



FRESHWATERS CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

Preparing a people for the Lord

Growing In Christ Discipleship Course

'Then Jesus said to the disciples, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must put aside your selfish ambition, shoulder your cross, and follow me.'" Matt 16:24

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1. INTRODUCTION

Meditate on every study and ask for divine revelation on how to apply it to your everyday life. 'Become doers of the Word and not hearers only' James 1:22.

- Spend some time on every subject and meditate on His words. (Don't move on too quickly to the next one.)
- Ask yourself 'how will I apply this to my life?'

In every subject you will be given...

- A question and an answer to introduce the topic.
- A fact to help you understand the topic.
- A word of wisdom.
- A question for you to think about.
- More information from the Scriptures on the topic. This is your study mission, if you choose to accept it.

'But seeing the boldness of Peter and John, and perceiving that they were unlearned and uneducated men, they marvelled. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus' Acts 4:13.

This course is designed to be completed in a logical order, starting at number one and continuing to the end.

2. In the BEGINNING - A look at OUR NEED

Question and answer: "Religion sounds boring, what good is it to me?"

Religion often is very boring and dull. In religion people usually perform rituals, trying to appease their god(s). BUT Christianity is well different; it is all about having a relationship with the true God. We don't need to spend a lifetime trying to make God happy with us, Jesus died so He could be well pleased with us!

John 3:16 'For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life'

Fact: Jesus offers you a new, exciting and challenging life as a disciple.

In the beginning Adam and Eve disobeyed God, and we all do the same. This is called sin, and it separates us from God and the great life that He has for us.

God is totally just and so could not have fellowship with sinful people, because He hates sin. Yet, He loved us so much that he sent Jesus to take the punishment for our sin so we could be forgiven! Jesus had never sinned, yet He wanted to be judged for all the wrong things that we do, because He wanted to have fellowship with us.

Wisdom: Let's think about someone stealing from a shop. They go to court and plead their innocence. But the CCTV cameras show that they were guilty. Suddenly the judge announces that they are guilty, but he decides to pay the fine and so the guilty person goes free.

Jesus did that for us, we have been caught lying, swearing, hurting people, getting angry, rejecting God's commands and dishonouring our parents and so much more! Yet Jesus says even though we are guilty, He has paid the price so we can be forgiven!

More Info: From the Holy Bible, the books Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, the verse 1 Corinthians 15:22.

3. WHAT is a CHRISTIAN?

Question and answer: "If I go to church, does that make me a Christian?"

No! Not at all! I go into the bathroom every day and I have never turned into a toilet or a sink! When I walk into a garage (bump!) it does not turn me into a car. Going to church does not make me a Christian. It is also totally impossible to be born a Christian.

The name 'Christian' started off as a nickname to those people who followed Jesus and believed in His teaching. They belonged to that group of people. Christians are followers of Jesus Christ or people belonging to Jesus.

They were also called followers of 'the way' (Acts 9:2, 24:14). The people were first called 'Christian' in Antioch (Acts 11:26). It was like a church base where the Apostles hung out in between mission work (Jerusalem was the first mission sending base, Acts 11:19-22).

Fact: Christ = Anointed One in the Greek language. Most of the New Testament was originally written in Greek.

Wisdom: To be a Christian you have to repent and believe in Jesus, and then you must apply the Bible's teaching to your life. Christians believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. We should act like a true Christian, or we should stop calling ourselves by that name.

John 14:6 Jesus said to Thomas, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me". See John 3:3, Acts 2:38.

Have you ever seen someone wearing the shirt of one football team and then supporting the rivals? You have to support the team whose shirt you are wearing. To wear Jesus Christ's 'shirt' you must obey Him.

Think: True or false? God is all-powerful. If you obey Him, He can do more with your life, than you could have done on your own.

More Info: Ecclesiastes 3:15, Isaiah 55:6,7, Ezekiel 18:20, 36:20, Jeremiah 29:13, Matthew 11:28, Mark 8:36, John 1:29, 3:15-18,36, 5:24, 6:35,47, 10:10,11, 11:25,26, Hebrews 1:7,8, 2 Peter 2:4-9.

4. TELL ME more about becoming a Christian

Question and answer: "If I am a good person will I get to heaven?"

NO! Even good people do bad things that hurt others. Have you obeyed all the commandments? Is God always first in your life? Everyone has sin and this separates us from God. But we can be saved, because Jesus came to forgive us, if we will repent and turn to Him. Exodus 20, Matthew 5:27-28, Romans 5:15-18.

1 John 1:9 'If we confess our sins, He (God) is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness'

1. Jesus said that you must be born again, John 3:3-18. It means starting your life once again, with the view of loving God first. First pray in your own words and ask Him in as Lord of your life.

2. You need to repent of all your sin (say you're sorry and have a change of mind – I will not live like this anymore). Mark 1:15, 6:12. Sin is all the wrong things that you say, think and do. Jesus died on the cross for our sins; He took the punishment that we deserved, so that we could go free.

Think: Is there any reason why I should not give my life to Jesus?

Romans 10:9-10 '.... if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation'

Wisdom: I can trust God with my life in every situation.

I want to be a Christian. This involves four elements: repenting towards God; believing in the Lord Jesus; being baptised in water; receiving the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:38.

Be honest with God and say a prayer similar to this with all your heart. (If it is not from your heart, then don't pray it! God is listening and will only take you seriously if you are serious with Him. But if you are real with God, He will be real with you. That is why people say; "I have tried Christianity, but it did not work for me". They were not real with God, and so God was not real with them.) "Dear Jesus I am sorry for all the bad things that I have done and thought (sin). I now choose to turn away from my sin. I believe that you died on the cross for me and after three days you rose again. Please forgive me and come into my life to be my best friend and from now on I want to follow you. AMEN."

To be a Christian means you now support Jesus and you want to live your life for Him. You have been accepted into God's family and you are now a child of God. You can even call God 'Father' when you pray and talk to Him. John 1:12 and Romans 8:15.

More Info: Acts 4:12-13, Romans 3:10, 23, 5:8,12, 6:23, 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10, Ephesians 2:8-9, Galatians 3:10, Hebrews 9:27-28, 1 John 1:9, 5:12, Revelations 3:20.

5. Now I am a CHRISTIAN, What Is NEXT?

Question and answer: "Now that I am a Christian, do I live my life waiting for heaven?"

You can be happy because a mansion has been prepared for you in heaven - you have a reservation! John 14:2. You are now child of God and part of the family John 1:12. But there is so much more, take a look at your Bible to start the adventure of discipleship.

What you need to do:

- 1. Read a portion of your Bible everyday and as you read ask God to speak to your heart. It is good to start by reading five minutes a day or more, but make sure you spend some time with the Bible everyday.
- 2. Pray daily to God. Talk to Him like you would a friend, but be respectful. You can tell Him anything or ask for His help, and do try to listen as a one sided conversation is boring and rude. You don't have to pray on your knees, I often pray when I go out for a walk, whilst others like to pray in a chair.
- 3. Find a good church that believes the Bible and attend there regularly.
- 4. Tell a friend about your decision to follow Jesus.

Think: What ungodly habit or thing do I need to stop?

John 1:12 'As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name'

Question: "Should my lifestyle change?" As a Christian you are a new Creation, - spiritually you have been born again. You should not live for self, but for the will of God. Change does not happen over night and no one becomes a saint instantly! Try your best. When you make a mistake, and you will, tell God that you are sorry and He will forgive you. 2 Corinthians 5:17, 1 John 2:2.

Fact: God is not like a policeman, who is ready to arrest you for any offence. He does give practical advice and it is all written down in the Bible. Remember that God does not want to spoil your fun, but He is trying to protect you from the harmful effects of sin.

Wisdom: Ask yourself what would Jesus do? If you think Jesus would not do it, then its best if you do not do it either.

More Info: Psalm 1:1-3, 2, 119:11, 15-16, 18, 105, Matthew 6:9-13, 7:7-8, John 3:30, 15:7. Romans 1:16, Philippians 4:6, 2 Timothy 2:19, 3:16-17, 1 Peter 1:16, 3:15.

6. THE BIBLE: It's The GREATEST Book Ever!

Question and answer: "What's so special about the Bible?"

The Bible is made up of 66 books divided into two parts: the Old and New Testaments. The O/T tells us about creation, and the history of Israel. The N/T records the life of Jesus, the Apostles and their teaching.

Fact: The Bible is the world's best selling book and portions of it have been translated into over 2000 languages. It is God's word to mankind. The Bible gives us principles and guidelines for every issue of life.

2 Timothy 3:16 'All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness'

Wisdom: If you want to learn more about God's inspired word, then you need to read it regularly. It is informative, reliable and eternal.

The Bible contains history, poetry, wisdom, genealogies, songs, life stories, romance, etc. It teaches on subjects like growing up, sex, relationships, dealing with enemies, how to live a faithful life, etc. The Bible also tells us about events to come; this is called prophecy.

Think: How do I spend my time every day? Am I productive?

Hebrews 4:12 'For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart'

Jesus taught us that true disciples continue in God's word. That means we must read and apply His word to our lives John 8:31-32, James 1:22. As you read the Bible, ask the Holy Spirit to guide you into all truth. Many have made bad mistakes by not knowing and applying God's word. As you read the Bible, there will be portions that you do not understand, but over the months and years, the Holy Spirit will help you understand more and more as you are faithful to read a portion of the Bible every day.

Fact: By reading five chapters a day you will read the Bible in less than one year.

More Info: Deuteronomy 4:2, Psalm 19:9-11, 119:9,11,105,130, Proverbs 30:5, Isaiah 40:8, Hosea 4:6, 6:3, Mark 13:31, Romans 15:4, 1 Peter 1:23, 2 Peter 1:20,21.

7. TALKING with GOD.

Question and answer: "What is the best way to pray?"

Personally I find that speaking out loud is effective, and to pray lying on my bed is not, especially when I'm tired! Think of prayer as talking to a friend. You usually start with 'Dear God'... (What ever you want to say here).. and then end 'in Jesus name, Amen'. (Amen just means 'So be it').

Fact: God is listening 24 hours, 7 days a week, every day of the year.

1 Thessalonians 5:17-18 'Pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus'

- It is good to set aside a regular time each day to pray.
- You can pray as often as you want to, for short or long periods.
- You can pray anywhere, anytime! At school, at home, or at church!
- Start by thanking and praising God.
- Spend some time being still before God, He may choose to speak to you. You do not have to close your eyes and put your hands together, but it may help you focus.

Think: Do I spend enough time with God every day?

You can pray on your own, or with friends in a group. Prayer comes from your heart so don't worry if you are not good at speaking.

Wisdom: If your prayers have not been answered ask yourself these questions: Do I have sin in my life? Am I asking with a wrong motive? Has God asked me to do something and I've been disobedient? Is it God's will for me to have that fast car or the latest games console!?

Some prayers are answered quickly, at other times we need to be persistent and it can take years for an answer! Luke 18:1-14. When you come to God, don't treat Him like a sales' assistant "I want this and that" etc. We don't come to God for just what we can get out of Him, as that is like your friend wanting to socialise with you only because you have a big wallet! You hang out with people for their company.

Fact: God is interested in all your problems, needs and concerns.

More Info: Psalm 66:13-20, 105:1-4, Matthew 6:9-13, 7:7,8, John 15:7, Acts 1:14, 4:23-31, Philippians 4:6,7, Hebrews 4:14-16, James 5:14-18, 1 Peter 5:6,7.

8. Church Life

Question and answer: "Going to church sounds scary. What does it involve?"

Church buildings can seem daunting, especially if you have never entered one before, but there is nothing to worry about. Just turn up when the service starts and go with the flow. Afterwards try and mingle with the crowd and introduce yourself to some people; you'll be amazed at whom you can meet, and it's good to have fellowship with like-minded people.

Psalm 122:1 'I was glad when they said to me let us go to the house of the Lord'.

Fact: The word 'church' in the Greek means a group or body of people, whereas in English, we refer to a church as the building.

Church buildings come in various shapes and sizes. Some Christians meet in halls, at home, and in some countries football stadiums! Church meetings vary; sometimes a service is one hour long, whereas in another church they could worship for more than one hour and then somebody will teach from the Bible. Each has its own particular style.

Wisdom: If you take a piece of charcoal out of a BBQ and place it on its own, it will soon grow cold and die out. That is one reason why we go to church - to be with people who can help and encourage us in the faith. 'Faith comes by hearing and hearing the word of God' Romans 10:17.

Churches often have denominational names like Elim, Baptist, URC, Church of England etc. Don't worry too much about the name, just make sure they believe the Bible and are open to the Holy Spirit's inspiration.

Think: When I go to church, am I willing for God to speak to me?

Often churches have meetings in the week, like a Bible study, prayer meeting, youth group etc. Find out what's on and give them a try. A live church often changes the way things are done - to do them better. Ask God to lead you to a church that is right for you and start attending!

Fact: The church is described as a body - teaching us that every member is important, because they have a role to play Romans 12:4-8, 1 Corinthians 12:4-31.

