an indirect message. They are experiencing God's goodness personally. If it helps them repent, then it served its purpose. If they experience it and don't repent, then God has been faithful to them; they are without excuse.

Jesus, show me why You are so generous to everyone. Help me understand why You want me to love and pray for persecutors. Teach me the power of living a life in front of them that represents You. Since no one in all the world would have come up with such an incredible plan, help me see that I must show it to them or they will never know.

The Basis Of Rewards

If you love those who love you, what reward will you get: If you get your reward here, you won't get one in eternity. It is vital for you to be aware of this rule. It is only in those cases where you do something good and don't get any reward or benefit for it. If you understand this rule, it will help you understand the Bible and Jesus' teachings better. He is constantly teaching you to do things that are uncomfortable, not fair, inconvenient, and difficult.

Jesus, help me see that this life is like that. It takes memorization, study, hard work, and long hours to get ahead. If I relax and take it easy, I am getting my reward at that moment. It isn't doing anything for my career, my investments, or my future. Help me understand that on this planet, I am sacrificing for things that will soon pass away. But, all inconvenience, difficulty, sacrifice, inequity, and service for eternity will last forever.

You Must Be Different

Are not even the tax collectors doing that: To be the salt and light of a Christian, you must be different. The world has embraced those things that are selfish, easy, self-beneficial, bring them popularity, and give them all the praise. Satan doesn't mine you being prideful, greedy, covetous, dishonest, selfish, or immoral. With him, you can get all your rewards right here. He doesn't want you to have an eternal perspective. So, he will let you be a cheating, lying, and greedy tax collector and only love those who love you.

Jesus, help me see Satan's plan to be like drugs that take a person into a stupor. As long as he can keep them oblivious, he can lead them down a path into destruction. They are getting all there rewards here, so they are happy. But, they are selling out all of eternity. Their eyes on all the cares of this world, so they won't be able to make any plans for Your eternal Kingdom. But, when this life is over for them, *then* they see the error of their ways. Help me bring them out of that stupor and help them realize the truth.

You Can't Fit In

And, if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others: As a Christian and a minister, you must do better than the world. You must do good things that the typical "good" person *would not do*. If you spend all your time with Christians, then you are breaking this command. If you are giving all your friends an assignment to spend all their time doing church work, you are teaching them wrong. You must take your trainees out like Jesus did. You must expose them to teaching, like this sermon on the mount, while being places where the unsaved are. Jesus' method was very clear and very effective.

Jesus, help me do a serious study of Your methods for preaching Your message, doing Your ministry, and living Your life. Help me realize that, if I don't follow Your method, I will fail to reach the lost. And, I will fail to properly teach the saved. Show me how to do things and spend time doing them Your way. Help my friends and I treat people very differently than the world does. Help me lead them into growing spiritually and then sharing that growth.

Don't Follow World Teaching

Do not even pagans do that: The world will teach you how to have friends that you can network with. They will show you how to pick those friends that help you reach your business goals. They will teach you to find those who are compatible. If you don't like someone, they would have you assume that it isn't the right chemistry. You will be trying to find the right people, when Jesus helped His disciples become the right people.

Jesus, I know You couldn't just pick anyone to be Your disciples. They had to have a desire to allow You to train and change them. But, they definitely weren't the same people, after You got them ready. Help me yield to You, so You can guide me to those people You want me to spend time with. Help me realize that I can't make these decisions based on who they are now. Help me not pick people who will just benefit me. Let me be willing to make sacrifices to help them grow and become who they need to be.

Chapter Fifty-One

A Double Goal

Mat 5:48 (NIV) Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect. As you know, you got a perfect record with God at salvation and justification. However, it must be your goal to pursue perfection in your behavior with yourself, other people, and with God. As long as you are on this planet you will never totally achieve it. But, it is your job to do what it takes to pursue it with all your heart.

2 Cor 6:17 (NIV) “Therefore come out from them and be separate,” says the Lord. “Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you will be My sons and daughters,” says the Lord Almighty.

2 Cor 7:1 (NIV) Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.

Cooperating With Jesus

In this sermon on the mount, Jesus is laying out for you, what it looks like, in real life, to **come out from them and be separate**. He is teaching you; and He expects you to expose your trainees to Him, so He can teach them. Being separate has two parts to it. You are separating yourself from those things that are hurting you on earth and keeping you from joining Jesus’ eternal Kingdom. Also, you are being separated, so you can show others that kind of a life they can have. At salvation and justification, you couldn’t do this second part. So, Jesus is empowering you to know what you need and be able to live it. He is answering these prayers.

Jesus, I thank You for teaching me these things. Help me see that this is the life You saved and justified me into. You gave me a perfect record with God, so I could have direct access to the Holy Spirit’s power to start living these things You are teaching. Help me believe You are hearing all these prayers I am praying. Let me take faith-action and live on the basis of the fact that You have empowered me through each of these prayers. Help me join You in living this life step-by-step, as I learn each principle in Your sermon.

Taking The Steps

Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you:

- Your relationship with **unclean things** has to do with not **touching** them on purpose.
- Finding out what an **unclean thing** looks like.
- Praying and asking Jesus to empower you to **touch no unclean thing**.
- To believe that He heard and answered your prayer.
- To do it, so you can spend eternity with Him and love others enough to help me do it too.
- To take faith-action and join Jesus in living on the basis of the fact you are empowered.
- To spend time expressing your thankfulness to Jesus and to those around you.

Jesus, help me always take these steps every time You give me a command. Help me teach others to take these steps, so they won't try to use human effort or world training to live the Christian life. Make it clear to me that my goal is to **be perfect, therefore, as my heavenly Father is perfect.** Help me not stop taking these steps all the days of my life, so I will always be pursuing this goal. Set me free from ignoring them, getting tired of pursuing them, forgetting what they are, or feeling like I already have them. Plus, while I am pursuing them, help me be exposing everyone I can to them.

Heading In The Right Direction

I will be a Father to you, and you will be My sons and daughters: This is a command; God's relationship doesn't come unless this command is obeyed. If it weren't for your perfect record, you can see that it would be impossible for you to live up to never *touching an unclean thing*. When Jesus said: **"Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."** He spoke perfection into you. Just like, when He said: **"Let there be light and there was light."** so did you get perfection credited to your record with God. But, that actually happened as salvation and justification. So, what happened at the moment you read this verse?

Jesus, teach me that, as I read this verse in Matthew 5:48, You spoke the power for me to start heading into the journey toward perfect behavior. All the things you taught in the Gospels are now available for me to pursue in real life. Help me realize that You spoke faith and power into me to take faith-action and start practicing *living* each principle. Help me realize that I would never be able to do this without You speaking this faith and power into me. Thank You for getting me supernaturally ready to *live* this life in faith and power.

Commands And Promises

Since we have these promises: Just like Jesus' commands aren't just instructions but creative power, so are God's promises. However, God's promises are based on Jesus' commands. You have to **come out from them and be separate**, in order to receive this promise. So, Jesus has been showing you what being **separate** looks like, gave each of His commands with creative power for you **come out from them and be separate**, led you into prayer asking for them to be applied to your life, heard and answered that prayer, and then offers to join you in living on the basis of the fact that you have His power to **come out from them and be separate**.

I will be a Father to you, and you will be My sons and daughters: Jesus, by giving me a perfect record and by helping me **come out from them and be separate**, I can pray Your prayer and say: **"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."** Thank You for making this promise available to me.

Knowing How To Purify Yourself

Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves: Since you know how to **purify** yourself through asking Jesus to help you live each of these commands, this Scripture isn't confusing to you. Since you know He is speaking power into you through each command, you start practicing living them. It gives you faith that it is already spoken into you.

Jesus, since You taught me to *pray* to live the Christian life rather than *try* to live it, my life has been incredible. Since You have taught me to believe You are speaking living power into me through each command, I have been set free from the pressure of trying to live impossible things. I am no longer wondering, wishing, trying, and failing. You are empowering me to practice each command. But, if I do fail, I know that You will pick me up, dust me off, and help me to keep practicing. Help me keep pursuing perfection even though I know I will never actually treat myself, other people, and You with perfection; let it be my goal.

Knowing What Contaminates Your Body And Spirit

Let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit: Without Jesus' sermon on the mount, you wouldn't know what **contaminates** your **body and spirit**. You would have lists of contaminants, in the Bible. But, what do those contaminants look like in real life. Jesus' ministry is so vital, helpful, powerful, and meaningful. He took out the time to explain the intricate details of **everything that contaminates body and spirit**.

Jesus, I can see how it is impossible for me to live life and do ministry without Your teaching and training. It is now obvious to me why Your disciples were so much better than me and my trainees. Help me embrace this study and prayer time, so You can move me into Your life, message, ministry, and methods.

Holy Perfection

Perfecting holiness out of reverence for God: Holiness is perfect righteousness. Only God is and lives out holiness. However, He doesn't allow you to just be glad and satisfied with Him being holy anymore that He lets you just appreciate that He is perfect. **Heb 12:14 (NIV) Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.** Along with your perfect record with God came holiness credited to it. But, since righteousness is you doing only good things to yourself, other people, and God's plan, perfect righteousness, which is holiness, must be your goal.

Jesus, help me be actively involved in **perfecting holiness out of reverence for God**. Help me see that this is what You are trying to accomplish in me. Raise the standard to **holiness** in my behavior with myself, other people, and Your plan. Let it become that intense **hunger and thirst for righteousness**, so **I will be filled**. Help me not just accept the fact that I won't ever be perfect and not put out a supernatural effort for it. Since You are living in and through me, You are perfect. So, help me completely yield to You and Your perfection. Let me see that this is the only way for me and those around me to get the perfect help we need.

Chapter Fifty-Two

Eternal Rewards

The Principle

Mat 6:1 (NIV) Be careful not to do your ‘acts of righteousness’ before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.

Using The Principle To Give

Mat 6:2-4 (NIV) So when you *give* to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Using The Principle To Pray

Mat 6:5-6 (NIV) And when you *pray*, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, Who is unseen. Then your Father, Who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Using The Principle To Fast

Mat 6:16 (NIV) When you *fast*, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Benefiting From An Action

Be careful not to do your ‘acts of righteousness’ before men, to be seen by them: As you can see, if you benefit from something you do, then that is your reward. What Jesus is trying to accomplish in you is, to be able to do incredible things and not get one bit of benefit out of it for yourself. Now, that probably does sound right to you; and, you are right! It doesn’t express the whole truth. You will get incredible benefits from everything you do, if you do it the right way.

Jesus, help me know what my motives are, when I am doing my **acts of righteousness**. Help me want my rewards to count for eternity. Help me understand that there are two ways of doing spiritual and ministerial things. I can do them and only get rewarded here. Or, I can do them and get rewarded both places. Help me understand that, if do them the right way, I won’t get rewarded through what I do. Instead, You will reward me here *and* in eternity because I gave You all the glory.

Don't Do It That Way!

If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven: You can get money, possessions, positions, popularity, prestige, power, pleasure, and accomplishments the right way and be rewarded on earth and in God's Kingdom. Jesus is giving you very specific instructions for how to do your **acts of righteousness**. And, if you allow Him to install the principle, it will carry on into every other aspect of your life and ministry.

Jesus, help me understand the basic principle. Help me not try to get any benefit from what I am doing in my **acts of righteousness** *through the praise of men*. Help me see that You are telling me that I lose that reward, when I do it **before men, to be seen by them**. Show me that this is how I can lose many heavenly rewards. Help me follow each of Your specific instructions on every individual **act of righteousness**.

Specific Giving Guidance

But when you *give* to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret: This is an illustration of how private your giving should be. By following this illustration, you will be able to give in such a way that no one will be able to praise you, appreciate you, reward you, or cause you to lose your reward. However, if there should be a situation where you have to give publicly, you will need to do a lot of praying and asking Jesus to control your motives for giving.

Jesus, thank You for laying out the specifics for giving to the poor. I know it is going to take a lot of guidance, as I try to apply this to every situation. Help me understand that the main issue is my motive not being to be seen by humans. But, I thank You for providing me with a rule-of-thumb, so I can see that my main way to give is secret. This greatly helps me not be tempted to do my giving so as to be seen by humans and get special credit for it.

Specific Prayer Guidance

But when you *pray*, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, Who is unseen: There will be situations where you will be called on to pray in public. Jesus did this on many occasions. But, this command is helping you with situations where you need to be protected from motives to do it **before men, to be seen by them**. As much as is possible, follow this principle, and you won't be tempted.