More Info: Psalm 27:4, 84, Ecclesiastes 5:1, Matthew 18:20, John 17:6-26, 1 Corinthians 3:9, Ephesians 1:20-23, 2:19-22, 4:11-13, 5:25, Hebrew 10:25, 13:20, Revelation 7:9.

9. Becoming A DISCIPLE of Jesus

Question and answer: "Is there anything else I need to do?"

Becoming a Christian is just the beginning. Jesus makes it clear that we must become disciples; and to be a disciple is costly. But with a great price, comes a great reward!

Fact: God has a plan and purpose for your life and He knows best.

Matthew 28:19, 20 'Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations ...teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you'

A disciple is a person who commits their entire life to Jesus. They commit their future and everything they own to Him. A disciple lives only for the will of God and their burning desire is to obey the Lord.

Wisdom: We have a Helper, the Comforter, called the 'Holy Spirit'. He leads us into God's plan, helping us to become disciples. The Holy Spirit helps us understand the Bible and convict us when we are wrong.

Jesus teaches us by His words and actions how to be a disciple. Find out about prayer, fasting, love, evangelism and miracles and so much more by reading these accounts.

Think: If you are unsure what to do, ask yourself 'what would Jesus do?'

2 Corinthians 5:20 teaches us that we are Christ's ambassadors. Ambassadors are very important people who represent their King/Queen or government in a foreign land. They speak on behalf of their nation regarding important matters. If an ambassador behaves badly it can reflect poorly on their country. Likewise, we as Christians represent God, and if we do act foolishly, it reflects badly on Him.

1 Peter 1:16 'Be holy, for I (God) am holy'

Do you want to become a disciple of Jesus? Will you live entirely for His will? Don't worry if you do make a mistake. Ask God to forgive you and move on. Many people in the Bible made grave mistakes yet they confessed their sin and went on to do great things for God!

More Info: Holy Spirit: John 14:26, Acts 1:8, 2. Right living: Matthew 5-7. Love: 1 Corinthians 13.

Conduct: Ephesians 4-6, 2 Timothy 2, Titus 3. Faith: Hebrews 11.

10. A CHANGE of THINKING

Question and answer: "Do I have a correct attitude?"

We are all influenced by the media, education, friends and others. If parents speak negative words over your life, you may not think good things could happen to you. If you listen to some non-Christian music, your thoughts may dwell on their negative/lustful words. Some TV programmes could fill your thoughts with bad images. If you come from a negative culture, that could reflect on your outlook on life.

Ephesians 4:22-24 'Put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind and put on the new man...'

If you were brought up in an environment where money was everything, you could grow up with the same philosophy. As Christians we need to renew our minds to view our lives and the world just as the Bible does Romans 12:1-2.

Wisdom: What is popular is not always right, and what is right is not always popular. We can view a glass of water as half empty or half full.

Friends can build you up or pull you down. If you stand on a wall it is easier to be pulled off, than to pull someone up. If you socialise with negative and critical people, you could be influenced to be negative. If someone you know swears a lot, you could subconsciously do the same.

Fact: The way we think determines how we act.

Faith teaches us to believe God's promises when our eyes say it is impossible. Faith is positive – 'anything is possible'. Doubt is negative – 'it can't be done'.

God can use negative experiences in our life to teach us something. Think about Job, a wealthy man who lost everything. Yet, by the end of his life, he was twice as blessed than at the beginning. James 5:11 tells us that God intended great things for Job. Romans 8:28 'We know that all things work together for good to those who love God...'and then it goes on to speak about trials etc 8:29-39. Jeremiah 29:11-13.

Think: Do I dwell on the negative, or do I stand in faith?

More Info: Exodus 3-15, Judges 6-8, Ruth and Esther, Job 1:21,22, 13:15, 19:25, 42:12, Romans 8:5-14, Philippians 2:2-5, 4:6-8, 2 Timothy 1:7, James 1:2-12.

11. Knowing RIGHT from WRONG

Question and answer: "How do I know if something is right or wrong?"

The Bible is our primary way of finding if something is right or wrong. The Holy Spirit will also convict us if something is wrong, and He will lead us to do good works. We must learn what the Bible teaches and we need to become sensitive to the small still voice of the Holy Spirit. Don't just follow the crowd – even in the church! (Not everyone lives a holy life).

Romans 9:1 'I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit'

Many bad things are legal and socially acceptable in different societies, for example abortion or drunkenness, but they are not right in God's eyes.

If the Bible does not address an issue directly, we need to look to a spiritual principle that can be applied to it. For example, the Bible does not say, 'Drugs are bad' but it does say, 'Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, do not defile it' 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17, 2 Corinthians 6:16.

If the law of the land directly contravenes or contradicts God's law, then it is acceptable to break 'man's' law in order to obey God's higher law. E.g. In some countries the Bible is banned, yet missionaries take Bibles in against the law, because God's word is more important Acts 5:29.

Wisdom: Would you enter a field that you knew had land mines in it? Likewise, if something could be sin, why take the risk?

Always ask yourself what would Jesus do in any given situation? How would He react? What would He say? Would He visit these 'places'? And if He did, what would He do? Could it form an ungodly habit? Can I thank God for it, or ask Him to bless it? Are you being secretive about it? Will it cause pain or hurt to other people?

Fact: It is better to be safe than to be sorry. One wrong action could ruin your testimony.

Think: Am I doing 'things' which may be wrong in God's eyes? Or am I setting a bad example for a fellow brother or sister?

More Info: 1 Chronicles 21:1-6, 2 Chronicles 25:5-10, Acts 24:16, Romans 2:15, 6:9-23, 7:14-25, 14:1,23, 1 Corinthians Chapter 8, 10:13, 23, 28-33, 11:1, 2 Corinthians 4:2, 1 Timothy 4, 5:17-20, Titus 1:15, 1 Peter 3:16, 1 John 3:18-21.

12. FEAR and WORRY

Question and answer: "Is there any point in worrying, or being fearful?"

You cannot solve any problems, or change anything, by worrying. It is a waste of time and energy! It only makes you feel stressed and puts extra pressure on your heart! Fear can be good or bad for you. Fearing to walk too close to the edge of a cliff is good. But, if you fear the future, that has a negative impact upon your life. God is in control of every situation; we should have faith in Him. Stop worrying and stop fearing. Romans 14:23. Matthew 6:25, 34 'Do not worry about your life...' 'Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about it's own things...'

Our heavenly Father takes good care of His obedient children. Give your fear and worry to God. Why not try to trust Him more, and worry less? 'Cast your cares upon Him because He cares for you' 1 Peter 5:7.

Wisdom: A problem not worth praying about is not worth worrying about. Tell God your feelings, express what is on your heart, and let him deal with the worries, fears and anxieties. Proverbs 12:25, Luke 1:37, 18:27.

Romans 8:15 'You did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship...'

'Perfect love casts out all fear' 1 John 4:18. We live in the perfect love of God, and He will help us in times of need. Put your faith in Him and rest in the safety of His love. Worry and fear is like a thief, it robs us of our joy and happiness. We must choose to cast all fear out of our mind and proclaim our faith in Christ.

Fact: Nothing is ever as bad as it first appears. God knows the future.

Have you ever laid on your bed and worried about an exam result or a job interview? If you do that again, you could get stressed or upset more, and you could even get sick, literally! Try to fix your mind on Jesus. Philippians 4:6,7.

Think: Am I a worrier or a fearful person? What will I do about it?

More Info: Psalm 27:1, 37:3-7, 56:10,11, Proverbs 24:19, Matthew 6:25-34, 10:28-30, 28:20, Galatians 6:2, 2 Timothy 1:7, 4:17,18, Hebrews 13:5,6.

13. The HOLY SPIRIT

Question and answer: "Is it a ghost?"

No, **He** does not creep up on people and go whhooo! The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity. He is equal with the Father and the Son, in His person and authority. The Holy Spirit is a person, but He does not have a body. When we ask Jesus to come into our life, it is the Holy Spirit who indwells us believers and seals us until the day of redemption. If you damage a building it does not grieve, because it is not a person with feelings, but we can grieve the Holy Spirit, who is a person.

Fact: Jesus told the disciples that they needed the Holy Spirit to empower them, so they could do the works that He did Acts 1:8, 2:1-4.

Acts 5:32 'The Holy Spirit...given to those who obey Him' (God). Luke 11:13 'The Holy Spirit... given to those who ask God for Him'

The Holy Spirit guides us into all truth as we read the Bible and He convicts us when we do wrong. He also distributes gifts to the body of Christ. These are called the gifts of the Spirit and there are nine of them (1 Corinthians Ch 12-14). To receive these gifts we need to be baptised in the Holy Spirit (no this is not a water dunking). The disciples were converted in John 20:22, this was when they were indwelt with the Holy Spirit. But in Acts 2:1-4 they received the Holy Spirit and in Acts 4:29-31 they had more of the Holy Spirit. The book of Acts has also been called, 'The Acts of the Holy Spirit.'

Wisdom: If you own a 'pay as you go' mobile phone, the credits run low as you call more people. If you give out helping others, you too will discover that you need to be topped up once again with the Holy Spirit.

If you desire to be baptised in the Holy Spirit, ask God, because He likes to give good gifts to His children (Luke 11:5-13). Other believers can also lay their hands on you and pray for the Holy Spirit to fill you, (Acts 8:14-17). Sometimes the Holy Spirit comes down in a meeting and everyone is filled with the Spirit. (Acts 2:1-4).

We can grieve the Holy Spirit if we continue to sin (Ephesians 4:30), and King David was afraid that the Holy Spirit would leave him after he had committed grave sins, but he found forgiveness 2 Samuel Ch 11,12, Psalm 51.

Think: Am I doing something that grieves the Holy Spirit?

More Info: Genesis 1:2, Job 33:4, Matthew 12:32, John 14:16, Acts ch 5, 9:17, 11:12,28, 13:2, 16:6,7, 1 Corinthians 2:10,11, 2 Corinthians 1:21-22, Ephesians 1:13.

14. The BREAKING of BREAD

Question and answer: "Did the disciples use white sliced bread?"

In all probability no, but that's not the point. Jesus wanted us to remember His death and resurrection regularly. That is why we celebrate communion. We remember that He gave His body and shed His blood, so that we could be saved.

Fact: The breaking of bread is also known as the Lord's Supper or communion. Communion means common union. As Christians we have a common union with other believers and Jesus Himself. The Lord's Supper is called a sacrament.

Luke 22:19-20 'Jesus took bread, gave thanks and gave it to them, saying "This is My body broken for you; do this in remembrance of me." Like wise He also took the cup after supper saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you"'

Some churches have communion once a week and others have it once a month. Some churches use bread rolls, sliced loaf, wine or juice.

Wisdom: It is not what you use that is important, but that you partake of this sacrament in remembrance of Jesus, and proclaim His death until He comes again.

We need to heed the warnings in 1 Corinthians 11:26-31 regarding the Lord's Supper. We are not meant to partake of it in an unworthy manner, as we could become sick or even die! Don't panic; just follow the guidelines that teach us not to come to the table unless we are right with God. Ask yourself: Is there anyone I need to forgive? Have I confessed my sin?

Fact: Most people can be tired, sick or die of natural causes.

Think: Am I right with God and with my fellow man?

Jesus knew how forgetful we could be; we even forget birthdays, dentist appointments and anniversaries. By regularly taking communion we cannot forget what Jesus has done for us nor what it cost Him.

More Info: Matthew 5:23-24, 18:21-22, Luke 24:27-32, John 6:35,50,51, John 19:34, 1 Corinthians 10:16-17, 1 John 1:5-9.

15. Water BAPTISM

Question and answer: "I've been christened, so do I need to be baptised?"

Christening is not a sign of your personal faith, because it was done without your consent. It is not even a biblical concept - it does you no harm, but neither does it do you any good. All Christians need to be baptised when they are born again (if it is possible) - even Jesus was baptised. It is one of the sacraments of the Protestant church.

Matthew 28:19 'Go and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit'

Fact: Baptism is an outward expression of an inward faith in Jesus.

Jesus commands us to be baptised, and we usually do it publicly as a testimony to our faith in Christ. It is a sign of our obedience to Jesus. When you see a soldier or a policeman, you instantly recognise them because of their uniform. Likewise, baptism is a public event to inform the world that you have nailed your colours to the mast, and that you mean business with God. You're dedicated to Jesus.

Wisdom: An engagement ring is purchased to be worn – not kept in a box. Likewise our faith should also be on display to the public.

Going into the water speaks of wanting to go deeper with God, a complete break with our past ways and sinful habits etc. Going under the water symbolises being washed by the pardoning mercy of God. The water speaks of a grave and as you go under you are spiritually buried. (Don't panic you don't stay under for long!). Coming out of the water speaks of a new resurrected and distinctive life. Jesus died, was buried and rose again, and now spiritually; you have identified with Christ Jesus.

Think: Is there anything that is stopping me from being baptised?

Get baptised as soon as possible after being born again. But make sure that you are doing it for God, and not under pressure to please someone else. Ask God to show you when the time is right.

Fact: In the time of Jesus and the early church, baptism was a common concept. Some religions baptised their people in bull's blood! Gross!