Jesus, help me always see why You give commands. They address situation where I am open to major temptation. You are trying to teach me all the possible pitfalls that I might accidentally fall into. You know all about life and how to live it successfully. Empower me to pray my prayers in such a way that I am not trying to impress people or saying things that I am really saying to them in prayer. Show me how to pray public prayers, where I am still not tempted to pray **before men, to be seen by them**. Help me stay humble before You.

Specific Fasting Guidance

When you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting: The object for fasting is to **not be obvious to men that you are fasting**. In this case, you can't just stay in a private room where no one can see you. But, you can do things that keep it from being obvious. Another possible pitfall is to tell people you are fasting or tell them how often you fast. If you do, that praise and respect you get from people will be your reward. There will be no reward for it in heaven.

Jesus, help me understand the importance of rewards in eternity. Help me see that I need to be doing things, like fasting, so as to build rewards in Your Kingdom. Help me know why I need to fast, what it does, and how to take advantage of it. Show me that I must take control over my body and make it do spiritual things. Empower me to bring it into subjection, so You can use it for those things You want to use it for.

A Good Rule For All Acts

Mat 6:1 (NIV) Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.

Bragging

Anything that you do so as to impress people will only benefit you on earth. This rule is a good rule for all the activities of your life. Your objective is to explain to people what Jesus is doing so as to help you do what you do and say what you say. A major way of helping people come to Jesus is to show them how He is helping you. It takes a lot of wisdom to be constantly giving Jesus credit for everything you do. But, that is the goal of your life. If people don't see how much He is making a difference in and through you, they won't want what you have. They will just think that you are just a gifted person and admire you.

Jesus, help me apply this principle to all of my life. Help me not live life in such a way that I get my rewards here on earth. Teach me that this principle is showing me how all of life works. It is also showing me how to go about doing things on earth that count in eternity. Show me how important this principle is for storing **up for myself treasures in heaven**.

The Treasure Principle

Mat 6:19-21 (NIV) Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Jesus, help me live my life in such a way that everything I do counts for eternity. Help me not just apply principles that help me with **acts of righteousness**. Help me have motives that are aimed at eternity. Help me do everything that You are directing me to do, so I am making it all be for the purpose of Your eternal Kingdom. Show me how to take things that I would normally just be doing for now and learn how to do them with an eternal perspective.

Chapter Fifty-Three

The Prayer Principle

Mat 6:7-8 (NIV) And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.

System-Steps

And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans: When you just pray as a technique, you are just trying to get your way. You have an objective; and, you are trying to God to help you reach that objective. So, you may lay out all kinds of convincing arguments trying to get God to do what you want Him to do. If you find yourself before God with your mind made up, you are in a bad place.

Jesus, help me not forget that my heavenly Father knows much more than I do. He loves me more than I love myself. And, He will only give me those things that are good for me and those around me. Help me realize that, if I come to Him with an attitude of trying to get Him to do what I want, I am not open to all His great knowledge, foreknowledge of the future, understanding, and wisdom. Set me free from thinking that I know what is best for me.

Love-Steps

For they think they will be heard because of their many words: If you start wondering how you are going to get God to hear your prayer, then you have a business relationship with Him. You are going over all the prayer procedures like you are getting ready to have a business meeting with the boss. God is your heavenly Father. He wants to give you the very best. But, when He made you in His Own image, He put you in charge of your life. If you don't come to Him realizing that He loves you supernaturally, your prayer methods will be messed up.

Jesus, I know that there are certain way for me to pray. I know You are about to teach me how to pray. But, help me not see it as a method, a system, or a procedure. Help me see it as a matter of love, respect, and honor. You are showing me how to approach my heavenly Father with love, respect, and honor. Then He will respond in the same way to me. But, if I don't, help me realize He can't allow me to stay in that bad spiritual condition. He will have to take care of my spiritual condition before He will help me with anything else.

Relationship-Steps

Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him: You aren't coming to God with anything that He doesn't already know. You aren't praying, so as to inform Him of some situation, need, want, or plan you have. You are dealing with your God-given free will. This is a permission-based relationship. You are learning a lot about God and He knows everything about you. You are just inviting Him into a situation.

Jesus, help me start in my prayer time with the knowledge that my ***Father* knows what I need before I ask Him**. Help me not spend a lot of time explaining things to Him that He already knows. Help me understand that the main thing that is holding back His provisions to my situation is my God-given free will. He requires that I invite Him into a situation He understands better than I do. Help me give Him my heart, my will, my plans, and my goals, so He can get involved in an area where I alone control the situation. Help me invite Him into an area of my life and needs that I must open to Him before He will help.

The Right Way To Pray

A Jesus-Command

Mat 6:9a (NIV) This, then, is how you should pray: This isn't a suggestion, this is a command. It doesn't always have to be prayed with these particular words; but, this **is how you should pray**. Many have tried to figure out the purpose, reasons, and strategies behind the elements of this prayer; but, **this, then, is how you should pray**. It has supernatural strategies, procedures, and principles behind it that humans will never figure out.

Jesus, help me respect You and Your supernatural knowledge, foreknowledge of the future, understanding, and wisdom. Help me realize that this has concepts inside of it that are way over my head. Show me that when I try to dissect it, I can misunderstand vital things that need to be addressed in the spirit realm. So, when I do make various changes, help me still pray this prayer as well. Help me understand that it addresses things I cannot comprehend.

Pray From A Heart Of Love

Mat 6:9b (NIV) "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name: Jesus, help me speak this from a heart of love. Help me not just say the words as a system or a method. Empower my heart to feel the relationship with my heavenly Father. Help me feel the greatness, the awesomeness, and the holiness of my heavenly Father. Give me the ability to use His love that that Holy Spirit poured into my heart to love Him. Help me take this prayer and bring it before Him with a supernatural love and respect for Him from me.

Pray From A Heart Of Respect

Mat 6:10 (NIV) Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven: Jesus, help me understand that the issues of my life, the lives of the people in this world, and the world systems are all in a deficit. The thing that is missing in all of us and all of our world is God's Kingdom and His will. Help me see that nothing will ever work perfectly, righteously, and justly without His total input. Show me that He will never be One Who we can disconnect from. His influence and will, will always be a constant need.

Pray From A Heart Of Need

Mat 6:11 (NIV) Give us today our daily bread: Jesus, I desperately need my heavenly Father's physical supply. Set me free from the life I have created through my own physical and financial support. Reveal to me how much I need His help with my physical and financial needs. I currently spend an unacceptable amount of time on something He needs to address.

Pray From A Heart Of Repentance

Mat 6:12 (NIV) Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors: Jesus, I am in constant need of forgiveness. My thoughts, feelings, words, and deeds are constantly being barraged by Satan, my body, and the world. Thank You for providing me with a perfect record with my heavenly Father. But, help me start treating myself and the people around me with a power-life, where I keep having less and less needs for forgiveness.

Empower me to use Your power-forgiveness for forgiving all those who do things I don't like. Help me forgive them quickly and completely. Help me put my relationships and human encounters in Your hands, so You can give me a loving and forgiving heart. If I am dealing with an evil person, give me Your wisdom for how to deal with them and then get away from them. But, above all, help me use Your power-forgiveness to forgive them.

Pray From A Submitted Heart

Mat 6:13a (NIV) And lead us not into temptation: Jesus, help me understand that, if I rebel against my heavenly Father, He will allow me to face temptations that He would have protected me from. Help me always keep in mind that You went through the major temptations for me. Help me submit myself to my heavenly Father, so He can empower me to deal with temptations from the point of victory. You have already won over every temptation, so all I have to do is take authority over them and defeat them.

Pray From A Righteous Heart

Mat 6:13b (NIV) But deliver us from the evil one: Jesus, teach me spiritual warfare, so my heavenly Father can help me spend most of my time helping people grow in You. Help me not get into situations where I am spending a lot of time fighting personal, spiritual battles. **Deliver me from the evil one**, so I am able to help others win over **the evil one**. Teach me spiritual warfare, so I will be able to stand in front of those who can't protect themselves.

The Forgiveness Mandate

Mat 6:14-15 (NIV) For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will *not* forgive your sins.

This command *cannot* be ignored. This can be a deadly spiritual condition that keeps you out of God's eternal Kingdom. Since there will not be any sin in God's eternal Kingdom, you must get **your Father's** forgiveness. As the Holy Spirit brings unforgiveness to your mind, use Jesus' power-forgiveness to forgive them. Do not wait; do not think about it; do not try to just use your own human forgiveness. You need supernatural forgiveness that heals your heart.

Jesus, help me see that You can empower me to forgive with a forgiveness that I can't produce. Show me that this Scripture can only be fulfilled by me accepting the fact that **apart from You I can do nothing**. Help me always keep in mind that none of these commands and requirements are accomplished by my human effort. Help me use Your power-forgiveness.

Chapter Fifty-Four

Being Influenced

Mat 6:22-23 (NIV) The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

It Really Matters

The eye is the lamp of the body: If you see something wrong, bad, or evil and you don't have a relationship with Jesus, where you take advantage of His power to turn your head or your eyes, then you are in trouble. If your eye, neck, and body muscles aren't trained to immediately turn away from you seeing immoral, ungodly, and sinful things, then you need to get right on that. If you don't see anything wrong with just looking, then you need to repent.

Jesus, help me take my exposure to things very seriously. Help me see that once something gets in, I can't unsee it. Let my reactions become extremely fast. I know that I will have to have a quick glance before I know it is wrong, bad, or evil. But, teach me that what I do from that moment on, is all on me. Empower me to accept that this consists of me either opening the door to Satan or immediately closing it.

What Makes Good Eyes?

If your eyes are good: It is a simple matter of what you look at. Good eyes are eyes that yield to the leadership of Jesus and the messages the Holy Spirit speaks to your conscience. But, if you have been making it a practice to look at questionable things, your conscience may already be hardened against the voice of the Holy Spirit. In that case, you won't see anything wrong with looking. Jesus and the Bible can say what they want, but you won't be able to hear.

Jesus, for everything that I am looking at that isn't pleasing to You, whether it is sex, money, worldly cares, or false religions that exercise my body and give me a better shape, help me see that I must bring them all to You for critiquing. Check my heart, that is running my eyes, and see if I am motivated by world principles rather than Biblical ones. Set me free from arguments, justifications, human reasoning, world philosophies, and social pressure that is motivating my heart and directing my eyes.

Full Means Pure Light

Your whole body will be full of light: If you have allowed your eyes to look at questionable things, your body is *not full* of light. That is a condition where you must bring each darkness-issue to Jesus and repent of it. **1 John 1:8 (NIV)** If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. Don't take any chances; don't try to prove your point; come to Jesus with an open heart and let Him show you what kind of things you have been looking at. If He gives you the slightest indication that you need to stop watching or looking at something, pray and ask Him to empower you to stop exposing yourself to that darkness.

Jesus, my body loves looking at all kinds of questionable things. The world is constantly trying to show me all kinds of wrong, bad, and evil things. Satan is always tempting me with sins and unacceptable things that would lead me down a path into destruction. I have not been successful, all the time, with resisting these things. Take my back to those times when darkness entered into my body and is still there. Help me remember and repent of each and every one of them, so my heart can be healed and my memory can be set free.

What Makes Bad Eyes?

But if your eyes are bad: This doesn't mean that all you look at are wrong, bad, and evil things. Your eyes are bad, if they do it some of the time. Sin is a disease that spreads. Spiritual darkness is a living thing. **Eph 6:12 (NIV) For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.** You aren't dealing with a *thing*; you are dealing with beings.

Eph 6:16 (NIV) In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Jesus, help me realize that even the arrows Satan shoots at me are active. They are **flaming!** If I let them in, they don't just stay there, they spread like a burning fire. Help me remember all the darkness I have allowed to enter into my heart and mind. Help me have the attitudes and character that want to be set free from *all* darkness. Show me that it isn't a **flesh and blood** or human issue. These are spiritual beings inflicting me with highly contagious, spreading, and contaminating things.

How Does It Get Full?

Your whole body will be full of darkness: The trick of the devil is to talk you into something seemingly insignificant. It's questionable; but, not an outright sin. You think, other Christians are doing it; so, it must not be *all that bad*. You figure that since no one is saying it is wrong, maybe you are just being a little too careful. You aren't going to make a habit of it; so, it probably won't hurt. But, you are ignoring the fact that it isn't a thing. It is a satanic trap that probably has some "good" things in it too. Bait is a "good" thing connected to a hook.

Jesus, if my standards were set by You, I wouldn't be measuring my exposure by how bad things are that I am *not* exposing myself to. If You are allowed to decide what is right, good, and righteous, some of the things I am seeing don't fit into that category. I have just set my standard based on the fact that what I look at, isn't nearly as bad as what others look at. Help me understand that even mildly contaminated things, that enter into my heart and mind, will grow. What I exposed myself to last year is "better" than what I see now. It is growing!