More Info: Matthew 3:1-6,13-17, John 4:1,2, Acts 2:38, 9:17-22, 10:44-48, 16:25-34, 19:1-6, Romans 6:4,5, Galatians 3:26,27, Eph. 4:5,6, 1 Peter 3:21.

16. PRAISE and WORSHIP

Question and answer: "What is the right way to worship God?"

We must worship God in 'Spirit and truth', which comes from the heart. We can sing to God, clap, raise our hands, dance, whistle and play instruments etc. There is no set pattern or formula, and worship is not just for Sundays, it should be a lifestyle... a way of life. John 4:23,24.

Psalm 149:6 'Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand'

Have you ever seen supporters of a football team 'worship' their side? They shout, sing, chant and get excited proclaiming players as heroes or even gods! If they get excited about a game, how much more should we be amazed about what God has done for us? Remember what happens at the world cup!

Wisdom: Praise and worship is giving glory to whom it is due. God is worthy of all our honour, praise, worship and adoration. Deuteronomy 10:21.

You may worship God differently at home than you do at church, sometimes with more passion! Some people worship, sing and dance with a Christian CD, others just sit and listen to God whilst reading their Bibles and praying. Exodus 15:1-20, 2 Samuel 6:14, Psalm 30:11, 149:3.

John 4:23 '...True worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him'

Fact: To love God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength means to worship Him with all that we are. Worship is an expression of love.

Often when we are feeling down we do not want to praise God, but in fact this is the best time to do so because it can lift our spirits Acts 16:22-40.

Think: Do I worship God as much as He deserves? Does my worship of Him come from the very depths of my heart and is it sincere?

More Info: 1 Chronicles 15:16, 23:4,5, 2 Chronicles 5:13, Ezra 3:10,11, Nehemiah 9:3, 12:46,47, Psalms 40, 46:10, 66, 119:164, 150, Mark 12:17, Ephesians 5:4, Colossians 3:16, Hebrews 13:15,16, James 5:13, 1 Peter 2:5,9, 4:11, Revelation 5:9, 7:9-12, 15:3-4.

17. What do these BIBLICAL WORDS mean?

Question and answer: “When I read my Bible, I find many words that I do not understand. What should I do in that situation?”

It’s good to be honest and that is always the best option. If you are ever in doubt, just ask, because it proves that you are taking your Bible seriously. You could use a dictionary to find the definition, or you may need to get a Bible, which is a simplified translation that helps eliminate confusing words.

1 Corinthians 6:11 ‘... But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God’

- Sanctified: We have been made holy in God’s eyes.
- Justified: Just as if I had never sinned.
- Righteousness: We have been made right in the eyes of God. We now can approach Him.
- Grace: Unmerited favour of God, which we do not deserve.
- Washed in the blood: Our sins are washed away; forgiven/forgotten.
- Interceding: Pleading the case of another (in prayer), like in a court.
- Atonement: At one with God, peace has been made because of Christ.

These words speak of our spiritual condition in Christ. We gain favour towards the Father, because we have been accepted in the beloved, because of what Jesus did for us. Jesus is at the right hand of the Father interceding for us.

Wisdom: If you don’t understand what the preacher is talking about, speak to him/her afterwards and ask him/her to simplify the point.

Have you ever had to ask for directions? The person says “You have to go there, over that, past this shop, ummm third or fifth traffic light on the left, two hundred metres on, turn left and there it is opposite you!” By the time they get to the end you have forgotten the start, often you’re so embarrassed to ask again that you just thank them and walk/drive away.

Fact: Sometimes people leave church without understanding the point of the message, because the minister did not make it plain enough.

Think: Do I need to ask someone to explain something to me?

More Info: Acts 26:18, Romans 3:24, 5:9,16, 18, 2 Corinthians 5:15,12:9, Ephesians 1:6, 2:8,9, Colossians 1:20, Hebrews 7:25, 8:1, 10:10,19, 1 Peter 1:5, 3:18,22, 1 John 1:7.

18. Our POSITION in Christ JESUS

Question and answer: "How am I different in Christ?"

If you do not know who you are in Christ, you will not understand the power and authority given to you. The most important thing is that you are a child of God, and an heir of Christ, John 1:12.

Galatians 4:7 'You are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son then an heir of God through Christ'

Wisdom: To know that you are related to royalty gives you a status and a position including privileges and responsibilities. Jesus is the King of Kings, and we have been adopted into His family. We are a son and an heir to the promises of God. We are in authority because of Jesus. We are...

- Redeemed from the curse of the law, Galatians 3:13.
- Saved by grace through faith, Ephesians 2:8.
- An heir of God and a co-heir with Christ, Romans 8:17.
- Sanctified and justified through Christ, 1 Corinthians 6:11.
- An heir of eternal life and forgiven, 1 John 5:11-12 & Ephesians 1:7.
- Justified and at peace with God & more than a conqueror, Rom 8:37, 5:1.
- Healed by His wounds, 1 Peter 2:24, victorious 1 Corinthians 15:57.
- Righteous by faith in Jesus Christ, Romans 3:22.

Fact: If you are a nobody, then you have just become somebody, in Christ.

Philippians 1:6 'Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ...'

We must also live up to our royal position. Just because we are sanctified (made holy) by faith, it does not mean that we now can sin all the time. The proof that we are in Christ is that we are choosing to live up to our title of holy in Him. Holiness and good works are the evidence that our salvation is being worked out practically day-by-day. When we do make mistakes, confess our sin and move on into His forgiveness. Ephesians 2:10, Philippians 2:12, Titus 2:7, James 2:18 and Matthew 5:16. 1 Timothy 4:12.

Think: Do I really know who I am in Christ Jesus?

More Info: Psalm 107:3, Isaiah 46:4, Matthew 5:14, Romans 8:14,16, 12:2, 2 Corinthians 5:7,17, Galatians 3:14, Ephesians 1:3, 5:1, 6:10, Philippians 4:13, Colossians 1:13, Titus 3:2, Hebrews 11:7, James 2:5, Revelation 12:11.

19. GODLY FRIENDS are GOOD to have

Question and answer: "Should I have non-Christian friends?"

It is important to have non-Christian friends, because you are the light of the world. But sometimes if you are weak in faith, they could lead you astray. Are your friends open to the gospel, or do they consistently lead you into sin? God may show you not to spend time with certain people because of the negative influence they have on you. He may call you to be a friend to them also, as a witness for Him.

Proverbs 12:26 and 13:20 'The righteous should choose his friends carefully, for the way of the wicked leads him astray'. 'He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will be destroyed'

A friend is good for a chat and will listen to you. A true friend should tell you in a loving attitude when you are wrong. A friend is someone who you can laugh with and sometimes you will cry together. Proverbs 27:9 'Ointment and perfume delight the heart and the sweetness of a man's friend gives delight by hearty counsel'.

Fact: A real friend will stick around in difficult times Proverbs 27:10. On the other hand we should not be deceived: 'Evil company corrupts good habits' 1 Corinthians 15:33.

Sometimes the people you study or work with can be 'friends' within the environment of school, college or work place etc. You may have to choose not to socialise with them at other times, because their life style would be a hindrance to your spiritual growth.

Wisdom: Some 'friends' may think less of you for becoming a Christian. They may not want to socialise with you any more. It's OK to drift apart.

Your Christian friends should help you grow in faith. Proverbs 27:6, 17. It is good to talk about your walk with God in an informal way. Ask your friends what they have been reading in the Bible, or what they have been praying for. Encourage each other to go deeper with God.

Think: Do any of my friends have a negative influence on me? Who has a positive influence on me and should I spend more time with them?

More Info: Deuteronomy 13:6-8, 1 Samuel 20, Proverbs 17:9,17, 18:1,24, 22:24, 28:23, Ecclesiastes 7:21,22, (Matthew 26:31-75 & John 21:15-19) John 15:14, Philippians 2:3,4.

20. RELATIONSHIPS with the OPPOSITE sex

Question and answer: "What are the rules for relationships with the opposite sex?"

This is a very interesting question with many different ideas; depending on what culture you come from. Even in the West, the American form of going out is different from that of the British. The universal rule is that you do not have a relationship (boyfriend or girlfriend) with some one who is not a Christian.

2 Corinthians 6:14 'Do not be yoked together with unbelievers, for what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?'

A yoke is a piece of equipment that goes across an animal's neck. The animal is harnessed to a plough, and it pulls it across a field. Often there would be two animals working side by side pulling one large plough. Imagine if an ox and a donkey were yoked together, they would end up going in circles, and the ox would carry most of the burden. Christians and unbelievers are very different people with different views.

Wisdom: To obey God's word is safe and profitable. To disobey God will result in broken fellowship with Him and possible disaster.

In a sports team, the coach or manager will give everyone a tactical plan. If you ignore their plan, and play by different rules, don't be surprised when you lose and disappoint a lot of people, including yourself.

Fact: Most people enter into a relationship unsure of the rules that have been made for their own protection. That can result in broken hearts/lives.

To jump from one relationship to another is not God's plan. Those who do this often have little self worth, and try to find acceptance and love in a partner. We can only find unconditional love and acceptance from God. Allow God to show you who is the right person for you. Sex is only permissible in the context of marriage. You do not need to go with the crowd, you are not odd - you're smart. It is wise to hang out in groups and not in secluded places where you could be tempted. Job 31:1, Matthew 6:22,23.

If you compromise your/God's standards when you choose a partner, don't be surprised if they compromise their standards with you. Also, don't be surprised if they won't live by the standards that you compromised.

Think: Does your relationship enrich or weaken your walk with God?

More Info: Genesis 2:18-25, Exodus 34:16, Joshua 23:12,13, Ezra 9:1-15, Nehemiah 13:23-27, Proverbs 13:13, 31:30, Amos 3:3, Matthew 12:25, Luke,

11:28, 1 Corinthians 6:9,10,19,20, 15:33, 2 Corinthians 6:14-18, 1 Thess. 4:7, 5:21,22, James 1:22, 4:4.

21. SEX outside of marriage

Question and answer: "All my friends are doing it, so why can't I?"

In all probability not all your friends are doing it, they just want to sound cool, pretending to be mature. There is nothing mature about sex outside of marriage, animals like pigs and donkeys mate whom they want and never get married! With the problems of unplanned pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases and broken hearts, it would be foolish to experiment or to try it 'the once'. The once will turn into many times and before you know it 'your sins will find you out'.

Genesis 2:24 'A man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh'

Sexual intercourse is a spiritual union where two people become one. If you have slept around, spiritually your soul is a bit confused. You need to repent and to renounce what you have done. If you have lost your virginity outside of marriage, then you need also to repent, and remember now that you have become a new creation 2 Corinthians 5:17.

Wisdom: Respect and love is the ability to walk away from something you desire (sex) to protect something or someone you love. To let a fool kiss you is stupid, but to let a kiss fool you is worse.

In a relationship both parties have to be smart. Be careful what you wear, don't be provocative and dress wisely. Keep your hands to yourself, enjoy the relationship and don't be controlled by lust. Try not to be alone together in a room where the door is shut. Purity is the name of the game; and 'give no appearance of evil'.

1 Corinthians 6:20 'Glorify God in your body and in your Spirit...'

Fact: Your virginity is one of the few things that you give away once, and never have the opportunity to get it back. A stolen moment of pleasure is not worth days or weeks of worry and a lifetime of regret.

Sex is like a fire; the same flame that warms a home can burn it down. God's proper place and time for sex is in the context of marriage.

Think: Have I mistaken love for lust? Love waits for marriage.

More Info: Proverbs 5, Matthew 5:27,28, 6:33, 15:19,20, Romans 6:15-23, 1 Corinthians 6:12-20, Galatians 5:16-21, Colossians 3:5-7, 1 Thessalonians 4:3-6, 1 Timothy 5:1-2.

22. FORGIVE or you will be SORRY!

Question and answer: "I hate apologising, it is so embarrassing. Do I have to do it?"

It can be embarrassing, but God does want us to be humble. It is important for us to admit it when we are wrong and to set the record straight. When we understand that God will require us to apologise, it does help us think twice before we do or say something stupid.

Matthew 6:14-15 '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'

Forgiveness is a gift we receive from God that we don't deserve; Therefore, forgiveness is a gift we give to others that they don't deserve.

Forgiveness includes giving up all emotional claims for compensation and ceasing to feel resentment after a wrong has happened. After forgiving someone, you will still recall painful memories. Remind yourself that you have forgiven, and choose to think about something else. Pray for those concerned and eventually your anger will subside.

Fact: Music and films can stir our emotions to make us feel good or bad. Forgiveness is not a feeling, but a choice. We choose to forgive.

We forgive because God commands us to, and for medical reasons! Un-forgiveness breeds resentment, bitterness etc, this has been proven to lead to physical illness. Un-forgiveness hurts others and can lead us into sinful habits to escape our own pain.

If we do not forgive others, God will not forgive us! Matthew 6:12. We continually ask God to forgive us, often for the same sin, so be forgiving when someone keeps offending you. Treat others like God treats you.

Wisdom: If your fellowship with another believer has been broken, unless you forgive/confess and seek restoration, your right standing before God will be compromised. Matthew 5:23-24, Luke 7:41-47. Resolve the situation as soon as possible.

Think: Do I need to apologise to someone or make amends?

A circle of apology should be extended to those people who were involved within the circle of offence. Therefore if we have made a public mistake or caused offence then a public apology needs to be made.

More Info: Matthew 18:21-22, Mark 11:25, Luke 15:11-31, 17:3,4, 1 Corinthians 13:4-5, 2 Corinthians 2:5-11, 1 Peter 4:8. The story of Joseph, Genesis 45-50.

23. Knowing your ENEMY the DEVIL

Question and answers: "So this devil, does he have horns and carry a pitchfork?"

To be honest I have never seen him, but I have seen his destruction in mankind; murders, abortion, rape, violence, anger, hatred, racism, prejudice, etc. All evil is incited by the devil. Jesus said he is the thief who has come to steal, kill and destroy, John 10:10.

1 John 3:8 'Jesus came to destroy the works of the evil one'

Fact: The devil has many names, for example, Satan, evil one, liar, deceiver, accuser and adversary. Jesus defeated the devil on the cross.

Satan works to undermine the believer's relationship with God and others. He uses the media, our anger, divisions in the church, our tongue, and the unconverted, in fact he uses anything. But the devil cannot be blamed for everything; sometimes we are our own worst enemy. Our sinful desires, lack of self-discipline and self-control can give our enemy a legal right to cause problems in our lives. Always remember that the Holy Spirit who is in you is stronger than the devil 1 John 4:4.

Wisdom: When countries go to war, the opponents examine each other's weak and strong points to know where to strike next. We need to be aware of the enemy's tactics so we can put up a strong defence.

1 Peter 5:8, 9 "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. Resist him steadfast in the faith..."

Think: The devil is the father of lies; he is a deceiver. The serpent tempted Adam and Eve to sin, by showing that the fruit looked good and would taste nice. Today demons tempt us by our senses, touch, taste and a look. Before you give in to temptation, ask yourself what will it cost you in the long term? Our sin can break our relationship with God, and it breaks down trust with other people.

Fact: When Jesus returns, Satan's works will be defeated and he will ultimately be cast into the lake of fire Revelation 12:9-11, 20:10.

More Info: Job 1:6,7, Isaiah 14:12-16, Ezekiel 28:12-19, Zechariah 3, Matthew 4:8,9, Mark 4:15, Luke 4:3,6,9, John 13:2,14:30, Acts 5:3-10, 2 Corinthians 11:14, 2 Corinthians 12:7, Ephesians 6:11, Colossians 2:15, 1 Thessalonians 2:18, 3:5, 2 Timothy 2:26, Hebrews 2:9,14,15, 1 John 5:19.

Names: Matthew 12:24, 13:19, 13:39, John 8:44, 12:31,14:30, 2 Corinthians 4:4, Ephesians 2:2, 6:12, 1 Thess. 3:5, Hebrews 2:14, Revelation 9:11, 12:7-10, 20:2,10.

24. STANDING our GROUND and using our WEAPONS

Question and answer: "The devil is our enemy, so what weapons do we have to fight with?"

The great news is that we are on the winning side, but we should never become complacent. Our spiritual weapons are the word of God (the Bible), self-discipline, prayer in the Holy Spirit, praise, the name of Jesus, our testimony, His blood and our spiritual armour.

Revelations 12:11 'They overcame him (Devil) by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony...'

In the Bible there is a picture of Christians as soldiers of Christ; we have been enlisted into God's army. In a sense we have the latest technology, as our weapons are proven as superior over our enemy the Devil 2 Timothy 2:3-4.

Wisdom: If we use the wrong tactics, then we may lose some ground.

Our weapons: **The word of God** is seen as a sword Hebrews 4:12. When Jesus was in the wilderness for forty days, He kept on quoting the Scriptures to the Devil (Luke 4:1-13). **Self-discipline.** If you're unsure if 'it' is a sin, play safe and do not do it. **Praise and worship** is also seen as a two edged sword in your hand Psalm 149:6. The Devil hates praise going to God, - he even wanted Jesus to bow down and worship him! Luke 4:7. **Jesus is the name over all;** He defeated Satan on the cross of Calvary Philippians 2:10, Colossians 2:15. We can also plead the **blood of Jesus** over our lives. The blood is like a covering that Satan fears. Exodus 12:21-30, Matthew 26:28, John 19:34, Hebrews 9-11. We have spiritual armour. We have to walk in truth, faith, righteousness, peace, prayer and stand on the word of God Ephesians 6:10-18. Always remember that the Holy Spirit who is in you is stronger than the Devil, so continually submit and obey Him 1 John 4:4.

1 John 3:8 'Jesus came to destroy the works of the evil one'

Fact: If you habitually sin, it will give the devil a legal stronghold in your life. The problem will only get worse, until you repent.

Wisdom: Often when we get discouraged we don't want to read the Bible, pray or worship God. The devil is trying to defeat us, so make sure you press in when the going gets tough. Fight back, and hit him hard!

Think: Do I use my weapons of warfare often enough?

More Info: Zechariah 3, Romans 12:1,21, 1 Corinthians 6:12, Ephesians 6:12.

25. Learning to RESIST TEMPTATIONS.

Question and answer: "What exactly is a temptation and how will I know when I'm being tempted?"

A temptation is a thought, a look or a suggestion, that if indulged in or dwelt upon will lead you into sin. Jesus taught that if we look at someone to lust after them it is like adultery with them in our heart Matthew 5:27-28. Temptation can be subtle and very appealing. If someone offends you, temptation would come if you think about a way of getting revenge.

Studying the Bible will help you to understand what is right and wrong, and it will help you resist temptation. The devil will tempt you as often as he can, especially when you are weak.

1 Corinthians 10:13 'God is faithful; who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able to bear, but with the temptation will also make a way of escape that you may be able to bear it'

Fact: Life is full of choices: You choose to sin, or be holy Genesis 4:7.

Temptation always looks, feels, or tastes good. If you know that a film, which contains sinful material is on TV, you may be tempted to watch it - that is not a sin. BUT if you watch it wilfully, knowing that it contains bad material, then it is sin. It is not edifying or glorifying to God. Ask yourself 'what would Jesus do?' Practise the presence of Christ.

Wisdom: When temptation comes, reject it, and refuse to dwell upon it.

The enemy will try to tempt you by planting bad thoughts in your mind. Fight back by proclaiming, "The Lord rebuke you Satan, I do not receive these thoughts and will not accept them. You are defeated; I plead the blood of my Lord Jesus Christ over my mind." Zechariah 3, Romans 16:20, Colossians 2:15, Revelation 20:10, Philippians 4:8.

Think: What are my weak points and what am I going to do about it?

Sin, if entertained, has consequences. A fence on a cliff edge may seem to spoil your view, yet it also protects you from falling to your death! 'The wages of sin is death' Romans 6:23.

More Info: Genesis 39:2-12, Numbers 32:23, Isaiah 41:10, Matthew 26:41, Luke 10:19, John 8:31,32, 2 Corinthians 9:8, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 4:22-24, 6:13, Philippians 2:12, 3:12-14, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Titus 3:3-7, Hebrews 4:15,16, 12:1, 2 Peter 1:3, 1 John 3:3-12, Jude 20,21.

26. DRUGS, ALCOHOL and SUBSTANCE ABUSE.

Question and answer: "So what makes these substances wrong?"

Anything that damages your body, or puts you in a state where you are unable to think or act properly, is clearly wrong. It has been proven that smoking, taking certain drugs and drinking excessively can kill you. God says, "You shall not murder" (kill) Exodus 20:13. Whether you kill others or yourself, it is wrong and therefore should not be done.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 'Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore, glorify God in your body'

Most ungodly habits like smoking, drugs, and drinking are very expensive and can lead you into debt, and on a slippery downward slope.

Have you ever seen a drug abuser or an alcoholic? Would you like to end up like them? There is hope for anybody with an addiction as God can do all things. Certain things may be legal, but are they moral or godly?

Wisdom: Be over cautious if you are in doubt whether something is right or wrong. Stay safe, rather than sorry. If you make a mistake, then repent.

"How much alcohol is too much?" To be honest I don't know because alcohol affects different people in various ways. Drinking socially has been the downfall of many people, and we are warned not to associate with believers who are drunkards, 1 Corinthians 5:11, Proverbs 23:19,20, Ephesians 4:17-24.

If you force someone to go for a drink with you, then you are in big trouble Habakkuk 2:15. If you encourage a weaker brother/sister to go drinking with you, you could be leading them into sin! 1 Corinthians 8:9-13.

Proverbs 20:1 'Wine is a mocker, intoxicating drink arouses brawling and whoever is led astray by them is not wise'

Fact: Most ungodly habits are very difficult to stop, so don't start one.

Certain establishments are best avoided so that you will not be tempted to fall under peer pressure. Any fool can get drunk, smoke or take drugs, but it takes a man or a woman of God to say no.

Think: Am I knowingly harming myself in any environment that I go to?

More Info: Genesis 9:20-23, 19:30-38, Proverbs 23:29-35, Isaiah 28:1-4, 7-8, Luke 21:34, Romans 6:16, 1 Cor. 6:9-11, Gal. 5:16, Eph. 5:18, Heb. 4:15-16.

27. How to HANDLE my FINANCES

Question and answer: "My finances are getting out of control, what can I do?"

We all need to be responsible with that which God has entrusted us, Matthew 25:14-30. If we have money then indirectly it came from God (Psalm 24:1, 50:10) and therefore should belong to Him, as He should be our Lord and Master. We should always try and live within our means. Borrowing money or living on credit is a bad idea. We are warned in the Bible not to fall into a lifestyle of debt as it leads to poverty and bondage.

Romans 13:8 'Owe no one anything, except to love one another...'

There are some occasions when believers may need to borrow money, e.g. university fees, hospital bills, a mortgage. We are not under bondage in impossible situations. Sadly many people by no fault of their own live below the poverty line.

Wisdom: Learn to control your money before it starts to control you.

We need to understand the difference between our needs and our wants. Our needs are our essentials, food, clothing, a place to live, etc (Matthew 6:25-34, Philippians 4:19). Our wants are clearly things we do not need, a new faster car, more jewellery and expensive designer clothes, etc. 1 John 2:15-17. Being in debt is a financial curse; to see it broken you must tithe, Malachi 3:6-11. By giving back to God you are toning your wallet, walking in obedience and exercising your heart, Matthew 6:21. Learn good habits.

Fact: Debt is living beyond your means, and sometimes can be sign of greed. It is the opposite of giving. Debt is emptying your future to fill up your present. Giving is emptying your present to fill up your future Matthew 6:19-24, Luke 14:28-30.

If you live in debt then it could be difficult for the Lord to fully use you, e.g. you might not be able to go on a mission trip or you could be unable to be a financial blessing to someone.

Credit cards give a false sense of wealth and purchases appear cheaper, but it will come back to haunt you! Proverbs 22:7, Galatians 6:7. You should only buy items that you have the cash for or use a debit card that cannot exceed your bank limit, Luke 9:23. If you are in debt, then your first priority is to pay it off, Matthew 22:21. Then start by saving (even a little) regularly and consistently.

Think: Am I responsible or irresponsible with money?

More Info: Deuteronomy 28:12b, Proverbs 3:9-10, 10:22, 11:15, 24-25, 19:17, Matthew 6:1-4, Luke 6:38, 18:24, 21:1-4, 1 Corinthians 16:1-3, 2 Corinthians 9:6-11, 1 Tim. 6:6-10.

28. TITHES and OFFERINGS.

Question and answer: "Why do I need to give MY money to God?"

Who said it's your money? When we become a Christian, we give our whole lives to Jesus, including our money. The Bible shows that you should give back at least 10% of your money to God, and this is called a 'tithe'. The money usually goes to the church that you attend and helps pay the Minister's/Evangelist's wage. As they give to us spiritually, we give back practically 1 Corinthians 9:11. The money is also used to maintain the church building, and some should go to missionaries.

Fact: The word 'tithe' in Hebrew means 'one tenth'.

Matthew 6:21 'Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also'

We live in a materialistic world Luke 12:15. Our tithe proves that we love God more than money. If we do not give a tithe, it proves that our commitment to God is very shallow. The Bible says that it is 'hard for the rich to enter the Kingdom of God' Luke 18:24. It is hard if we love money more than God. Usually you should give your tithe when you get paid, be it weekly or monthly 1 Corinthians 16:1-3.

Wisdom: Investments in God's eternal Kingdom never fail.

An offering is anything that you give to God's work out of love for Him, or by His guidance, which is given as well as your tithe. In fact an offering may not just be money, but could be food, an object, or in fact pretty much anything. Your tithe is a measure of your obedience; an offering is a measure of your generosity or sacrifice.

There is a warning and a promise in Malachi 3:6-11, where God tells us to bring the whole tithe into the storehouse and then we will see huge blessings on our life. God even challenges us to prove Him! He will rebuke the devourer for our sakes and open the windows of heaven over us!

But God also warns that we are cursed if we do not bring our tithes and offerings to Him and He even calls these people thieves, because they have robbed God.