Is It Still Light?

If then the *light* within you is darkness, how great is that darkness: There are things that don't look like darkness; but, they don't look like light either. So, would you assume that it is a "gray" area. Are you good with something not being light? If it isn't light, Jesus doesn't see it as being gray. He sees gray and being a mixture of darkness and light. It is contaminated.

If then the *light* within you is darkness: Jesus, I wouldn't drink water that was kind of clean. I wouldn't eat food that didn't have *much* poison or filth in it. Help me see that I am being exposed to things I have considered to be "gray" areas that are, in fact, darkness. There are things I have allowed to enter into my eyes, because I couldn't find spiritual things I enjoyed as much. I allowed my body and my friends to lead me into things that "weren't all that bad," so I could have fun. But, they are contaminating my mind and heart.

How Did It Get So Dark?

How great is that darkness: As the sun goes down, it doesn't just suddenly get dark; it is a gradual process. When there is something you really want to see, it may only have a few bad things in it. Satan isn't going to try to get you to go all out. It doesn't become **great darkness** all at once. It was just a "gray" area that may have had *a lot* of good things to see. But, the only way you are going to be able to navigate through a world that does have a lot of good things with a few bad things is, you *must control your eyes!*

Jesus, help me avoid as many places as is possible where there is some bad and some good. But, I can't just go in a room and avoid all areas of mixture. So, help me navigate through the *necessary* areas of life, where I don't have a choice. Help me have total control over my eye, neck, and body muscles. Help me have quick, spiritual reflexes that empower me to only get a very small glimpse of something questionable. Help me, without delay, without curiosity, and without making sure I saw what I thought I saw, move my eyes away.

1 Cor 2:9-10 (NIV) However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him" --but God has revealed it to us by His Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.

No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him: It isn't just a life of what you cannot expose your eyes, ears, and body to, you are navigating into awesome things to expose yourself to now and in eternity. You aren't giving anything up! You are trading highly contagious, deadly things for eternal life. Don't let Satan get you to start feeling sorry for yourself. Don't let him cause you to feel like you are missing out. This is all about you making it clear to your friends that they are missing out.

Rom 8:18 (NIV) I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. Jesus, help me not let darkness start looking good to me. Help me not see the world as having more fun. Help me not let some thing that has mixture but had something I really wanted to see, be an enticement to feeling like I am getting cheated. Help me keep my eyes on my goal, my prize, and my eternal future. If I do have to sacrifice something, give me the attitude that the trade isn't worth it.

Chapter Fifty-Five

Don't Worry

It's Either Jesus Or Money

Mat 6:24 (NIV) No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money. This is more of a statement of fact. It is like Jesus saying to you, “Don’t even try; it’s not possible.” But, here is what is going to happen, if you try: **Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other.**

You cannot serve both God and Money: Jesus, if my faith is in me earning money, in what money can do, and if I only feel secure when I have adequate money, help me see that I am not serving You. Teach me how to put my trust in You taking care of my finances. Help me switch over to doing what You require for me to look to You for my physical and financial needs. Show me that it isn’t possible for me to serve You and put my trust in money.

Keeping Your Body Alive

Mat 6:25 (NIV) Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? When Jesus gets down to the basics of things that keep your body healthy and alive, this may be the place where you draw the line. How much time do you spend making sure these things are available for you?

Do not worry about your life: Jesus, help me sort this out; show me how you want me to survive. Teach me how You want control over how I earn my money. Help me see that I made a lot of career decisions. I made a lot of job decisions. I made a lot of purchase decisions. And, I made a lot of plans for my financial future. Help me see which ones were made without me consulting You. Help me make You my financial consultant. Help me understand that You aren’t my Lord, if I don’t let You decide my financial issues.

What Do You And Birds Have In Common?

Mat 6:26 (NIV) Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? You may not realize that the reason plants have seeds that birds can eat and live on, is because God designed the plants, the seeds, and the birds to be compatible. It wasn’t done by evolution; it wasn’t random; it was the plan and provision of God for birds.

Are you not much more valuable than they: Jesus, in my mind, I can logically see that I am more important than birds. And, I can see how wild bushes and flowers produce seeds that not only propagate themselves but also feed the birds. But, I am much more complicated, and my needs are much more sophisticated than theirs. Help me see how something I have put most of my time into, can be met after the manner of feeding birds.

The Only Reason You Are Alive

Mat 6:27 (NIV) Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? Jesus is expecting an obvious answer. He is looking for you to put these facts together and come up with the answer that no one can. You won't live one more second, without God keeping you alive. This is a vital, spiritual principle that must be embraced. If you are going to turn your finances over to Jesus, then this must be a principle that you believe with all of your heart.

Mat 8:20 (NIV) Jesus replied, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay His head." Jesus, one of the hardest things for me, is to not worry about finances. It is hard to take a chance that I will be poor, hungry, homeless, and cold. I need a miracle in my attitudes and character. You made a great point that the only reason I am alive is because You are keeping me alive second-by-second; but, it is still hard to yield to. I see, I believe, and trust You with my life. But, it is difficult for me to face the possibility of pain, suffering, hunger and thirst, cold and heat, and **no place to lay my head.**

Clothes Aren't Just Clothes

Mat 6:28-29 (NIV) And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. You have seen people who didn't worry about style, design, quality, or comfort. You aren't just concerned about covering your body and keeping it warm. You care about what people think. The world taught you to dress for success. The society decides who you probably are, based on what you wear.

Jesus, the style of my clothes are like my hair. It doesn't contribute any life-saving provisions; but, I like it styled, combed, cut, and colored indicating I am a good quality person. I heard over and over again that clothes say a lot about a person. What if You don't give me enough resources, so I can send a quality message to everyone? Help me trust You to do what is right with my clothing. Help me see that You love me more than I love myself.

Faith In God

Mat 6:30 (NIV) If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

If that is how God clothes the grass of the field: See! God cares about beauty, style, and quality. If He puts that much in something **which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire**, then you know what kind of a God you are trusting. So, Jesus takes you down to the basic issue. How would you answer the question: **"Will He not much more clothe you?"**

O you of little faith: Jesus, that is really what it comes down to. I am struggling with trusting my heavenly Father with my basic needs. Help me be set free from this. Your message is clear; You want me to stop spending the major part of my day with these things. You want me to be available to You, so You and I can be doing what You want to do. Help me be healed in this area, so you have me being yield to You and Your ministry.

This Is The Command

Mat 6:31 (NIV) So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ You must pray and get Jesus to help you pay off all debt. You must let Him teach You how to follow Him, wherever He wants to take You. You must be set free from all this worry. But, Jesus is more than able and willing to help you with all these areas. If you are tied up with the cares of the world, you aren’t available to Jesus.

Jesus, out of all the struggles I have had in life, I can see that this is one of the biggest. I have been able to yield to You in so many other areas. I have been able to trust You to take care of many other things. But, this is one where I am really feeling emotions that trying to hold me back. I am thinking about all kinds of worst-case scenarios that are trying to keep me from getting this incredible breakthrough. Help me not let this be the one thing I can’t give up.

Following The Trends

Mat 6:32 (NIV) For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. If your goals for food, clothing, housing, transportation, and finances are pretty much the same as the rest of society, then you are running side-by-side with the **pagans**. As you can tell, Jesus doesn’t consider that a good thing. If your life and ministry are going to be conformed to Jesus’ life, ministry, message, and methods, then you actually must be going in the opposite direction.

Jesus, I see why You are spending so much time on this. I have objections; I have tried to reinterpret these verses; I have gone to seminars that reinterpreted them; I don’t know of very many people who look at them the way You are presenting them. And, I don’t know how to get started heading into a full trust in Your financial supply. Like Peter, I have a house, a mother-in-law, a wife, and mouths to feed. I can’t just make this decision without a miracle being worked in me and my life. Help me win at this big issue.

Setting Your Priority

Mat 6:33 (NIV) But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. As usual, apart from Jesus you can do nothing. So, your first step into this lifestyle is to **seek first His kingdom and His righteousness**. You need spiritual power to make this happen. The results of you putting your total financial trust in Jesus will take His Kingdom and His righteousness flowing into your attitudes and character. You must be totally yielded to Jesus, so you can accomplish a very difficult assignment.

And all these things will be given to you as well: Jesus, help me see that seeking **first** Your **kingdom** and Your **righteousness** causes **all these things** to be given to me **as well**. Thank You for clarifying a very difficult concept and command. Show me that, if my attitudes and character are transformed by me putting my priority on Your Kingdom and righteousness, that will help me make all the right decisions. You will be able to guide me in what career, job, financial opportunity, and investments I will be making. You will be in first place in my life; and, that will empower me to be totally yielded to You.

Chapter Fifty-Six

Bringing Healing To A Friend

You Are Not The Judge

Mat 7:1 (NIV) Do not judge, or you too will be judged. When you see something wrong in someone, you may use it in an inappropriate way. Judging is to apply a verdict to someone. You have examined their life and have given them a sentence. You have decided what kind of crime they have committed, what they are guilty of, and what kind of punishment they deserve. But, Jesus' command is that you would not judge or you will bring judgment down on yourself.

Heb 10:30 (NIV) For we know Him Who said, “It is Mine to avenge; I will repay,” and again, “The Lord will judge His people.” Jesus, teach me that the first step in being able to minister to other people is to not judge them. If they have done some very evil things, then all I know is that they have done some very evil things. You are just showing me the facts. You aren't giving me these facts, so I can decide what punishment they should receive. I am not to use these facts to share with others about them. I am to know these facts, so You can give me spiritual procedures to help them be forgiven, healed, and set free.

Don't Be Critical

Mat 7:2 (NIV) For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged: In order to keep this from happening to you, you must understand what you are seeing. When a person comes into a hospital with damage to their body from having been driving too fast, the fact that they were breaking the law doesn't come into the issue. They don't ask the person what they were doing to cause it. All they are focused on is the wound. But, when a person comes into a Christian group with spiritual damage, all kinds of critiquing, judging, and evaluating takes place.

James 4:12 (NIV) There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the One Who is able to save and destroy. But you--who are you to judge your neighbor? Jesus, help me just look at the spiritual disease in a person. Help me do what medical doctors do. With no judgment, critical attitudes, or negative feelings, let me simply offer to help them be set free from those things that are hurting and driving them.

Don't Be Even A Little Bit Critical

And with the measure you use, it will be measured to you: If you are a very critical, gossiping, backbiting person, then you can count on this law being severely applied to you. If you are just mildly critical, then you will still have Jesus seeing to it that criticism will be coming your way because of it. Pray and ask Jesus to help you be able to see the evil condition in a person and not involve yourself in trying to decide what should be done to them.

Heb 4:12 (NIV) For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Jesus, show me how to apply Your Word to a person and not my opinion. Help me see that You are empowering me to evaluate their spiritual situation, so I can know which Scriptures to apply. But, help me not apply judgment Scriptures to them, when they are open to healing. Help me only apply judgment Scriptures, when they are denying they have sinned. But, protect me from judging them.

You Have The Plank

Mat 7:3 (NIV) Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? When you can see a fault in someone else's life, you aren't qualified to help until you have taken that same issue before Jesus about yourself. When a doctor goes in to operate on a patient, they scrub up. They don't want to contaminate the patient. That is what Jesus is teaching you here.

1 Pet 1:16 (NIV) For it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy." Jesus, help me get every issue in my life purified before I go to help someone else. Help me bring all my sins, shortcoming, failures, and misdeeds of my body before You. I know this moment of cleansing won't last long. I will soon go do or say something and there will recontamination. But, help me temporarily get the plank out of my own eye, so I won't contaminate the person I am trying to help. Help me do like doctors and do a quick scrubbing before I go.

You May Feel Ready

Mat 7:4 (NIV) How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? Always keep in mind that you, like all humans, have a double standard. It is easy for you to see how bad things are that others do. But, you can see why you "had" to do it in your situation. Jesus has to be the evaluator of whether or not you are ready to go help someone. Bring those things that you see as **specks** in your eye to Jesus. Let Him show you their true size. Very often you will discover that things you thought were **specks**, were actually **planks**.

1 Pet 1:17 (NIV) Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear. Jesus, help me give up my own evaluation of myself. Help me not go to my friend with a feeling of superiority. Help me come as a servant, who is volunteering to serve them with something that is doing damage to them. Free me from any critical attitudes, pride, judgmentalism, or authority. Help me humble myself before them and serve them with those things only You can offer.