We should also make sure that we are sowing our financial seeds on good ground. If you gave a farmer seed and he threw it on concrete, would you expect a harvest? Likewise, we should make sure our financial seed goes to good ground where Christian leaders are producing fruit for God's glory. Our financial seeds can also go to Christian leaders, missionaries and ministries all over the world, because God gave the tithe to His Levites (those who work for Him) Numbers 18:26. The Kingdom of God is bigger than a local church, which sometimes neglects the world for a smaller, personal vision, (Matthew 28:19-20).

Think: Have you been stealing from God? Are you giving your tithe?

More Info: Genesis 14:17-20, Genesis 28:20-22, Exodus 35:5,21,22,29, Leviticus

27:30-33, 2 Chronicles 35:1-19, Proverbs 3:9,10, 11:24,25, 19:17, 22:9, Matthew 6:1-4, 10:8, 19:16-26. Luke 21:1-4, Galatians 6:7, Philippians 4:19, 1 Timothy 6:7, Hebrews 7:2.

29. A GENEROUS GIVER

Question and answer: "I understand that I have to give money to God's work, but can I be happy whilst doing it?"

You have a choice to give out of compulsion, or because it is an expression of your love and devotion towards God.

2 Corinthians 9:8 'God is able to make all grace abound towards you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have abundance for every good work'

We can liken our life to that of a manager or a good steward, one who looks after their master's possessions. It should not be 'my' property, but His. God will bless you, in order for you to be a blessing. Trust God to direct and guide you how to use your resources for His Kingdom.

Fact: People often buy things they don't need, to impress people they don't like. You don't need to seek man's approval. 2 Corinthians 3:1, 10:18.

Greed can cause us to be so preoccupied with secular pursuits that we can forget why we are here. God gives us the ability to earn money, but He wants us to love Him, not money. Money can be stolen, and objects can corrode. You cannot take it with you when you die; look what happened to the Egyptian Pharaohs' tombs. If you invest financially in eternal issues, you will reap earthly and heavenly rewards Deut. 8:18, Matthew 6:20.

Wisdom: Be committed to give with a right attitude. Give regularly, specifically, proportionately and with a big smile on your face.

There is a spiritual law of sowing and reaping Galatians 6:7-10, Luke 6:38. If you sow generously into God's work, He will generously give back to you. 2 Corinthians 9:6-8 says, 'If you sow sparingly then you will reap sparingly and if you sow bountifully you will reap bountifully.'

If you try to grow a lawn with very little seed, don't be surprised when it looks tatty. If you're not tithing according to God's word, the devourer has a legal right to hinder you and your financial "lawn" will be in tatters. Malachi 3:6-11.

Think: Am I a joyful giver to God's work, or am I an unhappy scrooge?

More Info: Deuteronomy 15:7-8, 1 Chronicles 29:6,9, Proverbs 11:24,25, 22:9, 23:4, Ecclesiastes 11:1, Matthew 6:33, 19:16-26, 25:35,40, Luke 16:10-13, Romans 12:8, 13:8, 2 Corinthians 8:1-9, Colossians 3:23, 1 Timothy 6:6,10, 17-19, 2 Tim. 3:2,1 John 3:16-18.

30. EVANGELISM: Telling other PEOPLE about Jesus

Question and answer: "Is evangelism for professionals, or can I get involved?"

Evangelism is simply telling people about the gospel. You do it when you tell people how Jesus has changed your life. You are not a sales person, but someone who knows that God is real and can change people's lives. You may not be an evangelist, but you have been called to witness.

Wisdom: If you saw a house on fire, you would raise an alarm. People's eternal lives are on the verge of hell, should you not warn them?

Mark 16:15 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel'

It can be very scary, sharing your faith, but the more you share, the easier it will become. Ask God for divine appointments and ask for boldness like the Apostles had Acts 4:13, 28-31. Jesus never lost sight of where He came from and where He was heading - neither must we.

Fact: The gospel is the good news about Jesus Christ.

In some countries around the world, people are tortured and even killed for being a Christian. In all probability your country has religious freedom; take advantage of this situation and be a good witness for Christ. If Jesus is the world's best news, then you should desire to tell people about Him. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide and help you.

Romans 1:16 'I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ as it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes'

Think: Do I witness enough? Am I concerned about people's souls?

Never keep on to people about Jesus and don't be rude. If you quote the Bible when sharing, it can help prove that the word is relevant today. Remember that your lifestyle will always speak louder than your words. You can also distribute tracts (pamphlets about salvation) or just leave them prayerfully in an appropriate place where people will find them and read them at their leisure.

More Info: Proverbs 11:30, Matthew, 28:19,20, Mark 16:15,16, Luke 19:10, John 16:8, Acts 1:8, 8:26-39, 17:6, Romans 1:15, 10:13,14, 1 Corinthians 3:6-11, 10:31, 1 Timothy 2:4, 2 Timothy 4:5, Philemon 6, Hebrews 13:5,6, 1 Peter 3:15, 1 John 4:18.

31. MISSION Work

Question and answer: "Is mission work the same as evangelism?"

Evangelism is usually witnessing in your own area or country, mission work is witnessing in another country. Some people become missionaries and move to another country for many years, others go on short-term mission trips, perhaps for a few weeks, a month, or a year.

Matthew 28:18-20 Jesus said, "All Authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you and lo I am with you always, even to the end..."

Jesus was the greatest missionary who ever walked on earth. He left His familiar surroundings (heaven) and identified with mankind. He learnt their language and culture, and then shared God's message.

Wisdom: Don't allow fear of the unknown to stop you from moving into God's plan. There is something worse than failure; that is to live in the regret of never stepping out in faith, and losing God's plan for you.

You could go on a mission for a few weeks, a year, or even become a missionary. If you are willing, God will use you. He does not look at your ability, but your availability. God needs agents that He can send out to preach Acts 1:8, Matthew 28:20. If you are faithful to share the gospel in your own country, God may want to use you in other nations.

Fact: Every hour approximately 7,000 people die and go to hell.

You may not be called to become a missionary, but you do have responsibilities to pray and give money to missions. If you are willing to give a few weeks (or even a year) to God, you could go on a mission trip, and be sure it will change your life! When you go on holiday, you could take some tracts with you to leave them in an appropriate location and give out as God leads you Matthew 9:38, 10:1-42, Luke 10 1-20, John 4:34-38.

Think: Am I praying and giving to missions? Am I prepared to go?

More Info: Lamentations 3:27,28, Isaiah 28:9-10, 55:8, Hosea 4:6, 6:3, Matthew 10:7-8, John 14:15, 15:14, Acts 8:14, 13:1-5, 18:3,18-28, 20:27, Romans 10:15, 1 Timothy 4:12, Revelation 5:9,7:9. The book of Acts is the Holy Spirit empowered mission book.

32. A SPIRIT of BOLDNESS.

Question and answer: "Does this mean that I can be a brave person?"

Yes, with God's help and the anointing of the Holy Spirit we can have a supernatural confidence, assurance and boldness in Christ Jesus. It will enable us to be more effective when we preach, witness, or testify, Acts 4:27-33. As we trust more and surrender to God, our fears will subside.

Acts 4:13 'Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marvelled. And they realised that they had been with Jesus'

1 Corinthians 1:26-29, tells us that 'not many wise are called'. When we are weak we cannot depend upon ourselves but have to lean more on God to help us, 2 Corinthians 12:9. The wise and proud could say, "Who needs God?" The tower of Babel is a classic example of man's pride, Genesis 11:4.

Boldness comes from God; the more you surrender to the Holy Spirit the more He will come in and fill you. You will be less afraid of man and have a greater trust in God knowing that He is sovereign. You have to really follow Jesus and have fellowship with Him, John 6:47-66, Revelation 3:20. Daily 'take up your cross and follow Him' Matthew 16:24. Daniel's friends refused to bow down to idols and ended up in the fiery furnace, but God delivered them and then they got a promotion, Daniel 3:13-30.

Wisdom: Give more of yourself to God and be bolder for Christ.

Romans 1:16 'For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes'

When you know who you are in Christ, a son and an heir and that the Holy Spirit who is in you is stronger than the devil, (1 John 4:4) then you will become bolder for Christ. Like the prophets who spoke out against sin, rebuked kings and told them what to do. 1 Kings 18:16-19, 22:6-28, Jeremiah 3:6-14, 37:1-19, Micah 2, Malachi 1, Luke 3:7-20, 11:37-54. You can also be zealous and bold for the things of God, Matthew 11:12, John 2:13-17.

Fact: There is a big difference between arrogance and boldness.

Think: Am I bold when it comes to the things of God?

More Info: Exodus 4:10-17, 12:29-36, Judges 6:11-34, 7:7-21, Proverbs 28:1, 29:25, Ecclesiastes 8:1, Jeremiah 1:4-10, Acts 4:13-21, 29-31, Philipians 1:20, 1 Timothy 3:13.

33. The HEART of the MATTER

Question and answer: "How can I go deeper with God?"

Obedience is the key to spiritual growth. As you spend more time with God in prayer and in His word, you should sense Him speaking to you. Obey what the Bible tells you and obey Him as He guides you by His Holy Spirit. Our flesh life, or sinful nature, does hinder our growth in Christ, so surrender each area of your life to the Holy Spirit and let Him change you Psalm 51:17, John 3:30. Put God first in your life. We should love God with all our soul, strength, mind and heart. Mark 12:30.

Proverbs 23:26 'My son, give me your heart, and let your eye observe My way'

The Bible says our heart is deceitful. What comes out of our mouth comes from our heart and our treasure is also there Jeremiah 17:9, Matthew 6:21, 12:35, 15:18. As Christians our heart can be hard, but we need it to be softened and made pliable, Ezekiel 11:19, 36:26.

Wisdom: If you give your heart fully to God as an act of obedience, God will guide you and use you in His Kingdom Jeremiah 18:4-6.

Psalm 34:18 'The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit'

"I don't bow down to a wooden idol!" In the West our idols are not made of wood and stone, but are anything that we put before God. If you think that money, a career, or a relationship is more important than God, then you are in danger of your heart becoming cold towards Him Ezekiel 14:3. We need to unite our heart to fear God, Psalm 86:11. This can only truly be done when we give God our heart.

Fact: By giving your heart to God you unreservedly give yourself to Him.

God allows hard situations that help you get closer to Him. A refiner's fire removes impurities in molten metal to produce a valuable product Proverbs 17:3.

Think: Do I put anything before God? Does He have my whole heart?

More Info: Psalm 57:7, Proverbs 20:27, Songs of Songs 8:6, Isaiah 43:2, 66:2, Malachi 3:2-3, Matthew 5:8, John 14:1,27, Philippians 4:6,7, Colossians 3:15, 1 Thessalonians 2:4, 1 Timothy 1:5, Titus 2:14, Hebrews 3:15, James 4:7-8, 10:16, 1 Peter 1:5-7.

34. The POWER of the TONGUE

Question and answer: "I don't speak proper, does it matter?"

Well it depends in what context. Pronunciation and accent are no problem with God. But He is interested in what we say. It's no good throwing a wobbly, and shouting obscene, cruel or unkind words - that's ungodly.

Matthew 12:34 'Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks'

Jesus was kind towards people, but on occasions He rebuked them in righteous anger, but He never sinned. God speaks to us in love, and sometimes the truth does hurt Matthew 23:13-39.

Wisdom: Often it is not what we say, but how we say it that counts.

- **Negative tongues:** Backbiting, deceitful, double, false, lying, muttering, perverse; sharpened as a means to sin and a source of trouble.
- **Positive tongues:** Gentle, just, witnessing, speaking well, righteousness, wisdom, singing praises and thanksgiving, wise, edifying and new.

Our eyes are the windows of our soul, and we need to be careful what we see; and also what we hear, (Matthew 6:22-23, 5:27-28).

Often we have a pretend conversation in our mind when somebody has upset us, and we think about things we could say to hurt them in return. Our mind becomes a battleground! These ideas drop down into the heart, and stay there until we see, think or talk about that person, and it makes us very angry Matthew 15:11, 17-20.

Fact: We don't like people to gossip or speak badly about us, so don't gossip or speak badly about other people Ecclesiastes 7:21-22, Luke 6:31.

The saying, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me," is simply not true. We have hurt others with our words and we have been hurt ourselves.

Forgiveness is the key that will unlock the pain; it is a choice and not a feeling. You choose to forgive. If you have hurt someone with your words, you need to ask God to forgive you, and you may need to go and speak to the person and apologise.

Think: Engage your brain and think before you speak, or you could cause a nasty stink! Do I need to apologise to someone?

More Info: Proverbs 10:19, 12:8, 13:3, 15:4, 17:9, 19:11, Jeremiah 17:9, Mt 5:23-24, 6:14,15, 18:15-22, John 15:3, Ephesians 4, James 3:1-12, 1 Peter 4:11.

35. If you add one letter to ANGER you get DANGER

Question and answer: "I get angry often, what can I do?"

You can try not to get angry! Life is full of choices and we have to choose to do the right thing. The more we surrender our will to the Holy Spirit and allow Him to fill and help us, the easier it will be. Ask Him to help you.