Hypocrisy

Mat 7:5 (NIV) You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

You hypocrite: This is when you represent yourself as having a breakthrough in an area where you don't. If you teach someone something you know but aren't living, that is hypocrisy. You are giving them the impression that you know how to help them. But, if you knew how to help them, you would have already been helped yourself. Once you get the breakthrough in that area, you would lack love, if you *didn't* share it with others. You experienced a wonderful miracle, Jesus showed you how you got it, and you are now qualified to share it with others.

Luke 6:39 (NIV) He also told them this parable: “Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit?” Jesus, help me not think I am ready to teach or help in an area where I am not. But, help me know when I am ready and immediately start sharing it with others. Protect me from being a hypocrite, who knows truths but isn't living it. And, protect me from lacking love, because am living it but won't share how others can also live it.

You Aren't Exempt

First take the plank out of your own eye: Okay, you have a plank in your eye, now what? That isn't an excuse for you to keep the plank, so you won't have to go help someone. Jesus is giving you incredible training on plank-removal. If you have a plank, it is hurting you and it is hurting your friends. If you get the **plank** removed, the pain, damage, and debilitation it was doing to you will be removed. Then, since you qualify to help your friends with this particular problem, you can help them get rid of the pain, damage, and debilitation the **speck** is doing to them. Plus, **planks** and **specks** are spiritual problems that cause people to hurt others.

Jesus, help me not just give up, once I discover I have a plank in my eye. Help me bring it to you for forgiveness, deliverance, healing, and training on how to share the victory with others. Help me not just get helped myself. Help me open my heart to the principles that were used on me, so I can explain and teach them to others. Fill me with the truths that set me free, so my friends can get those truths into their lives.

A Breakthrough

Then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye: As Jesus gives you one breakthrough after another, your life is blessed, healed, and trained. The things you get addicted to, the habits you develop, the sins you commit, and the issues you face do in deed hurt you. But, once Jesus gives you breakthroughs in each of these areas, **you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.** The miracles, the healings, the forgiveness, and the training will empower you to qualify to help others in those same areas.

John 5:22-23 (NIV) Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, Who sent Him. Jesus, set me free from all judgmental attitudes. Help me love those around me and simply want to help them be set free from whatever is hurting them. Help me leave all judgment to You, so You can use me to flow through to the great needs they have. Show me how to see deep into their heart and life, so I can be used to bring the truths they need. Give me a heart of love for the suffering.

Chapter Fifty-Seven

Get Away From Them

Mat 7:6 (NIV) Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and then turn and tear you to pieces.

They Lack Spiritual Comprehension

Do not give dogs what is sacred: If you would have tried to lead Saul of Tarsus to Jesus, who later became Paul the apostle, he would have done all he could to get you imprisoned and executed. At that point, he had no comprehension, appreciation, or receptivity to Jesus' message. **John 6:44 (NIV)** No one can come to Me unless the Father Who sent Me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day. But, that doesn't mean they will never come to Jesus. It just means you had better not push them too soon.

Jesus, help me understand that spiritual **dogs** are different than the average unsaved person. When I try to share You with them, they will exhibit tendencies to be physically violent. They will immediately become filled with rage. And will demonstrate that they hate You and all You stand for. Help me be aware that I have Your command to not **give them what is sacred.**

They Like Their Life

Do not throw your pearls to pigs: You can see that the pig's life is gross, stinky, and way below a human's life; but, a pig loves their life. They won't appreciate you invading their lifestyle. They won't see your efforts as being good for them. They won't be able to feel your heart and your good intentions. They will just see you trying to take their fun, happiness, and lifestyle away from them. They will resent any changes you present to them.

Jesus, help me notice, when someone is satisfied with the way their life is going. If You haven't brought them to the place where they are ready for a change, help me be careful of what I present to them. If they become verbally abusive, extremely resistive, or demonstrate an intense desire to discontinue the conversation, help me look to You for guidance. Help me understand that a spiritual **pig** is different than the average unsaved person. Show me that if I push them too far, they will attack me.

You Have Been Warned

If you do: You can tell, when you are trying to force an issue. It's easy for you to sense your heart, when you are being obnoxious or pushy. In most cases, you might get by with being that way without any major consequences. You may even end up with a good result, in some cases. But, when you come across spiritual **dogs** and **pigs**, Jesus has already warned you about even offering them **sacred** things. But, sometimes you don't know they are a spiritual **dog** or **pig**. However, the moment you find out, it is your responsibility to obey Jesus' command.

Jesus, help me to not evaluate a person as a spiritual **dog** or **pig** too soon. If I suspect that they may be one, help me quickly check with You. Help me not cheat someone out of a change to accept You, just because I reacted too quickly. Teach me how to lessen my presentation to a milder message. Help me back off a little bit, so I can see who I am dealing with. Give me words that will test them and reveal who they really are. But, if they are spiritual **dogs** and **pigs**, help me excuse myself, and if necessary, apologize for the inconvenience, and move on.

They Are Ministers Against Jesus' Message

They may trample them under their feet: The main issue here is the message. Jesus is telling you that spiritual **dogs** and **pigs** will attack your message. Sincere people may argue with you. Just because you are getting pushback from someone, doesn't mean they are a spiritual **dog** or **pig**. If you can tell they are pushing back, so as to not be gullible, then they are sincere. Even people who have no intentions of accepting Jesus' message may not be spiritual **dogs** and **pigs**. Spiritual **dogs** and **pigs** are *ministers*, who preach and teach against Jesus and His message.

Jesus, if I am talking to a person, who I can tell they have no intention of accepting You, help me move on to someone who is willing to at least consider You and Your message. But, if I encounter someone who is trained, proficient, and skilled at attacking You and Your message, help me treat them as a spiritual **dog** or **pig**.

Persecutors

And then turn and tear you to pieces: Spiritual **dogs** and **pigs** are on a mission. You do have to go through them in order to get to sincere, hungry, hurting people. They position themselves in front of potential Christians. They have been very busy trying to prepare hurting people for resisting you. Many of the objections of sincere people have come from them. They have been working on you most of your life. They hate Jesus and His people.

Luke 20:46 (NIV) Beware of the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and love to be greeted in the marketplaces and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets. Jesus, keep me from allowing spiritual **dogs** and **pigs** from stopping me from making contact with the sincere. And, once I identify who they are, help me warn people against them.

You Can't Avoid Them

Mat 5:11 (NIV) Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. These are spiritual **dogs** and **pigs**. They aren't doing this to you because you tried to lead them to Jesus. You heeded Jesus' command and did **not** give **dogs** what is sacred; and did **not** throw your pearls to **pigs**. But, in the process of locating the sincere, you will come across them; and, they will persecute you.

Jesus, thank You for giving me a command, so I won't *cause* myself to be persecuted. But, help me be ready for their persecution, as I minister to the sincere. Help me not allow them to contaminate my efforts, discourage me, or even be able to offend me.

The Power To Keep Going

Mat 5:12 (NIV) Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Rejoice and be glad: This is your weapon against discouragement, fatigue, or quitting. Jesus is telling you what to do, when spiritual **dogs** and **pigs** try to keep you from bringing people to Jesus. This is a command that is vital to your survival. Just like all of Jesus' commands, they keep you spiritually alive and winning. They are commands, so you won't get the impression that they are optional. They are commands, because they come to you in creative power. When Jesus commands something, it is created in the physical realm.

Jesus, help me take advantage of Your command to **rejoice and be glad**. Help me believe that through it, You empowered me to react that way, when I get persecuted. Help me see that it empowers my emotions in my heart and helps it not get discouraged, frustrated, or depressed. Show me that it keeps me from being influenced by a relentless barrage of resistance from spiritual **dogs** and **pigs**. Help me love the sincere people, who are hurting and are looking for Your answers. Let me help them **rejoice and be glad**, when they are persecuted.

Rejoicing With A Purpose

Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven: Jesus isn't telling you to **rejoice and be glad** as a ritual or system. He is giving you a reason to **rejoice and be glad**. But, if you just put this reason in your brain and try to pump yourself up in your mind, it won't work. When Jesus says these things, He is speaking them into your heart. However, the only way to access it is to believe it is there. It takes practice; but, if you know it is there, you can learn how to bring it up and feel it. Sometimes it takes you **rejoicing and being glad** with your mouth without feelings for a while. But, if you will do that, it will come to the surface.

Rom 10:8 (NIV) But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your *mouth* and in your *heart*," that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming. Jesus, help me believe that **rejoice and be glad** was spoken into my heart. Help me realize that I can't believe for something that isn't already there; that would be hope. But, since I know You have spoken **rejoice and be glad** into my heart, help me take faith-action and live on the basis of it. Help me always keep in mind that the first step of faith-action is speaking it in faith. Even if I don't feel it at first, help me **rejoice and be glad** with my *mouth* and with faith in my *heart*.

This Is Normal

For in the same way, they persecuted the prophets who were before you: Jesus wants you to know you are in good company. It is important that you not feel like you are experiencing something strange. You *must* not only expect persecution, you must be willing to be persecuted.

Jesus, help me know I will be persecuted and be ready to win over it. Help me love the sincere, hurting people enough to not let anything get in my way. Help me not hate the spiritual **dogs** and **pigs**; help me pray for them that they can see the truth and be saved.

Chapter Fifty-Eight

The Three Keys To All Of Christianity – Part One

This Is A Major Command

Mat 7:7 (NIV) *Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.* You could read this passage during your Bible reading time and miss it. Since every new Christian come to Jesus only knowing about human effort and reasoning. And, since that is what the world taught them, they *try* to live the Christian life instead of *praying and asking* for Jesus' power to live the Christian life.

Jesus, help me see the vital necessity of this verse. Help me see that You are telling me how to get all the aspects and provisions of the Christian life. Show me that these are the keys that unlock the provisions that I must have to live it. Teach me that, if I just try, I will lack the power to live a supernatural life. I will lack Your knowledge, foreknowledge of the future, understanding, and wisdom for how to live as a Christian.

How To Live The Christian Life

Mat 7:8 (NIV) *For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.* This is Jesus' promise, His assurance, and His truth. Once you apply this to your Christian life, you are operating your life on a very incredible spiritual principle that new and untrained Christians don't know and therefore can't believe. **John 15:5b (NIV)** *Apart from Me you can do nothing.* If there is *any* doubt or confusion on this, you will find yourself in trouble. You will struggle with Christianity and not know why?

Jesus, speak this truth into me, so I can move forward into living a powerful and successful Christian life. Help me believe with all my heart that **apart from You, I can do nothing**. If I think this isn't totally true, that there are some things I have and can do, help me realize that Christianity won't work for me. Show me that human effort and reasoning and world training will not work in Christianity. Teach me that this is what people, who live in the Romans 7:15-24 life experience. They live a very limited Christian life.

Things That Are Useless

Mat 7:9 (NIV) *Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone?* Obviously, you can't eat a stone; so, if you ask **for bread**, you are asking for something that you need to live on. You aren't asking for some extravagance. It's a necessity. Would a good parent ignore that request and give you something that you couldn't eat?

Jesus, help me understand that You are making an important point about my heavenly Father. He is my parent; You are talking to me about **asking, seeking, and knocking**. They are forms of prayer that I will always be using in my Christian life. So, help me see that You are helping me see what kind of response I will get from Him, when I apply these three keys to the spiritual and physical needs of my life.

Things That Are Dangerous

Mat 7:10 (NIV) Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? All snakes can be dangerous; even those which are nonpoisonous have very strong muscles that can squeeze you to death. Jesus is telling you that you can apply these Three Keys and your heavenly Father's response won't be to give you something bad. As a matter of fact, He is totally devoted to only those things that are good. He will only give things that are good for you and those around you. If it is good for you, but bad for those around you, He won't give it. If the reverse is true, He won't do that either. It must be good for all involved.

James 1:17 (NIV) Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, Who does not change like shifting shadows. Jesus, make it clear to me that the word "**every**," keeps me from getting anything good from anywhere else. It may look good to me, like it did to Eve; it may feel good to me, like it did to David with Bathsheba; it may seem good to me, like it did to Judas Iscariot; but, since it didn't come from God, it wasn't good. Help me accept this truth, so I can stop looking elsewhere.

Mat 7:11 (NIV) If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who *ask* Him!

If Humans Do It

If you, then: You can't expect human parent to out do God. If you see good parents, you are looking at a flawed, damaged, and imperfect being. If you can sometimes trust a person, then you can always trust God. If a human sometimes does the right thing, then you can know that God will always do the right thing. But, once again, convincing mental-proofs don't help you live a supernatural Christian life. So, if you are moving along with Jesus' reasoning and just trying to agree with Him, You will fail. Human effort, human reasoning, and world training do not work in Christianity. So, how do you get this truth into your life? You **ask**!