Anger in itself is not sinful, if directed for the right reason and motive. We can get angry at sin and how the devil is taking people to hell. But sadly there is also ungodly anger which most people portray, and this is sin. Godly anger can be seen in Jesus when he was grieved at the hardness of the people's hearts, Mark 3:5. Jesus made a whip and drove the buyers and sellers out of the Temple as they had made His house of prayer into a den of thieves, Matthew 21:12-13, John 2:13-17.

Fact: We can be zealous for God's Kingdom and concerned for His name.

Ephesians 4:26-27 'Be angry and sin not, do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil'

If someone wrongs or offends you, then don't go blowing your top. If you are normally a calm person, but get really angry once and make a messy scene, everyone will remember it!

Proverbs 19:11 'The discretion of a man makes him slow to anger, and it is to his glory to overlook a transgression'

Wisdom: Stop and think! Act! Don't react! Don't be a fool - keep cool.

Ungodly anger does not solve any problems; it just reveals how much work the Holy Spirit has to do in your life. Now that you have given your life to God, you are under new management, and the old former conduct should not be permitted any more. If your tongue is engaged before your brain, then you could cause pain.

Think: Do I have a problem with anger? Do I react too quickly in a conflict?

If you have a family history of being hot-heads, it does not have to stay that way. You have a new Father and the Holy Spirit wants to help you to be conformed into the image of Jesus.

More Info: 1 Samuel 11:1-6, 1 Kings 11:9, 2 Kings 17:18, Psalms 7:11, Proverbs 10:12, 14:17, 15:1, 27:19, 29:11, 29:22, Ephesians 4:30-32, 1 Peter 4:8.

36. The FRUIT of the SPIRIT

Question and answer: "How is this fruit manifested in my life?"

As we surrender to God and continually receive the infilling of the Holy Spirit, the fruit of the Spirit should become a reality in our lives. This is not theory, but a daily experience in our every day lives. All the fruit is manifested through love, as *fruit is a singular word, and not the plural, which would be fruits.

Galatians 5:22-23 'The *fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control'

We are commanded by God to bear fruit within our lives Matthew 3:8. People will know us by our fruits - which are a changed character and lifestyle Matthew 7:16. As we surrender every area to the Holy Spirit, then our old negative ways will die (1 Corinthians 15:31). As the old ways die, we will produce new fruit; the fruit of the Spirit John 12:24.

We love God because of everything He has done for us. From the over-flow of our love for Him, we should love our fellow man. The Bible says that without love we are nothing 1 John 3:13-21, 1 Corinthians 13:1-7.

Wisdom: If you pray for more patience (long-suffering), don't be surprised if God teaches you to be patient by difficulties in your life Hebrews 12:11. You will never wake up one morning as a 'saint'! But God will help you to grow into His image by your daily circumstances.

Fact: When we surrender to God, we let His will be done in our lives.

To become kind or good is not a spiritual mystery, but a practical experience. You must choose to help someone, for example to go shopping with an elderly person, or help them in their garden. We can also choose to be kind in what we say to people. As we do this, we can pray that God will change us to be more like Him.

Think: What areas of my life show the least fruit? How can I change?

More Info: Mark 4:20, John 15:1-16, Romans 6:22, 7:4, Ephesians 5:9, Philippians 1:11, Colossians 1:10, James 3:17.

37. The GIFTS of the HOLY SPIRIT

Question and answer: "What are these gifts for?"

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are given by Him to help build up and edify the body of Christ (the church). They also equip us for ministry to advance the kingdom of God (evangelism). Usually the gifts are manifested within a church meeting, but not exclusively. Someone could give a prophesy, or a tongue and then an interpretation should follow, 1 Corinthians 12:4-12, 14:26,32,33,39,40, Ephesians 4:12, 1 Peter 4:10. (Isaiah 11:1-2).

1 Corinthians 12:8-10 'For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, To another the gift of healing by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophesy, to another discerning of Spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues'

Wisdom: Desire & seek everything that is available to you as a believer!

All of these gifts are being manifested today and God wants you to have them! This short list describes some of their functions today.

- **1. Wisdom:** Supernatural ability to apply knowledge in specific situations. The believer grasps a little divine insight regarding a specific situation. Genesis Ch 40 - 41 (40:12, 41:25-38), 2 Kings 4:38-41, 20:7, Acts 8:9-23, 13:6-12.
- **2. Knowledge:** The ability to receive specific information given as a direct revelation from God. 2 Kings 1:17, 6:8-12, 20:1-11, Mark 2:8, Acts 10:19, 11:12.
- **3. Faith:** The ability to believe for something, which is naturally impossible. This extraordinary confidence in God is not shaken by situations, pain, apparent failure, or ridicule 1 Kings 18:21-40 and Acts 12:5-16
- **4. Healing:** A special gifting to see divine restoration of a person back to health, 2 Kings 5:1-17, Acts 3:1-11.
- **5. Miracles:** The ability to do supernatural works of power that glorify Jesus, Exodus 7-12, Acts 19:11,12.
- **6. Prophecy:** Prophecy is the ability to receive direct revelation from God and then to communicate that revelation to men 1 Kings 17:1, Acts 11:28.
- **7. Discernment of spirits:** The supernatural ability to discern what is true and what is false; this includes discerning the difference between God's Spirit and individual evil spirits. 1 Kings 22:19-23, Matthew 10:1, Mark 5:1-20, Luke 9:37-42, Acts 16:16-18.
- **8. Tongues:** The ability to speak in a spiritual heavenly language, Acts 2:4, 10:46, 19:6.
- **9. Interpretation of Tongues:** The ability to interpret tongues into a 'known' language. (Acts 2:1-11, this is not interpretation), 1 Corinthians 14:22-28, 39.

The gifts are only to be used for the glory of God. Sometimes they come for a season. Most Spirit-filled believers only have a few of the gifts.

Fact: God does not fill or empower dirty vessels. With great power comes great responsibilities, Isaiah 52:11, Matthew 12:18, Luke 3:22, 1 Peter 1:16.

Think: Will I seek God until I move in spiritual gifts? Am I living a holy life? Do I desire the greater gifts, as God wants me to? 1 Corinthians 12:31.

More Info: Romans 1:11,11:29,12:6, 1 Corinthians Ch 12-14, 2 Timothy 1:6, Hebrews 2:4.

38. The GRACES of the HOLY SPIRIT

Question and answer: "Are these gifts from the Holy Spirit as well?"

We can do nothing of eternal value without God, and any talents or gifts that we have come from Him in the first place, Deuteronomy 1:18, Jeremiah 1:5, Acts 17:28, Romans 15:10.

These natural gifts are God-given and they can be used to a greater effect within the Kingdom of God as the Holy Spirit leads or out of love for people. E.g. I don't need to hear the Holy Spirit tell me to help my brother or a stranger out when I can see that he is in need and I have the means to help him, Matthew 7:12, 25:14-30, 1 John 3:16-17, James 1:22.

To help someone out should be a natural response to share the love of Christ.

Romans 12:6-8,13 'Having gifts differing according to the grace given to us, let us use them...(gift of) ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. Distributing to the needs of the saints; given to hospitality'.
1 Corinthians 12: 28 'God has appointed these in the church...helps, administrations, varieties of tongues'.

Wisdom: It is sin to know what to do, and not to do it James 4:17.

We should use our gifts and talents for the glory of God. Some people are gifted at making money. They have been given this gift so they can give large amounts of money to God's Kingdom. Others are talented with music/singing and can help in worship, or can help others to learn how to play an instrument. Others are gifted in administration, writing letters, filing accounts, handling money etc. Some people are gifted mechanically or are very practical in problem solving. Other people ooze with love and have the ability to look after elderly people, disabled children etc. Some people can teach, others are good encouragers and some are given to hospitality. The list is endless 1 Corinthians 12:14-27.

Fact: Do you want to live as a Christian who waits for heaven, or as a disciple who lives for God's will, and enters heaven with "Well done my good and faithful servant"? A disciple also collects a crown and rewards, 2 Timothy 1:9, 4:8, Matthew 10:37-42, 25:23, Luke 19:12-27, Revelation 3:11.

Think: Am I using my God given talents/gifts to glorify Him?

More Info: Exodus 28:3, 31:6, 35:26,31-34, 36:5-7, Deut 28:2-8,11,12, 1 Chronicles 28:19, Nehemiah Ch 3, 4:6, 6:15,16, Proverbs 11:18, 25:21,22, Haggai 1:14, Matthew 6:19-21, Luke 6:38, 16:10, Romans 15:15, 1 Corinthians 9:16-18, 10:31, 15:10, 2 Cor. 9:8, Col. 3:23,24, 1 Thess. 2:11, 3:12, 5:14, 1 Tim. 3:2-3, 1 Pet. 4:9, 5:4, Rev. 22:10.

39. Knowing GOD as FATHER

Question and answer: "I never knew my dad. Mum said he was a drunkard, so how can I relate to God as a Father?"

Knowing God as Father can be a difficult concept to understand, especially if your father was never there, or was a very bad example. Most people would naturally assume a heavenly Father to be similar to that of an earthly father, but that is not the case; even if our parents were good, they never come up to God's standard. Do you dream of the perfect father? The Bible tells us that God is perfect!

Fact: God loves us for who we are, and not for what we can do for Him.

Romans 8:15 'For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out "Abba Father"'

Fact: In the Hebrew and Aramaic languages 'Abba' means father.

God is love. He is especially interested in the orphans, the fatherless and the widows. God wants to take care of them, just like He wants to take care of all mankind. God is no respecter of persons. Big or small, rich or poor, God loves them all 1 John 4:8, Psalm 68:5-6, 27:10, Romans 2:11.

Think: Do I need to forgive my earthly parents or guardians for not being good role models? Bearing in mind that they probably tried their best.

Do you believe that God loves you unconditionally? God's love is free and has no conditions. Even if you make loads of mistakes, He is bubbling over in love for you. You cannot understand this unless the Spirit of God shows you that you are not in His bad books, or in trouble. You are His beloved. Whether you stand or fall, He loves you as a perfect father would.

Jesus said "I will never leave nor forsake you" and 'He has not left us comfortless', as the Holy Spirit would be our Comforter Matthew 28:20, Hebrews 13:5-7, John 14:1-21.

Wisdom: As God's love is free and unconditional we should receive it and be tender hearted towards all. As we allow God's love to fill our hearts, then we can show His love to the people of this world.

More Info: Deuteronomy 32:9-12, Psalm 91:4, 144:2, Matthew 6:9-13, 7:11, Mark 10:13-16, 14:6, Luke 15:11-32, John 1:12, 2 Corinthians 6:18, Galatians 4:6,7.

40. Let your JOY be FULL

Question and answer: "Are we supposed to be full of joy every day?"

We have been baptised in the Holy Spirit, not in lemon juice! It is hard to be joyful everyday, yet, if we understand that God has saved us, and that He is with us as we discover His great plan, we should experience joy. A plastic smile is not joy! We all have hard times, and God has given us emotions, and sometimes it is right for us to be grieved or upset.

Romans 14:17 'For the Kingdom of God is not food and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit'

Joy is not just an outward appearance, but it is the happiness we receive as we trust God and enjoy His presence and calling in our lives. When the storm arose on the lake the disciples were petrified but Jesus was fast asleep, Matthew 8:23-27.

Wisdom: If we walk right with God and man, and obey the Holy Spirit, we should experience His Joy Romans 5:8, 1 John 1:3-4.

Fact: "Do not worry about tomorrow; every day has enough trouble of its own", Matthew 6:34. In God's strength, take one day at a time.

Psalm 16:11 'You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore'

Don't worry if you don't feel full of joy in difficult circumstances. Press on and ask for God's help. 'Looking unto Jesus...who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and sat down at the right hand of God' Hebrews 12:1-3. If we praise God, it helps take our minds off of our circumstances, and we feel more confident in His presence Psalm 32:11, 35:27, 43:4, 149:6.

Sin in our lives hinders our joy, Psalm 51:12. Repent of your sin and return to the presence of God. Don't focus on the problems in hard times, but focus on God's power and promises to help you. Joy cannot be forced, but we can learn to live in His presence where there is fullness of joy.

Think: Am I filled with the joy of the Holy Spirit?

More Info: Nehemiah 8:10, Psalm 42:5, 63:5, 89:15, Isaiah 12:3, 26:3, Habakkuk 3:18,19, Luke 10:17-20, John 15:10, 2 Corinthians 7:4, Acts 8:5-8.

41. EXERCISE for a Healthy SPIRITUAL life

Question and answer: "How do I become spiritually fit? Will I have to go to the gym?"

Physical exercise will strengthen your muscles and help you get fit. If you do not exercise, you will become lethargic. Our spiritual muscles also need to be exercised and built up. It is good to stay physically healthy, but your spiritual health is much more important.

1 Timothy 4:8 'Bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having a promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come'

Prayer, Bible reading, faith and holy living are some of our spiritual muscles. Keep exercising them to be strong in Christ. An athlete competes according to the rules and they train hard so they can reach the goal to win a prize and so must we 1 Corinthians 9:24, Philippians 3:14.

Wisdom: When you are sick, a doctor can help you get better. If you are spiritually unwell, go back to God for forgiveness and healing.