Jesus, help me understand that, even though you are reasoning with me, You aren't appealing to my human brain or my human, logical mind. Help me always keep in mind that the Bible is a supernatural Book; and, You are a supernatural God. You are working on a supernatural, Christian life that has to be empowered by You and Your truths. Show me that You are making sense to me, so I will accept it as truth. But, once I accept it, all that has happened is, I became willing to allow it to be applied to my life. Help me realize that this is just the first step into being transformed. It is me yielding my will to You in that area.

Don't Be Offended

Though you are evil: In a situation like this illustration, you are being compared to God. If you were compared to the best human on the planet, you might not appear to be evil, just not as good as them. But, when you bring God into the comparison, you really look and act evil. But, here is your chance to move out of the human-standards realm. If the very best parent is evil in comparison to God, your heavenly Father is offering you supernatural, awesome, miraculous, generous, and sacrificial-love parenting.

Jesus, I am convinced, in my mind, that my heavenly Father will only give me good. I agree that I should only trust Him to decide what is best for me and those around me. Heal my heart, so it will be able to cooperate with me totally yielding to You and my heavenly Father for everything I need. Help me to apply The Three Keys To All Of Christianity to all my needs, all my wants, and all my life. Help me see that they will redirect my focus on God. They will be my way of getting everything I need and want.

All Parent Know How

Know how to give good gifts to your children: Just because parents **know how to give good gifts to their children** doesn't mean they did it or are willing to do it. However, as a child *of God*, you will be only getting good things from Him. But, as you continue to move forward in this verse, you will see that you have a responsibility, in order to get those good things. But, for now, Jesus is teaching you about your heavenly Father's attitudes and character.

Jesus, build faith in me concerning my heavenly Father's attitudes and character. Help me get to the place where I agree that He is perfectly good. Help me know it, believe it, embrace it, and then live on the basis of it. Help me take advantage of Your teaching, so I can see how I can have a life and a ministry that is completely supplied by my heavenly Father. Help me understand that this is a very vital area of teaching. You are creating in me a knowledge and a truth that extends to every aspect of Christianity.

Raising Your Faith

How much more: You are somewhat familiar with some of the very best humans. You have seen soldiers lay down their life for their countrymen. But, Jesus is saying that you haven't seen anything in comparison to your heavenly Father. You have no experiences or information that can raise your expectations to the level of Your heavenly Father's love and generosity.

"How much more," are very inadequate words for the meaning behind them. The sacrifice of Jesus coming to earth from being God in heaven to the likeness of a human and then dying on a cross for you, gives you a glimpse into your heavenly Father's generosity; but, only a glimpse.

Jesus, help me understand that my mind isn't going to comprehend the real meaning of what You are saying, when You use the words, **"how much more."** So, help me be able to embrace it on a faith and trust level. Help me be able to see it with as much supernatural revelation as I can handle. Speak to my heart, so it can feel things my mind isn't capable of comprehending. Help my mind at least grasp the logic of God's greatness and love. Help me think these supernatural truths enough for me to be in total acceptance of what You are offering and teaching me.

This Is Really Big

How much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask Him: This is the foundational truth that all of Christianity is based on. It is too important for it to only occupy the typical chapter. This last statement is laying out what The Three Keys To All Of Christianity are all about. So, let Jesus broaden this truth some more.

Chapter Fifty-Nine

The Three Keys To All Of Christianity – Part Two

These Unlock All The Biblical Truths

Mat 7:7 (NIV) Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. Ask is the foundational key that the other two are based off of. When you are asking for some Biblical truth, if you add the *seek* key to it, your emotions from your heart are activated. You could **ask** casually and it not really catch the heart of God. When you are wanting to share your breakthroughs with others, you would add the *knock* key to the *ask* key so as to get doors opened for opportunities to share. This leads you to people God has already prepared their heart for you sharing with them.

Jesus, help me understand I can't live the Christian life without **remaining in You, Your Words, and Your love.** **John 15:7 (NIV) If you remain in Me and My words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.** As I can see that by doing that, it empowered the *ask* key. Your sermon on the mount has been teaching me what remaining in You, Your words and Your love look like in real life. What You have been having me do, as You exposed me to each truth is, I have been applying the *ask* key to each truth I read.

Jesus, I thank You for giving me each one of these truths. And, I thank You for helping me pray over each truth and ask You to put it in my life. You have been making sure I have been applying these Three Keys to all those things You taught me. Thank You for leading me into the way things operate in the spirit realm. Now, help me get proficient in these Three Keys, so I will be able to **ask whatever I wish, and it will be given me.** Show me how much You have already led me into wishing for. It has been a powerful study and prayer time.

The Purpose Of The Illustration

Mat 7:11 (NIV) If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask Him!

Jesus introduced you to The Three Keys. He explained that, if you *ask* Him for something good, He won't give you something useless like a stone to eat. He also explained that, if you *ask* for something good, He won't give you something bad, dangerous, or harmful, like a snake to eat. Then He showed you that, if humans wouldn't typically do that to their children, **how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to you, but, with one requirement.**

How much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask Him! Jesus, I can see that my responsibility is to *ask*. But, in John 15:7, you qualified that process of *asking* by requiring me to **remain in You and Your words remain in me.** Help me realize that, as I read the truths in this book and prayed the prayers, I have been fulfilled the requirements of **remaining in You and Your words remaining in me.** Now let Your mighty work, that You did in response to those studies and prayers, control my **wishes.**

Once You Are Remaining

Give good gifts to those who *ask* Him: Jesus gave this whole illustration to come down to this one main point. He started with the concept of *ask*; and, He ended with it. Your heavenly Father is waiting for you to learn how to remain in Jesus, His words, and His love. Also, He is waiting for you to *ask*. Jesus gave you the powerful truths of His sermon on the mount. You studied them and *asked* for them to be applied to your life. If you start taking faith-action and living on the basis that Jesus heard and answered every one of these prayers you prayed, Your heavenly will make Jesus' life and ministry be a river flowing in and through you.

Jesus, help me see why You require that I *ask* for everything I need from my heavenly Father. Help me always keep in mind that this is a permission-based relationship. I can't live the Christian life without God; and He won't make me live it. Help me learn how to take the truths of the Bible and turn them into prayers that *ask* for those things the Bible says I need. Help me create Biblical prayers that I know are the will of God. Show me that these are the kind of prayers that transform my life and ministry. Help me give up all those prayers I used to pray that weren't really based on the Bible.

The First Step

Mat 7:7 (NIV) *Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.*

Ask To See If It Is God's Will

Ask and it will be given to you: Do you believe this is true? Do you believe that when you read this, it gave you power to ***ask and it...be given to you?*** Do you believe that, when you read the Bible and it commands you to do something, if you *ask* for it, God will give it to you? But, have you ever *asked* for something in the Bible and didn't get it? That is because all Bible Scriptures are tied together. One Scripture can't be applied independently from all the others. That is why John 15:7 was added to this study. And, that is why you are going through the sermon on the mount. And that is why you must read, study, and pray over your whole Bible.

Ask and it will be given to you: Jesus, if I *ask* for something and it isn't given to me, help me understand that this Scripture is still true. Show me that it is not possible for me to just use it by itself. It is true; but, it is true, as it relates to the rest of the Bible. Show me that all the other Scriptures in the Bible are tied to this verse and this verse is tied to all the rest of the verses in the Bible. Help me see that You caused the Bible to be written, so I would be able to get it all put together. Thank You for getting me started on this journey, so I can start opening more and more doors to all of Your truths.

Seek To See If It Is God's Will

Seek and you will find: You will notice the Bible didn't stop at *asking*. Jesus introduced you into that principle; but, He prefaced it with a whole bunch of other principles; and, He didn't stop there. There isn't one thing the Bible says that you don't need to consider. However, if you *seek* while *asking*, you have started on your journey into all the provisions of God.

Jesus, show me that each step I take gets me closer to fulfilling Your will for my life. As You keep exposing me to all these truths and prayers, I am moving in the direction that took Your disciples to their life and ministry. Help me not be looking for one thing that will do it. Help me see that each thing You expose me to is vital to the whole work. Show me that The Three Keys are where I start; but, if for some reason, they don't produce results, there are ways to find out why. Once I know they are totally true, then I know something else is wrong. Help me grow in You until my *asking*, *seeking*, and *knocking* are functioning at a very high rate.

Knock To See If It Is God's Will

***Knock* and the door will be opened to you:** If you don't *ask*, then that is for sure why you didn't get what you needed. But, if you *ask* casually without true concern, desire, passion, and interest, then the *seek* key could be why you didn't get your answer. If you *ask* and *seek*, but don't *knock*, then your problem could be selfishness. Has God already answered many other prayers and you aren't *knocking* on the doors of opportunity to share those breakthroughs, miracles, and blessings with others?

Jesus, I have been involved in things like education, cooking, driving, and earning money. In all of those cases, if I didn't do things in the right order and with every requirement, I didn't get the results I wanted. In most things, if I left a step, ingredient, or procedure out, it didn't work. Help me see that this is how things are in the spirit realm. If I have had patience with the world requiring I do things just right, then help me give You the same cooperation.

Ask, Seek, And Knock To See If It Is God's Will

Mat 7:7 (NIV) *Ask* and it will be given to you; *seek* and you will find; *knock* and the door will be opened to you. With *ask* being the main key, *seek* will help me put your heart into your request. *Knock* will help you take the answers, truths, and breakthroughs that you get from God through *asking* and *seeking* and then *knock* on the doors of opportunity to share them with others. If you just get miracles, blessings, healings, and training and don't share the breakthroughs you got from them with others, you lack love.

Jesus, help me see these three keys as a unit. Show me how they flow together to guide me into a powerful Christian life and ministry. Let them set me free from all other procedures for trying to live the Christian life and do Your ministry. Teach me that they keep my eyes focused on You. Help me see that, as I get miracles, blessings, breakthroughs, and healings through them from You, You get all the credit, glory, praise, and worship for them. And, make it clear to me that this way of living the Christian life make Christianity available to everyone. Matthew 7:8 says: "***Everyone who asks receives.***"

Chapter Sixty

The Three Keys To All Of Christianity – Part Three

Mat 7:8 (NIV) For everyone who *asks* receives; he who *seeks* finds; and to him who *knocks*, the door will be opened.

Who Can Ask?

For *everyone* who *asks* receives: This verse adds who this promise applies to. Because *asking* is the main key to all of Christianity, it is important to know who this applies to. So, starting with being born again to the highest levels of Christianity, this is always available to getting what you need. This is the replacement tool for living the Old Testament law. Rather than trying with all your abilities, talents, skills, strengths, and experiences, you simply *ask* Jesus for it, and He will empower you with it.

Jesus, help me see that with this system, *everyone* can live the Christian life. They don't have to have special human abilities and skills. They don't have to have supernatural power. They can *ask* You for everything they need and You will provide it. But, then I can see that this takes away all credit from me. I will have nothing to be proud of, nothing to brag about, and nothing to bolster my esteem and confidence. So, with this procedure, rather than trying to impress people with my greatness, I will be telling *everyone* that if they will *ask*, they will **receive**. Help me understand that I will be spreading Your message with this procedure.

Who Finds?

He who *seeks* finds: This one doesn't say who can seek; Instead, Jesus explains *who finds*. If you **seek first God's kingdom and His righteousness**, you will not only find them, **all these things will be given to you as well (Mat 6:33 NIV)**. And at the time Jesus said this, the *things* He was talking about were: **What...we eat, what...we drink, or what...we wear**. So, seeking not only adds intensity, passion, and a hungering and thirsting to your *ask*, it adds *seeking* God's Kingdom and righteousness.

Jesus, help me **seek first Your kingdom and Your righteousness**. Help me add *seeking* to my *asking*, so I will have a deep desire for the things of God. Give me a *seeking* attitude, as I pursue You and Your truths. Teach me that, if I *seek*, I will **find** all those things You and the Bible are making available to me. Let this key be a major part of my pursuit of the Christian life and ministry.

Who Gets Open Doors?

And to him who *knocks*, the door will be opened: The one who applies the *knock key*, starts going through life with doors opening up for them. These doors are opportunities for you to start ministering to people, who want to be helped by Jesus. They will listen to you, yield to Jesus, and will be willing to share their breakthroughs with others.