- 1. Prayer is your lifeline to God. Consistent fellowship with Him will help you grow and become an effective fruitful Christian. John 15.
- 2. Read your Bible every day. You will learn the ways of God, and He will guide you into the future. Hosea 4:6, 6:3 James 1:22.
- 3. Ask God to give you the gift of faith. Start believing for small miracles!
- 4. Keep living a holy life every day of your life. Get victory over your hidden sins one at a time.

Fact: The more you exercise, the stronger you will become.

Think: Am I spiritually fit? In what areas do I need to exercise more?

More Info: Psalm 84:11, Jeremiah 12:5, Matthew 6:5-15, 32-34, 7:12,16, Luke 3:8-9, Romans 15:4, 1 Corinthians 9:19-27, Eph. 4:11-12, Phil. 3:10-21, Col. 1:10-14, 1 Tim. 6:12.

42. LOVE is a REALITY

Question and answer: "What exactly is love? Is it a 'loose' word?"

The word love has been completely confused in Western culture. Some say they love their football team, others love a TV series, and some people say they love someone, but treat them with contempt! Love can be a strong positive emotion, or a term of endearment, but it is more than that! Love can be manifested as a decision or action. Christians demonstrate their love in practical ways 1 John 3:17-18. Jesus is the perfect example of love. He loved the unlovable. He touched the lepers and many other outcasts of society.

The world is confused about love. This is what the Bible says it is.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8a 'Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up. Does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, and thinks no evil. Does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails...'

Fact: There are four Greek words for love. All of them have different meanings that give greater expression and depth to their significance.

- **1. EROS:** Physical love. It is not found in the New Testament due to its bad connotations in the pagan society of the day.
- **2. STORGE:** Family love. The fondness that people share for their relatives, Romans 12:10. Negative form as seen in Romans 1:31 and 2 Timothy 3:3.
- **3. PHILIA:** Affectionate love. Warm hearted spontaneous affection, liking, attractive appeal and friendship John 5:20.
- **4. AGAPE:** Loving by choice. God commands us to love our neighbours as ourselves, and so we choose to love them, to treat them well and to win them for Christ John 3:16 and John 13-17, 1 John 4:8.

Wisdom: Before you say, "I love you", ask yourself if you are prepared to back up your words in self-less actions. Will you put their best interests before your own? John 13:2-17 and Philipians 2:6-8.

Have you ever recognised what country someone is from because they were wearing their national costume? God is love. If we clothe ourselves in love, people we know we are of God; it is our spiritual costume. As we receive more of God's love, we shall be able to give out more.

Think: What can I do to demonstrate God's love to people?

More Info: Matthew 22:37-40, 25:35-46, John 14:15, 15:14, Philipians 2:2, 1 Thessalonians 3:12, 2 Tim. 1:7, 13, 1 Pet. 1:22, 1 Jn 2:5-15, 4:11-21, 5:2,3, 2 Jn 1-6.

43. HUMILITY and MEEKNESS

Question and answer: "Isn't humility and meekness a sign of weakness?"

No not at all! To be humble and meek are Godly traits. Moses was a very powerful leader, yet the Bible speaks of his humility and meekness. Exodus 3:11, 4:10-17 and Numbers 12:3. Jesus was God's Son yet He came as a servant to serve mankind, Matthew 12:18-21, John 13:3-17.

1 Peter 5:5 '...be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble'

God uses humble people. When we are humble, we give glory to God for all the things He does through us. We must choose to be humble as we walk in the fruit of the Spirit Galatians 5:22-23. Jesus was meek, He was of a gentle and long suffering disposition, yet He had great authority and power.

Matthew 18:4 'Whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven'

Nobody likes a proud and boastful person, so try not to be one. If you are humble and meek, you will not need to tell people about it! People will honour you as God uses you. Did you hear about the Christian who kept saying how humble he was!

Wisdom: You cannot lead unless you have first learnt to follow.

Jesus was humble and meek, yet He stood out amongst the crowd as someone who had God's seal of approval on Him. He spoke and moved with authority, yet willingly gave His life for mankind and was led as a lamb to the slaughter. Matthew 7:29, Mark 1:22,27, Isaiah 53:7, John 19:9-12.

If God is with you, you will never need to promote yourself into a position of authority, and you should not try to push others down to promote yourself. 'For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends' 2 Corinthians 10:18.

Fact: God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble James 4:6.

Think: Will I humble myself and let God promote me? Do I try to promote myself? 'Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God and He will lift you up' James 4:10.

More Info: Genesis 41:15-41, 52, Deuteronomy 8:2, 2 Samuel 16:5-12, 2 Kings 22:19,20, Isaiah 57:15, Zephaniah 2:3, Matthew 23:12, Luke 8:14, Philippians 2:8, Colossians 3:12.

44. Get on FIRE for GOD

Question and answer: "How can I be more enthusiastic towards God?"

If you have fully surrendered your life to God, then that is a big step in the right direction. Discouragements and disappointments will come so you have to continue to come before God. Ask Him to give you a deep desire to read the Bible and to spend more time with Him. If you are obedient to God ask Him to fill you with fire for Him! Matthew 3:11, Matthew 5:1-16.

John 6:63 "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are Spirit and life"

Wisdom: The opportunity of a lifetime must be seized during the life-time of the opportunity. Live your life to God's full potential for you.

The goals that you set for your life will ultimately determine what you become in the pursuit of them. If the Lord came today, what would He see? Jesus had a plan to accomplish His calling; what's yours? Find out!

If you are going to pursue God's dream for you, it will be costly. There will be many distractions and well meaning people who perhaps will not understand your obedience to God John 6:53-66.

Sports' personalities sacrifice friendships, social events, certain foods etc just so that they can be 100% ready for the next game or event. The men's Olympic 100 metres runners train for four years for a race lasting under ten seconds. A life of total commitment is very short compared to eternity. Whatever the Holy Spirit tells you to do, do it promptly Acts 8:29, 16:7, Romans 8:14.

Fact: If you are really on fire for God, then people will see it and will want to know why. Some people will feel threatened and challenged.

We need to be careful that we do not fall into the trap of serving God, while neglecting our relationship with Him, Luke 10:38-42. God would rather have your presence than your performance Ephesians 2:8-10, James 1:22.

Think: Am I on fire for God? What price am I prepared to pay?

More Info: Judges 6:11-7:25, 1 Kings Ch 19, 2 Kings 23:1-25, 2 Chronicles Ch 5-7,15, Nehemiah Ch 6, Matthew 8:18-22, 9:35-38, Matthew 11:16-19, 12:22-30, Luke 6:26, John 7:1-5, Acts 4:1-21, 2 Corinthians 6:3, 11:23-33, 12:10, Philippians 3:8, Hebrews Ch 11.

45. LIVING for REVIVAL

Question and answer: "What is Revival?"

Revival is a sovereign move of God when the Holy Spirit comes down and visits His people in a special way. Firstly the Holy Spirit comes to revive the church (usually by deep conviction of sin) leading to repentance and restoration and then the evidence of a more godly life (spiritual fruit). Secondly He comes and pours out His Spirit on an unbelieving community, bringing forth a spiritual awakening, so that they can come to a saving faith in Jesus Christ.

2 Chronicles 7:14 'If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land'.
Nehemiah 9:17 'But you are a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, abundant in kindness'

Revival should always start from within your own heart, Psalm 139:23-24. Revival is a sovereign move of God, but like all of God's promises there are conditions, which we need to appropriate. We need to:

- 1. Repent of our sins and humble ourselves, Lamentations 3:40-42a, Psalm 32:5-6a.
- 2. Turn from our sinful ways, Psalm 15, 18:24-26, 24:3-5a.
- 3. Pray and seek God's face, Psalm 25:5b, 14, 27:8,13 and Matthew 6:33.
- 4. Have unity between the brethren, Psalm 133 and Ephesians 4:3.

Proverbs 1:23 'Turn at my reproof; surely I will pour out My Spirit on you; I will make my words known to you'

Wisdom: Don't stay in your comfort zone. Press in hard after the things of God and you will be surprised what He can do for you and your nation.

When revival touches people lives they are deeply changed. With much repentance comes restoration and differences are settled. Sadly with any move of God there will be opposition, Matthew 12:1-32, Acts 3, 4:1-22.

Fact: More people get saved in a revival than in fifty years without one.

Think: Do I want to see a revival within my own life and community?

More Info: 2 Chronicles Ch 28-29, 34-35, Psalm 9:10b, 80:3, 85, 94:14, 119:136, v149b, 154, 156, 159, Isaiah 32:15, 64:1-4, Jeremiah 14:7, Hosea 6:1, 10:12, Habakkuk 2:14, 3:2, Zechariah 10:1a.

Conditions: Psalm 4:3, 20:7, 28:7b, 33:18, 34:18, 35:13b, 37:4, 39:1a, 42:1a, 50:15a, 51:10, 55:17, 62:8, 63:1, 8, 66:18, 73:1, 84:11, 86:11b, 97:10, 100:4, 105:4, 123:1-2, 144:5a, Isaiah 44:3.

46. A GOOD PLAN for your LIFE

Question and answer: "I want to make the best of my life, how can I achieve this?"

To lead a fulfilled, fruitful and successful life in the eyes of God, you will have to follow and obey this Scripture 'love the Lord your God with all of your heart, soul, mind and strength'. We have to be obedient to the Holy Spirit who will lead and guide us into all truth.

2 Corinthians 5:15 'Jesus died for all, that those who live, should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again'

Wisdom: To be surrendered to the Holy Spirit means to be under His control. You have given 'your' will to Him and now you delight to do His will. 'You were bought at a price' Exodus 21:1-6, Psalm 40:6-8, 1 Corinthians 6:20, 7:23. As we read the Bible we need to obey the principles and apply them to our life James 1:22. We can learn from those who have gone before us.

We should be seeking God from day to day, trying to get to know Him and His ways. God should not be a stranger to us. We are told to 'seek first God' and 'delight our self in Him' Matthew 6:33, Psalm 16:11, Psalm 37:4-5, 23, 63:3. Live each day as if it is your last, or if Jesus were to come tomorrow... He might! Matthew 24:27-51, 25:1-13, Revelation 19:11-16.

Fact: We were made to have fellowship with God. We should live for the King and His cause Mark 16:15-18, John 4:34. Every one you meet today is on heaven's most wanted list! John 3:16, Romans 15:4, 2 Peter 3:9.

"A life without a cause not worth dying for is not worth living for" Martin Luther King. Die spiritually to 'self', then you can really live.

Complete surrender to God's call is costly. Sometimes you will have to make hard and painful decisions to obey God. Jesus understands, because He had to choose to die in our place. It was very hard, yet He steadfastly set His face towards Jerusalem to fulfil His destiny Matthew 16:21, Matthew 20:18, 23:37, Luke 9:51. But the rewards and benefits in this life and the next will be glorious. Matthew 10:19, 38-39, 19:27-30, Luke 14:25-35, John 3:30.

Think: Am I prepared to be sold out for Christ Jesus. Do I want His best?

More Info: Isaiah Ch 53, 58:14, Mark 8:34,35, 12:30-33, Luke 2:49, John 5:17,12:24,25, 1 Corinthians 15:51, Galatians 2:20, Philippians 3:7,8, Revelation 6:9-11, 7:9-17.

47. The COST of DISCIPLESHIP

Question and answer: "Will following Jesus Christ be easy and what does it involve?"

To follow in the footsteps of Jesus will be difficult - there will be trials and discouragements. BUT the rewards are out of this world! Jesus has all authority, after all, He conquered sin, death and the devil, and He gives us abundant help in time of need. He is the head of the body, and He will come back for us, the spotless and powerful bride of Christ! Colossians 1:18, Ephesians 5:27, Revelation 21:2, 9.

Luke 9:23 'If anyone desires to come after Me, (Jesus) let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me'

After a diamond is brought from the ground, it has to be washed, cut and polished. It has to be changed so the light will reflect the beauty of the stone. After it has been worked on, it becomes much more valuable than before. We also are a bit rough round the sides! We were dirty but the blood of Jesus has made us clean, John 17:17, 1 Timothy 4:5, Hebrews 10:22, Revelation 1:5. The Lord may call us into a very hard situation to pray and be faithful. It is during these times that we are washed, cut and polished to be more like Christ.

Wisdom: God is the Master Potter and we are His clay. Allow Him to mould you daily into His image Jeremiah 18:1-6, 29:11-13.

A disciple should be led by the Holy Spirit. Obey God's Word and the Holy Spirit will lead you into His plan for you. Regularly pray, read your Bible and fellowship with other believers. Mature believers will help you learn more about following Jesus. A disciple is not someone who can pass a theological test on paper, but a person who obeys the leading of the Holy Spirit. Their prayer is, "Here I am Lord, use me!" Isaiah 6:8.

Fact: You can go as deep and as far with God as you choose to.

Enoch walked with God, Genesis 5:24. Moses was desperate to see God's glory, Exodus 33:18. Peter's shadow healed the sick! Acts 5:15. God worked unusual miracles by the hand of Paul, Acts 19:11. There is always more to learn about the ways of God. Nobody has arrived or got all the answers.

Think: Will you pay the price to become a real disciple of Jesus?