Jesus, help me see that, if I don't *knock* on doors of opportunity to share my breakthroughs with others, I will lack love and appreciation for what You have done for me. And, if I do go around sharing without *knocking*, I will be sharing with people You haven't prepared their hearts for me sharing with them. Help me not only *ask*, *seek*, and *knock* for myself. Help me apply The Three Keys To All Christianity to all my friends, so they will get all those things You have given me.

The Three Keys Working Together

Getting Fellow Ministers

Mat 9:36-38 (NIV) When He (Jesus) saw the crowds, He had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field."

Here the *ask* key is working together with the *knock* key. You are *asking* God, **the Lord of the harvest...to send out workers into His harvest field.** This is how you would apply the *ask*, *seek*, and *knock* keys to your friends. You would be using these keys to *ask* God to add other ministers and workers with you. It is vital that you and many other Christians join in unity to minister to all the needs of the people of this world.

1 Cor 3:6 (NIV) I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. Jesus, help me understand that I haven't been gifted with all Your ministerial service gifts. Help me realize that I will have failures in my ministry, if I try to be an apostle, pastor, evangelist, prophet, and teacher. Also, I will have ministerial failure, if I ignore these ministries in the lives of those I minister to. Help me ***ask the Lord of the harvest...to send out workers into His harvest field***, so we can work together like a body.

Staying Inside God's Will

1 John 5:14-15 (NIV) This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And, if we know that he hears us--whatever we *ask*--we know that we have what we *asked* of him. If you use the *seek* key to **seek first God's kingdom and His righteousness**, then righteousness will guide you into the will of God. God's **kingdom and His righteousness** are all about His will. This is expressed in Jesus' prayer He told you to pray. **Mat 6:10 (NIV) Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.**

Jesus, help me see how to combine the *ask* key with the *seek* key, so I will always *ask* according to Your will. **If I *ask anything according to Your will*, You **hear** me.** And, I want You to always hear me. So, help me always put the priority on **seeking first You kingdom and Your righteousness**, so I will always be *asking* for those things that are Your will.

Ministers Working Together

Mat 18:19 (NIV) Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you *ask* for, it will be done for you by My Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in My name, there am I with them. Your *knock key* will lead you to people who will want salvation, spiritual growth, Biblical training, ministerial training, and ministerial opportunities. Once you start working with these people, you will start praying together with them. By combining the *knock key* and its results, of many more Christian partners, the *ask key* can be used to pray together and **it will be done for you by Jesus' Father in heaven.**

Jesus, I don't want to work alone. Help me start *knocking* on doors of opportunity to share my breakthroughs with others. Lead me to people who are wanting salvation, spiritual growth, Biblical training, ministerial training, and ministerial opportunities. Let us start praying together, so the **two of us, on earth, can agree about anything we *ask* for, and it will be done for us by Your Father in heaven.** Teach me how to combine these Three Keys in various ways, so I can excel to my greatest potential in Christianity and Christian ministry.

Ask Is The Beginning Combination

Mat 21:22 (NIV) If you believe, you will receive whatever you *ask* for in prayer. Suppose you keep forgetting to *ask* for things. Or, what if you keep doing things without consulting Jesus before you do it. Your problem is you aren't using the *ask key* in situations where you should. There is no key below *ask*. You must use the *ask key* to help you with the *ask key*. You must *ask* Jesus to help you remember to *ask* Him for His help, as you go about your day.

Jesus, I want to **believe I will receive whatever I *ask* for in prayer.** But, so many times I forget to even *ask*. I go about my day just using my own abilities, skills, talents, knowledge, understanding, wisdom, and human power. I know that my life would go so much better, if I *asked* for You to join me in all my daily activities. So, I *ask* You to help me always *ask* You to join me in every decision and every action, all during my day.

Ask About Asking

Mark 8:12 (NIV) He sighed deeply and said, "Why does this generation *ask* for a miraculous sign? I tell you the truth, no sign will be given to it." There will be times when you don't know if you *should ask* for something. Before you apply the *ask key* to the questionable request, *ask* Jesus, if it is okay for you to *ask*. When you yield The Three Keys To All Of Christianity to Jesus, that is when they really start to work for you. It is when you see The Three Keys, as being your ticket to the world of Christian success, that they stop working.

Jesus, help me always understand that The Three Keys To All Of Christianity belong to You. Help me always *ask* You for guidance before I start to use them. Help me follow Your leadership, as I use these incredibly power and effective keys to my life and ministry. Help me first *ask* You *what* You want me to apply them to, *how* You want them applied, *when* You want them applied, *where* You want them applied, and *to whom* You want them applied.

Chapter Sixty-One

The Golden Rule

Mat 7:12 (NIV) So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

How To Have Relationships

So, in everything: This is an all-inclusive command regarding all relationships; and, it includes all situations you will ever face. You will have to evaluate what you would want done to you, if you were in their situation, or, if you were them. But, the command will stay the same. The place where this command is corrupted, is where it is taken out of the rest of the Bible and applied in its isolated form.

Jesus, help me understand that, if I **do to others what I would have them do to me**, as if they are me, then I will treat them from a self-centered perspective. If I do it, as if they like what I like or want what I want, then I lack love. Help me see that love helps me look beyond myself. It helps me ask questions of the other person. It helps me see things from their perspective. It helps me go to You and make sure I have the plank removed from my eyes.

Taking Faith-Action

So, in everything, do to others: This deals with neglect. **James 4:17 (NIV) Anyone, then, who *knows* the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins.** This isn't just dealing with those moments when you do take action. It is also dealing with those moments when you *should* take action. You don't just have to **do to others what you would have them do to you**, when you are doing things to them; you have to follow this command when you are neglecting someone.

Jesus, I knew I was supposed to follow this rule, when I was treating a person a certain way. But, help me see that this also applies to **“in everything.”** When You show me a person that You want me to initiate a relationship with, help me realize that this command applies to the moment You show them to me. Before I have done anything to them, when You let me know You want me to do “something,” this command requires that this is how I am to go treat them.

Is It All About You?

So in everything, do to others what you would have: This isn't just a sudden, spur-of-the-moment reaction. **“What you would have”** could be based on you, your preferences, your likes and dislikes, you past experiences, your attitudes and character, and a whole lot of other *personal* characteristics. This isn't based on *your* personality. It is based on Jesus' attitudes and character. **What you would have**, should be what Jesus would have. You have been going through the sermon on the mount to find out what Jesus **would have**.

Jesus, remind me that I am a Christian, and, am supposed to be dead to myself and alive in You. Teach me that this command isn't a self-check. It is a You-check. Help me not do to them something that is based on my human desires. Let it be Your supernatural, love of God, and God-sized desires. Help me give them You and what You want for them.

Is It Just About Them?

So, in everything, do to others what you would have them: This is a moment when you join them. It is a time where you are no longer just you. You are yielding to God's love and it is working a miracle in you. As you yield to it, it empowers you to actually feel and see things about **them** that you weren't able to see before. While you are just being you, you are distracted from everyone else's situation. Your life, your likes, your wants, your needs, your problems, and your life is dominate in your mind.

Jesus, help me see that this verse must be interpreted from verses all over the Bible. I have isolated it; and, have tried to apply it from my perspective. Help me realize that this verse is a lot more powerful and meaningful, once I leave it in the Bible and interpret it from there.

It Is About Us

So, in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you: This is where the win/win principle of Christianity comes into play. You are doing the doing; but, you are doing it where all involved win. You and **them** aren't always by yourselves. There can often be others involved with the two of you. You must **do to others what you would have them do to you**. And, others must **do to you what you would have them do to you**. If you give people the impressing that Christianity makes you a doormat that everyone walks on, then they won't want it. You *must* teach them the win/win principles of Christianity, so they will want it.

Jesus, help me see how Your sermon on the mount has prepared me for this verse. When You took me through it, I mainly saw it as commanding me. But, I now see that You are commanding everyone. Help me understand that the sermon on the mount and all its commands are my message to everyone. Help me get a revelation for how I can help others live the Christian life in such a way that everyone wins. Show me that You have developed a life that blesses businesses, teams, families, marriages, friendships, and even our enemies.

A Very Powerful Command

For this sums up the Law and the Prophets: When you have a verse of Scripture that will do this, it is extremely powerful and effective. **You will have no other gods before God. You won't misuse the name of the LORD your God. You will remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. You will honor your father and your mother. You won't murder. You won't commit adultery. You won't steal. You won't give false testimony against your neighbor. You *won't* covet your neighbor's house. You won't covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.**

Jesus, help me understand that when I bring this verse into the context of the whole Bible, it will empower me to use it as a dynamic commandment. It will be a rule-of-thumb for all the foundations of my relationships. Help me see it, as a summation of all the commands in Your sermon on the mount. Help me see that, if this verse isn't being fulfilled, then let it be my warning that there is a command I am failing to live by.

Your Motivation For Obeying Jesus' Commands

Mark 12:30-31 (NIV) 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength: If you use the love of God that was poured into your heart by the Holy Spirit, according to Romans 5:5, then this is an easy assignment. If you obey this Mark 12:30-31 command, then it will transform you into a person who is fulfilling the commands of the sermon on the mount. However, because Jesus considers how you treat other people, as how you treat Him, this second command must be obeyed. **Love your neighbor as yourself.**

Jesus, make it clear to me that love is how and why I obey all Your commands. God's love, that is in my heart, is my power to obey. And, it is my motivation for why I obey. Help me realize that my praise, thankfulness, and worship are part of my expression of love for You. As I go about my day, help me understand that I must be looking for Your miracles, blessing, answers to prayers, and breakthroughs in me. Help me not miss any of them, so I can demonstrate my love by thanking, praising, worshipping, and appreciating them and You.

Jesus, show me that I express the second love-aspect for You by the way I treat others. Help me look for ways to serve others, where I can't get rewarded for it. Help me remember, that the only rewards that are stored up in eternity, are those that I didn't get rewarded for here. So, help me express my love for You by doing these kinds of things as often as I can.

Enhancing Your Ministry

There is no commandment greater than these: With this Jesus-evaluation of these two commandments, you can see how it supplements the Matthew 7:12 command. You, **in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you**, because you love them and Jesus. Even when a sermon on the mount command is extremely challenging, your love for people and Jesus will empower you to obey the command.

Eph 6:7 (NIV) Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men. Jesus, help me **serve wholeheartedly**, when I am working with others. Help me be looking for areas where they are struggling, hurting, and have lack. Help me not just look for those needs I can meet. Help me be looking for ways for You to flow through me supernaturally. Help me be willing to notice God-sized needs that only You can address. Let God's love empower me to be willing to be inconvenienced, challenged, and stretched spiritually.

Chapter Sixty-Two

You Need Supernatural Help

Mat 7:13-14 (NIV) Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

Jesus Has Been Showing This To You

Enter through the narrow gate: No doubt you have been feeling the spiritual squeeze, as you read each command that Jesus gave you. You were carrying a lot of baggage that would not have fit through the gate that leads into God's eternal Kingdom. Sin won't go through; human effort won't go through; disobedience won't go through; and world training won't help you make it through. Jesus' commands, in His sermon on the mount, are the requirements for making it **through the narrow gate**. But, He does give a grace period.

Jesus, if it weren't for the perfect record You gave me with God, **the narrow gate** would have kept me out. But, as I remained a Christian for a longer and longer period, it was vital that I "act" my spiritual age. The farther, in time, I move away from my spiritual birth, the older I become. And the older I become, the more that is expected of me spiritually. But, because You have been helping me "act my age" by growing me spiritually, I have continued to be slim enough to fit **through the narrow gate**.

Satan Welcomes You In

For wide is the gate: You can be prideful. You can take all the credit for all those things Jesus gave you and did for you. You can be as dishonest and immoral as you want. You can take all the spiritual shortcuts you want. And, you can decide how you want to spend the rest of your life. However, there are a few side-effects. Just because it is a **wide gate**, doesn't mean it is the right way to go. There isn't one thing that God has labelled sin that doesn't have side-effects. Every one of them is either bait or a trap. But, it is a **wide gate**, easy to go through.

It's Like A Freeway

Broad is the road: There are no traffic laws. It is a free-for-all. There are a tremendous number of wrecks. But, there is no insurance to pay for the damage. You can drive on any side of the road you want to. There are no speed limits, road blocks, warning signs, guard rails, or mile indicators. You will never know, when you are about to reach your destination.

Jesus, I can see that, until a person starts experiencing the side-effects, the **broad road** seems like an ideal situation. Until the lack of laws cause them to experience evil, ruthless people, it looks like freedom. Until their "freedom" turns into chaos, they think they are experiencing paradise. Help me be able to point out what their future looks like, so they don't have to actually experience it. Since all roads lead somewhere, help me show them their destination

Where Are You Going?

Broad is the road that leads to destruction: The reason you get on a road is because you believe it will take you where you want to go. Typically, they have surfaces that are designed for the type of vehicle you will be using for transportation. Also, usually there are boundaries and adjoining land that isn't conducive for your vehicle. It is more than likely, easy for you to tell when you are on it and when you have veered off. It is clear to you that as long as you are on that road, you will keep heading toward that destination. Jesus is letting everyone know how to tell what road they are on and *where it is taking them*.

Jesus, thank You for Your sermon on the mount. You have helped me know I am not on **the broad road**. You made it clear to me what road I am on, how to stay on it, and when I have veered off. You have provided me with spiritual transportation that travels well on Your road. But, it doesn't work at all on any other road. You have designed my spiritual transportation, so that I can keep it powered to take me to Your eternal Kingdom. It is a narrow road; but, it is easily travelled for as long as I remain in You and Your words remain in me.

It's A Well-Traveled Road

And many enter through it: Sometimes, when you aren't sure which way to go, you will follow the traffic. Many people make their decisions, as to which way to go, based on what is trending, what is popular, what everyone else is doing, what popular stars are recommending, and what world "experts" are teaching. If you didn't have the Bible and Jesus to direct you through it, you would get your cues that way.

Jesus, I thank You that I no longer am dependent on what everyone else is doing. I thank you for helping me understand that I can expect the well-traveled, popular, and trending ways to lead me toward **destruction**. Thank you for taking that confusion away from me. You have given me a much better way for deciding what road I want to get on.

Why Is This So Small?

But small is the gate: You might think God would make it as easy as is possible for people to get into His eternal Kingdom; and, He has done that! The gate isn't small because it is difficult to get in. It is small because of what He doesn't want getting in. Like a high-speed rail, with a sleek, aerodynamic train, Jesus got you through that gate faster than lightening. But, like train tracks, not just any vehicle can access the spiritual tracks and the spiritual railway system.

John 14:6 (NIV) Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. Jesus, thank You for getting me through that gate. That made it possible for me to be on this journey. Help me take advantage of everything on the other side of that gate. Help me yield to and obey every command that You have provided, so I can show my appreciation for being through that gate.

This Is Razor Thin

And narrow the road: As you have seen, Jesus' commands are very strict. They don't give you any road-shoulder for margin of error. But, He can do that, because He is the One Who is living your life. If you drive off of the road, it will be because you took control of your life. All you have to do is, repent, *ask* for forgiveness, *ask* Him to help you not do that again, go to anyone you hurt and make it right, and let Him drive you on down that **narrow road**.

Jesus, help me see that You are dealing with an eternal Kingdom that can't have any contaminates in it. If I am a carrier of some kind of sin, misdeed, or failure, I would destroy Your eternal Kingdom in a way far more devastating than Adam and Eve ever came close to. Eternity would exponentially spread that one character flaw beyond human comprehension. Thank You for allowing me to moment-by-moment and issue-by-issue turn the control of my life over to You, so You can navigate me down that **narrow road**.

Eternal Life

But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life: It wouldn't be good to live forever here in your current body. Jesus is taking you to a place where you will receive what is called a glorified, heavenly body. It will be capable of supernatural things; and, that is why He is making sure you can handle power, positions, and control. You will be reigning with Him over the nations; and, He wants you to be qualified for the job.

Phil 3:20-21 (NIV) But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who, by the power that enables Him to bring everything under His control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like His glorious body. Jesus, help me realize that what You have prepared for me is well worth any sacrifices I am having to make. Help me keep my eyes on You and Your eternal plan. I trust You to do what needs to be done to help me be a World Changer, so I can achieve Your highest goals.

A Very Sad Situation

And only a few find it: Jesus, it is so sad that You have done all You have done **and only a few** will **find** all You have provided. Help me lead as many as possible into Your awesome provisions. Thank You for helping me be one of those **few**. Help me not only be one of those **few**; but, help me be the very best there is in You. Help me take advantage of the fact that You helped me **find it**.

Chapter Sixty-Three

You Have Cunning Enemies

A Prophet With A Very Deceptive Message

Mat 7:15a (NIV) Watch out for false prophets. These are people, who hate Jesus and hate Christians. But, that are a special kind of enemy of Jesus and His people. They take an approach that is very deceptive. Instead of getting in your face and spewing out hatred and persecution, they try to come in the back door. They will talk with you, as if they believe everything you do. They will take leadership positions in churches and Christian organizations. They will have a message that will sound very much like yours; but, just a “little bit” off.

Jesus, this really helps me understand why You took me through Your sermon on the mount. You trained me for this moment and command by giving my heart and mind some of the most incredible training and transformation possible for a human. You have laid a very solid foundation in me that prepared me for deceivers that will use methods and presentations that will be very hard for the average Christian to detect. Help me keep getting ready for them by being filled with Your truth; and, help me get as many as possible ready as well.

A Minister That *Looks* Christian

Mat 7:15b (NIV) They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. If you use your typical evaluation and diagnostic procedures, these people will pass your test. They won’t mind lying to you about what they believe. They have worked hard learning how to “look” like you. They will wear their **sheep’s clothing** with great deception. And they will be wearing it for a very distinct purpose--to deceive you and your friends.

Mat 24:24 (NIV) For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect--if that were possible. Jesus, Your purpose for all this study, training, and prayer is becoming more and more important to me. If I were going to just do a normal, typical ministry, I would be able to maybe lay low and not have to face too much opposition. But, because I am in the very last days where a human can work, and, because You have made me into a World Changer, I can count on having to deal with the very worse and most evil people on the planet. Help me be totally ready!

They Can Be Recognized

Mat 7:16a (NIV) By their fruit you will recognize them. Spiritual fruit has several meanings. In this case it has two meanings. If, in the natural realm, these were grapes, they would not be seedless grapes. The meat of the grape would represent attitudes and character. These feed those around them with fake spiritual food for fake spiritual growth. The seed, on the other hand, is for reproduction. This is where they take their evil spiritual condition and reproduce themselves in others. They don’t just contaminate people; they produce **false prophets** that are worse than themselves.

1 John 4:2-3 (NIV) This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus, is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world. Jesus, help me realize that these **false prophets** lack Your attitudes and character. They present a watered-down version of Your message. They will feed the people with half-truths, distorted truths, an easier way to enter into Your Kingdom, and a rejection of the truth about Your coming, in the flesh, to earth.

Mat 23:15 (NIV) Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are. Jesus, help me be on guard for their converts. As they reproduce themselves, their converts will be more deceptive, more perverted, farther from Your truth, and much more dangerous. Help me be able to tell by their convert what kind of people they are.

They Don't Live The Life

Mat 7:16b (NIV) Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? If a person is a new or untrained Christian, they will live the life described in Romans 7:15-24. But, if you show them how to start applying The Three Keys To All Of Christianity and they stick with human effort and human reasoning, then you are dealing with a *potential* convert from someone who is a **false prophet**. Do not involve them in working in your ministry.

Jesus, help me not get so desperate for people to help me in the ministry that I water down my requirements. When You invited someone to follow You, if they dropped what they were doing and followed You, You accepted them. When You had people following You, who were *acting* like Christians, You gave them a strict message. If they stuck with You, so You could help them make the commitment, they were real; if they didn't, they were fake.

Is It On Purpose?

Mat 7:17 (NIV) Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. Those who are struggling as new or untrained Christians will have a Romans 7:15 **want** and **hate**. As you read down through verses 15 to 25, new and untrained Christians feel like that described there. If you meet someone who is trying to use these verses to justify an inconsistent life, you are dealing with a *potential* fake Christian. Fake Christians sin on purpose and then simply justify it, excuse it, ignore it, forgive themselves for it, or try to do it on purpose and then go to Jesus and get forgiveness over and over again.

Jesus, help me not try to decide who is going to spend eternity with You and who isn't. Just help me pick those who can be trusted to work in Your ministry. Help me try to help those who are sinning on purpose; but, if they refuse to make the change, help me move on. Show me who is able to be trusted, able to be helped, able to be healed, and able to be trained.

Do They Understand?

Mat 7:18 (NIV) A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. One thing can happen that keeps people from being able to live the Christian life. It can be that no one has helped them do what it takes to be born again. They can come from a Christian group that doesn't know how to help people be born again. They can come into your group professing to be a Christian but haven't done what it takes.

1 Cor 2:14 (NIV) The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. Jesus, help me not take anyone's conversion for granted. Give me wisdom on how to make sure everyone knows what it takes to become a Christian. Help me periodically take all my friends through Your prayer and through Romans 10:9-10. Help me see that, if they have not been born again, they can *appear* to be a **false prophet** or a convert from a **false prophet**.

Judgment Is Coming

Mat 7:19 (NIV) Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. A person who doesn't accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior doesn't just do wrong, bad, and evil things. There are things that they don't do that just as evil. **Mat 23:13 (NIV)** Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the kingdom of heaven in men's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to. They are commanded to present the good news message, so people can spend eternity with God. But, they won't go in and they won't tell anyone else how to get in.

Jesus, help me see that people who won't accept you will sometime resist others trying to come to You. But, help me understand that even if they don't resist anyone, their failure to help others come to You is a very evil thing. Help me be trained and empowered to invite as many as is possible. Give me wisdom for how to gain the interest of large quantities of people, so I can share the good new with them and then help them share it with others.

Check The Trainees

Mat 7:20 (NIV) Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them. The things to be looking for are their philosophies, beliefs, teachings, and principles of life, and the kind of people they produce. The older **false prophets** have developed deception skills that the newer one haven't. So, it can be easier to find out what kind of a person the teacher is by talking to their students. The important thing is, they are very devious, deceptive, sly, and cunning. They are not straight forward or easily detected. That keeps you from always knowing who you are dealing with.

Jesus, help me see that it is very important to identify and expose these people, who are representing themselves as being Your people and are not. Help me be an expert at exposing them to all Your people and to those who want to come to You. Let me help those who would be deceived by them. Give me truths and the ability to express those truths, so You can use me to protect the innocent.

Chapter Sixty-Four

Be Sure And Make Sure

Don't Be Deceived

Mat 7:21 (NIV) Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of My Father Who is in heaven.

Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,': Saying a word twice was the Hebrew way of emphasizing a concept. So, if some one came to Jesus and said, "Lord, Lord," they were indicating that they were really serious about making Him their Lord. However, Jesus doesn't base His decisions on our words alone. He looks inside our heart. **Jer 17:9 (NIV)** The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it? It can even fool you!

Isa 29:13 (NIV) The Lord says: "These people come near to Me with their mouth and honor Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me. Their worship of Me is made up only of rules taught by men. Jesus, help me not trust my heart. Instead, help me regularly bring my heart to You for examination. When I make decisions and take actions, during my day, help me always lay my heart out before You, so You can examine my motives. Show me how important it is for me to keep a **pure heart** with You and others.

Don't Take A Chance

Mat 7:22 (NIV) *Many* will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' This is what the Corinthian church thought. Because the Holy Spirit allowed them to be used with His power-gifts, they thought it was an indication that they were really great Christians. But, God uses some people as vessels of honor and others for dishonor. **Rom 9:17 (NIV)** **For the Scripture says to Pharaoh: "I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display My power in you and that My name might be proclaimed in all the earth."**

Jesus, You used Pharaoh to bring judgment on him and the people of Egypt. Help me see that You used people in the Corinthian church with the Holy Spirit's power-gifts, so You could minister to desperate, hurting people. Help me not misunderstand that and think it is an indication of spirituality. Help me see that what You are doing to my attitudes and character are the indicators of spiritual growth and my relationship with You.

Don't Be Surprised

Mat 7:23 (NIV) Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from Me, you evildoers!' There are people who have developed their own belief and doctrinal system. They have decided what they are going to believe. They will tell you that they don't believe some of the things you know are in the Bible. They will act like their decisions, as to what they believe, will change the way things will be in eternity. But, there are other people, who will search the Scriptures to find out what they should believe. They are the ones who are protected.

Mat 18:3 (NIV) And He said: “I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will *never* enter the kingdom of heaven. Jesus, help me come to You in a neutral condition. Make me **poor in spirit**, as I go through the Bible. Help me not put Scriptures together to prove my point. Help me put them together, so I can find out what my point is. Once again, help me keep bringing my heart before You, so You can help me with my motives for why I am doing what I am doing. Make me **pure in heart**.

Here Is How To Be Sure

Mat 7:24 (NIV) Therefore everyone who *hears* these words of Mine and puts them into *practice* is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. This is the faith-action that is being mentioned periodically through this book. If you **hear** Jesus’ **words**, that is the first step. But, if you just read your Bible, even if you memorize it, you have not put it **into practice**. That is why The Three Keys To All Of Christianity are *so* important. ***Ask* and it will be given to you. For everyone who *asks* receives. How much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who *ask* Him!**

Jesus, I thank You for teaching me about The Three Keys. I also thank You for taking me through Your sermon on the mount. Help me always ***hear these words of Yours and put them into practice***. **James 2:17 (NIV) In the same way, *faith* by itself, if it is not accompanied by *action*, is dead.** Empower me to bring every word You speak before You, so You can apply it to my behavior. Transform my attitudes and character into conformity to Your attitudes and character.

You Will Be Tested

Mat 7:25 (NIV) The rain *came* down, the streams *rose*, and the winds *blew and beat against that house*; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. This will happen to you! **John 16:33 (NIV) I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.** This is why Jesus is being so strict. He knows that if you don’t enter into the supernatural requirements of His commands, *you will not make it*.

Jesus, thank You for showing me that I cannot win at life without putting my total faith in You. Thank You for revealing to me that without Your words in the sermon on the mount, I will not make it. Thank You for raising the requirements so high that I stop trying and start *asking*. Thank You for being willing to bring me into You, Your words, and Your love. Help me **remain in** You, Your words, and Your love.

Always Stop And Ask

Mat 7:26 (NIV) But everyone who hears these words of Mine and does *not* put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. See! It isn’t just hearing Jesus’ words. You can read your Bible through over and over again; but, if you do not stop and pray over these principles, you will know a lot of truths but not be living them. Reading your Bible through is very important. But, stopping and *asking* for it to be apply is vital.

Jesus, help me not just be one **who hears these words of Your and does *not* put them into practice.** You have taken me through most of Your sermon on the mount. And then You helped me pray and ask You to apply each command to my life. It would have been so easy for me to have done a study of these commands but not stop and pray for them. Thank You so much for exposing me to a time of study and prayer, so You could install them in me. Now, help me take faith-action and **put them into practice.**

After Asking, Take Faith-Action

Mat 7:27 (NIV) The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash. This can happen to you on a smaller scale. Since you are putting a lot of Jesus commands **into practice**, you will be winning over a lot of the storms of life. But, if there is an area where storms are doing damage to you, then it is an area where you have either not heart a word for Jesus on it or you haven't put that truth into practice. When a storm brings some kind of failure. This is your reason why you had storm-damage. It is your indicator that one of these things is missing.

Jesus, thank You for protecting me from my house falling **with a great crash.** But, help me be watching for roof leaks, cracks in the walls, or any other life failure. Teach me that I cannot just read the Bible. I must apply The Three Keys to those things I need applied to me. But, if I apply them to a situation in my life and they fail to function, help me be aware that there are other tools that will help me diagnose my heart and life, so I can find out why.

Put Them In Practice

Everyone who hears these words of Mine and puts them into *practice* is like a wise man who built his house on the rock: The Three Keys To All Of Christianity get the things of Jesus into you. But, it isn't until you take faith-action that you **put them into *practice*.** You must live on the basis of the fact that Jesus has installed all these commands in your life and ministry. **2 Cor 5:7 (NIV) We live by faith, not by sight.** You must believe that Jesus heard and answered your prayers. As you go back through the sermon on the mount, you will see what Jesus put in you. Then from there, you must allow Jesus to join you and live through you.

Jesus, help me understand that You are in me, Your words are in me, and Your life is in me. Help me believe and act on the basis of that faith that I can yield to You and do all those things You commanded me to do. Help me not allow one command You gave in the sermon on the mount to not be put **into practice.** Let me spend the rest of my life doing what it takes to yield to every command You gave me through this time of study and prayer.

Chapter Sixty-Five

The One True Instructor

Join Jesus' Life And Ministry

Mat 7:28 (NIV) When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at His teaching. When you are obeying every one of Jesus' commands, He is able to do this in and through you. But, you are a beginner in doing all these commands. The disciples heard this sermon on the mount and didn't immediately go out and live it. Jesus had to constantly work on them. So, reading the Gospels will help you be exposed to the correction of Jesus. The sermon on the mount is the subject content. The rest of the Gospels are the practice and training sessions. Let the Holy Spirit make the Gospels come alive in you.

Jesus, help me be willing to make mistakes and sometimes be severely corrected. As You verbally chastise Your disciples, help me put myself in their place. Help me not miss one miracle, one training session, or one correction. Put me inside Your disciples in a very living and real way. Help me gradually perfect each and every one of these commands from the sermon on the mount. Show me that they are the way You want me to live and do ministry.

Yield To Jesus' Life And Ministry

Mat 7:29 (NIV) because He taught as One Who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law. You are practicing living life and doing ministry according to the way Jesus wants them done. He has spoken His commands into you; you have asked for them to be applied, now it is time to start practicing, practicing, practicing. You won't do them perfectly; you will make mistakes; you will have to come to Jesus, repent, tell Him you are sorry, ask for His forgiveness, ask Him to empower you to never make *that* mistake again, go back to the person or people that you hurt and make it right, and then go back to practicing, practicing, practicing.

Jesus, **the crowds** will be **amazed at Your teaching** through me. You will teach as **One Who has authority, and not as their teachers** or preachers. You will give them the same commands You gave me. You will show them how all these commands will be lived through You and Your power. You will teach them The Three Keys. You will set them free from human effort, reasoning, and world training. You will help them live Your life and do Your ministry, so Your gospel message, ministry, and methods can be spread around the world.

The Ministerial Training Classes Begin

First, There's The Crowd

Mat 8:1 (NIV) When He (Jesus) came down from the mountainside, large crowds followed Him. These types of people won't follow you; but, they will follow Jesus. It isn't a matter of you using human and world procedures for gathering a crowd. It will be a *method* where Jesus draws the people He wants to speak to and work with. If you figure out a way to draw a crowd, they may not be the people Jesus wants to teach and heal. If you have the wrong crowd, the results won't be the same as what Jesus had.

Jesus, You presented a very straight forward message and the crowds followed You. Help me see that the sermon on the mount filtered out those who didn't want to hear Your truth. If you had watered it down, You would have had a crowd that wouldn't obey Your commands. They would have been people who only wanted to hear those things they could live by their own efforts. Help me understand that You want those who are willing to hear supernatural things that only You can accomplish in them.

Then There's The Ministry

Mat 8:2 (NIV) A man with leprosy came and knelt before Him and said, **"Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."** What made this man think that Jesus could make him clean? The sermon on the mount filters doubters and objectors out. Jesus' life, message, ministry, and methods will only work with a certain type of person. You can't just get a crowd and do the Jesus-ministry.

Mark 6:4-6 (NIV) Jesus said to them, **"Only in his hometown, among his relatives and in his own house is a prophet without honor."** **He could not do any miracles there, except lay His hands on a few sick people and heal them. And, He was amazed at their lack of faith.** Then Jesus went around teaching from village to village.

Jesus, help me always be aware that You must apply the sermon on the mount commands to me. But, they will not make me into a great, smart, successful, or accomplished minister. All they are trying to do is make me a yielded minister. They are making me transparent, so You can shine through me and do Your own work. If I am not yielded to these commands, then I am fighting You on every issue they deal with. Help me obey every one of them, so I will be able to yield to You through them all.

It's All Jesus

Mat 8:3 (NIV) Jesus reached out His hand and touched the man. **"I am willing,"** He said. **"Be clean!"** Immediately he was cured of his leprosy.

Jesus reached out His hand: If you stretch out your hand and **Jesus reaches out His hand**, then supernatural things will happen. But, if you are resisting any of Jesus' commands *on purpose*, there will be a blockage that will hinder **Jesus reaching out His hand**. **Being a yielded person is your goal.** Going over the commands are your indicators, as to *where* to yield to Jesus. The Three Keys To All Of Christianity, in Matthew 7:7-11, are *how* to yield to Jesus. Going through the Gospels is *Who* you get your training from on yielding to Jesus. Then, practice, practice, practice will be those times *when* you work with Jesus *while* yielding.

Jesus, thank You for showing me how to live life and do ministry. This is an awesome exposure to You and Your Word. Thank You for helping me realize that my job is to yield. And, thank You for revealing to me that my job of yielding consists of studying where I need to yield and how to go about yielding. Empower me to keep practicing yielding to You in every command You gave. Help me never give up on practicing.

It Takes A Touch From Jesus

Jesus reached out His hand and touched the man: When Jesus walked around in His earthly body, people soon learned what He looked like. So, this man came up to the person he knew to be Jesus. As he stood before Jesus, he knew what Jesus could do. But, you don't look like Jesus and people don't know Jesus is inside you. So, they don't know they can come up to a person who looks like you and get things from Jesus. People need Jesus to flow through you; but, some things will have to happen before people know He is flowing through you.

Jesus, help me see that some things had to happen out of Your life and ministry before people, like this leper, would come to You in faith. As I keep practicing, help me understand that I won't start out with the skills, abilities, experiences, and results You started with. So, it will involve failures, mistakes, misunderstanding, and ignorance on my part. You will be inside me with all Your power, knowledge, abilities, and perfection. But, I will be struggling with yielding to all of them. Help me stay in faith in You, as You training me to yield.

Jesus Decides What He Is Willing To Do

"I am willing," He said: It isn't just yielding to Jesus' power. It is a matter of totally yielding. Just because you see a need, doesn't mean Jesus is willing to meet it. The people around you must fulfill some requirement of Jesus just like you do. They aren't all of the same requirements; but, one thing they must have, is faith. There are numerous other things; but, the big one is faith. So, just because a person has a need, doesn't mean you can cause Jesus to flow through you and meet it. Jesus must be **willing**.

Jesus, I have a lot to learn about yielding to You. Help me and the people I practice on not get discouraged with my process of learning. When I have a failure, help me come to You and find out where I went wrong. Help me not just keep practicing based on stagnant spiritual and ministerial growth. Help me see that I must be in constant training or I will keep failing all the time. Give me a deep desire to love and care for people, so I am motivated to grow.

Once Jesus Is Willing....

"Be clean!" Immediately he was cured of his leprosy: The issue here isn't that Jesus used you to meet someone's need. As exciting as it is that you got used, that is the least of the matter. A leper got healed! You may get discouraged, when you fail to yield to Jesus. But, you must pray that, that discouragement isn't just about the fact that *you* failed. Pray and ask Jesus to help you mainly care about the fact that someone got neglected.

Jesus, empower me to yield to Your love more than anything else. Let it all be about obeying and loving You and loving the people You want to touch their lives. As I fail to help hurting people, protect my heart, so I won't get so damaged that I can't stand it. Help me keep loving these hurting people enough to keep going through the Gospels to be trained by You. Help me not be motivated by money, power, prestige, popularity, pleasure, possessions, or accomplishments. Let my entire heart be motivated by Your love.

The Conclusion

Don't Stop Now!

Jesus has ten other books that can help you with your life and ministry. If you are reading this prior to reading them, then a lot of what you additional need are presented in them. Jesus will take you through **The Jesus Life** book and help you take advantage of what you have been exposed to so far. They follow this same format except for being a five-day study and prayer program. In them, you will be encouraged to only read and pray over three pages for five days. You will need to spend the rest of your day in the Gospels and in meditation with Jesus.

A Five-Day Preparation

As you go about your day, there will be a lot of things Jesus will be wanting you to practice. Some of them will have to do with your attitudes and character. You will face honesty and integrity challenges that His commands require you to handle with His honesty, integrity, and power. Other things will have to do with you sharing Jesus' miracles, blessings, healings, and breakthroughs with others. As you start your next day, you would study and pray over three more pages, so Jesus can help you grow more. Then it is back to practice, practice, practice.

Graduates

If you read this after already completing the ten books in the **Starting Your Day With Jesus** series, then you need to make sure you are not only going through the Gospels, but additionally reading your Bible through. Find a good yearly Bible reading program, if you feel that would help you get it into the regular part of your daily schedule.

It would be good for you to pray this prayer for yourself and those around you regularly:

I keep asking that the God of my Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give me the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that I may know Him better.

I pray also that the eyes of my heart may be enlightened in order that I may know the hope to which He has called me, the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints, and His incomparably great power for me, who believes. Jesus, help me see, know, and understand the hope, the riches, and this power.

That power is like the working of His mighty strength, which He exerted in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under His feet and appointed Him to be head over everything for the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him Who fills everything in every way. Jesus, I ask that I would receive a full revelation and vision into all this power that is available to me; and, I ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Wctlc.com also has a lot of wonderful resources for you to access for free.