More Info: Psalm 119:67,68, Lamentations 3:33, Matthew 5:13-16, Luke 9:23-26, 16:10, Romans 5:3-5, 2 Corinthians 1:8,9, Hebrews 2:4,12:11, James 1:2-4, Revelation 3:19-20.

48. Find YOUR CALLING

Question and answer: "How do I know what God wants me to do with my life?"

Seek God and ask Him to reveal His will to you. You can do this practically by reading and meditating in God's Word, in prayer and by listening to His 'still small voice'. As you obey God today, you can be sure that He will reveal His will for you tomorrow.

Proverbs 3:5,6 'Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths'

If you want to lead a fulfilling life, then live for God's plan for you. You only have one life... so don't learn the hard way that a sinful life will inevitably be an empty life. God has an individual calling for you; so don't follow your friends into their job or position.

Wisdom: Follow the peace of God Col. 3:15. 'Let the peace of God rule in your hearts'

If you have a job and feel at peace there don't run away, even if things are hard. Maybe God is teaching you something through that learning curve. If you are thinking about taking a course, which other mature Christians have said would be good for you and you feel at peace, then step out in faith, believing that God is leading you. If you make a major decision and feel deeply disturbed inside, maybe you should talk it over with God and others. God may be warning you before you make a big mistake. Always remember 'we are led by the Spirit of God, not our feelings!' Learn the difference between the Spirit's leading and your feelings.

Fact: God does have a great and exciting plan for your life.

Some people are called into the ministry (to work for God full time) say as an evangelist, pastor or missionary. Most Christians have a 'normal' job, but can also be the evangelist or missionary within their work place. Every day ask the Holy Spirit to give you opportunities to share your faith and to help you lead a lifestyle that will glorify Jesus.

Think: Do I want to follow God whole-heartedly and to live for Him? Will I live for His will alone?

More Info: 1 Chronicles 16:11, 2 Chronicles 16:9, Ezra 7:10, Nehemiah 4:6-9, Psalm 32:8, 34:10, 37:3-5, 46:10, 123:2, Proverbs 5:21, 6:22-23, 8:17, 16:9, 31, 28:5, Matthew 6:33, 7:7, 8, John 10:27, 16:13, 1 Corinthians 10:31, 2 Tim. 3:16, 17, Heb. 11:6, 1 Pet. 5:6.

49. JUDGING others

Question and answer: "Should I be judging my brother?"

This subject can be very confusing, and misunderstandings can arise unless we read all the scriptures within their context. We can judge people, but we are also warned not to judge! Most people judge negatively and this is sin. It is best to make sure that your own life is right with God before you go and point out a brother's mistake, because your brother may tell you many of your own faults! Always tell the truth in love, because you want them to grow into a deeper relationship with God, Mat. 5:23-24, 6:14, Eph. 4:15.

Matthew 7:1-5 "Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgement you use it will be measured back to you... consider the plank in your own eye! Or how can you say to your brother, 'let me remove the speck out of your eye'; and look a plank is in your own eye? Hypocrite first remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye"

To judge someone biblically is to talk with a brother lovingly one on one (and not telling others!) (Titus 3:2, James 4:11) regarding their fault, hopefully leading to their restoration. It is best that either a leader (Galatians 6:1) or a close friend (Proverbs 27:17, James 5:16) tells a brother about his fault. If the brother has committed sin against you or vice versa then you have to speak to him on your own, Matthew 5:23-24, 18:15-22, Luke 17:3-4.

Wisdom: If you are not right with God or a fellow brother, then judge no one. There is a big difference between the gift of discernment and suspicion.

There are three types of judging and correction: John 7:24.

- 1. To restore the offender so that they can repent, change and be restored, because you want the best for them, 2 Corinthians 2:1-11, Galatians 6:1-5.
- 2. To protect the body of Christ from false teachers. Matthew 7:15-23, Acts 21:29-31, 10-22. (1 Timothy 1:19-20, 2 Timothy 2:17-18), 2 Peter 2:1-3.
- 3. To correct those who set a bad example and could shake a young believer's faith, (Acts 23:3), 1 Corinthians 5, 8:7-13, 10:23-32, James 4:1-4.

Fact: Most people judge with a wrong heart and motives, Romans 2:1-5.

Think: Do you do to others, as you would have them to do to you?

More Info: Matthew 3:8-10, 19:13-15, Luke 12:54-59, Romans 16:17, 1 Corinthians 4:4-5, 6:1-10, 14:29, 2 Corinthians 13:1-2, Galatians 6:7-8, Ephesians 5:11, 1 Thessalonians 5:14, 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 1 Timothy 5:19-20, 2 Timothy 2:14-19, 23, 3:1-9, Titus 3:9-11, 1 Peter 4:8, Revelation chapters 2 and 3.

50. Who should I MARRY?

Question and answer: "How do I know who I should marry?"

Well no one can tell you that but God. He will show you when it is His time, and whom you should marry. God's timing may not be our timing, never go rushing into a commitment with a relationship. At the heart of marriage is companionship and intimacy, which both husband and wife must promote. Do not mistake lust for love.

Genesis 2:18 'God said, "It is not good that man should be alone."'

Wisdom: Spend some quality time seeking the Lord and talking with godly leaders before you make any decision – they could save you a lifetime of misery; and help you find God's choice.

Remember these three principles...

- 1. Be obedient to God and choose a believer.
- 2. Trust God to lead you to the right person.
- 3. Look out for good and godly characteristics.

2 Corinthians 6:14 'Do not be yoked together with unbelievers, for what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?'

A husband and wife team should complement each other. Do you have similar interests when it comes to spiritual matters? Do you pray and read the Bible together? Do you have common interests and values? Can you work and relax together? Do you help meet each other's emotional needs? Can you work problems through together? When you fight: can you sort it out, forgive and move on? Do you agree on the foundational doctrines?

Do either of you have unresolved relationships in your past? Have you talked about each area of your future life? Do you want children? What are your callings? If one of you wants to be a missionary and the other does not, then you are not compatible. Will there be cultural differences? Western and Eastern culture are very different, with different responsibilities.

Characteristics to look for in a future husband / wife

- 1. Are they devoted to Christ? Are they right with God and do they walk close with Him? 2 Corinthians 5:15. Will they draw you nearer to or away from the Lord's will for your life? Isaiah 5:20, 2 Corinthians 13:5. Do you want to spend the rest of your life with someone who may one day hate your love for God? 2 Corinthians 6:14.
- 2. Look for the correct priorities. Do they want to fulfil the plan that God has for you both, or are they committed to money, position in society and pleasure? Will they put their work life before you and maybe one day the kids? Proverbs 23:4, Matthew 6:33.

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- 3. Do they walk in the love of God? We all have our bad days – but do they treat you with respect? Can you see the peace of God flowing from them? 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a. Are they vindictive towards other people – one day they may be that way towards you, Proverbs 27:5-6. Do they totally lose their temper? Ephesians 4:26-27. Do you feel safe with him / her? Proverbs warns us not to get involved with someone who is constantly irritable and contentious Proverbs 21:9, 19. Do they moan all of the time? Do you see the fruit of the Spirit in them now? Galatians 5:22-23.
- 4. Are they an honest person? Can you trust him / her? Are they a person of their word? Imagine spending the rest of your life with someone whom you cannot trust; they promise – but rarely fulfil. They lie to get out of difficult situations Numbers 30:2, Psalm 15:1-4b and Proverbs 24:1. Do you think you would be happy with that person?
- 5. Are they responsible? Do you want to spend your life working hard, when your husband / wife is a selfish, lazy person who ignores their responsibilities? Proverbs 14:23, Proverbs 21:25, Proverbs 22:13, Proverbs 26:13 and 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15.
- 6. Do they exercise self control? Luke 9:23. Does he or she binge drink? Ephesians 5:18. Are they addicted to drugs, alcohol, sex, work etc? If they have not valued sexual purity before marriage – will they remain pure throughout the whole marriage – even during the long difficult times? Proverbs 5:15-20 and 1 Corinthians 6:19-20.
- 7. What is their attitude towards money? Will they waste the grocery money on expensive brand name shoes, because they are an impulsive shopper? Luke 9:23. Could they send you spiralling into debt by buying a big car or expensive dress without consulting you? Do they gamble? Will they bring a big debt into the marriage? Proverbs 22:7 and Luke 14:28-30. Do they tithe and give offerings to God? Could they put their 'wants' above your future families needs? 1 Timothy 5:8.
- 8. Are they committed to fellowship in church? Are they humble and willing to serve others? 1 Peter 5:5-6. You really don't want to find out that they are a backslider after six months of marriage! Hebrews 10:25.
- 9. Do they honour their / your parents? We all know the joke about the mother-in-law; but the Scripture does promise that all will go well with us if we honour our parents Ephesians 6:2-3.
- 10. Do you love them for their inner beauty? Physical attraction is important, but age does catch up with us all! The Lord looks at the heart and we need wisdom to see past their outward appearance to the heart 1 Samuel 16:7, 1 Peter 3:2-4.

Proverbs 31:30 'Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised.'

- 11. Has love blinded you? Sometimes everyone else can see that the person you are with is unsuitable – but our feelings can completely blind us! If your friends, family, pastor and church all tell you not to get married – you will need to consider

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their advice carefully! Seek God very urgently! Proverbs 11:14 and 20:18a.

On the other hand, many leaders told John Wesley not to marry a great Christian girl because it was not good for the Methodist movement. See Job 12:12, Job 32:9. He was so heart-broken that later he married without consulting anyone – unfortunately for him – he married a bad apple. People testified to seeing his wife pull him around by the hair!!

- 12. Beware of unrealistic expectations! The list above is good: but remember there is no perfect prince charming or princess out there! We are all real people, with real problems and faults. Are you ready to deal with their and your problems? Proverbs 19:11, John 12:24, Romans 12:9-12, Galatians 2:20, 2 Timothy 2:24-26.

Some think that marriage will solve all of their problems, whilst others marry for all the wrong reasons: such as being caught up in the excitement of a proposal, fear of being left on the shelf, an excuse to escape a bad family atmosphere or to give up work forever under the pretence of starting a family. Others look to marriage as a way to step up the social, economical or political ladder, or for the security in knowing of a future inheritance.

Remember it is better to be single and lonely, than to be married, wishing you were single! One woman who married poorly said, "I never really knew what it was to be alone, until I got married."

Fact: Christian marriage is a lifetime commitment through all of life's ups and downs.

Do you understand what the responsibilities of a husband and wife are? Study 1 Corinthians 7:1-11, Ephesians 5:22-33, 1 Peter 3:1-7, Proverbs chapter 31.

If you take care of the things that are dear to God, then He will take care of the things that are dear to you Matthew 6:33, Psalm 37:4, 23, 145:19. Being single is an important time to prepare you for marriage. It can also be a time to experience a closer relationship with Him. Sometimes people do not marry for a variety of reasons and there is nothing wrong in remaining single. God's will be done.

Think: What do you expect to get from marriage and what are you prepared to give? Are you ready for a lifetime commitment?

More Info: Genesis 2:18-25, Ruth, Ecclesiastes 9:9, Song of Songs, Matthew 12:25, Galatians 5:15, Ephesians 6:4, 1 Timothy 3:4. Malachi 2:13-16.

51. All about DIVORCE

Question and answer: "Divorce is everywhere, but what does the Bible say about it?" The Bible says that God hates divorce.

Jesus said that divorce is permitted if a spouse has been sexually immoral. Matthew 19:3-12, Mark 10:1-12. Divorce is messy and painful - everybody loses, especially the children.

Malachi 2:16 'For the Lord God of Israel says that He hates divorce, for it covers one's garments with violence...'

Divorce is 'normal' in some societies, but it should not be normal for Christians. Most of us will know people who have gone through a divorce and we know some of the pain and anguish they have endured.

Wisdom: Never rush into marriage, pray long and hard and make sure that you are compatible, suitable and both spiritual. Do you have the same calling? The best way to protect yourself from experiencing a divorce in the future is to let God choose your future spouse.

Divorce can cause much pain, rejection, a feeling of betrayal, bitterness, anger, financial and emotional stress and a deep sense of grief. You need to forgive those who have hurt you and allow God to heal your broken heart. We need to love and to help those who have been through divorce, especially the children who often are caught in the middle of the parent's tug-of-war. God can give you all the emotional support etc that you need.

Fact: It is better to work a problem through than to run from it. 'With God all things are possible' Matthew 19:26. Jesus can and does heal marriages. He also can heal the children who have been hurt by their parents' divorce.

A lady who had been married for fifty years was asked the secret of her successful marriage. She replied, "I decided to make a mental note of his ten worst habits or annoyances, and then just ignore them one by one". And what were those ten habits or annoyances?" asked the intrigued lady. "I'm not sure" replied the happily married lady "I stopped counting at nine". You cannot change the person whom you marry, but you can love and accept them Ephesians 4:32, 5:21-33, 1 Peter 4:8, Ecclesiastes 7:22-23.

Think: When I step into marriage will it be 'Till death do us part?'

More Info: Genesis 2:18, 24, Deuteronomy 22:19, Malachi 2:13-16, Matthew (5:23-24, 18:15-17), 19:3-12, Romans 7:1-3, 12:17-19, 1 Corinthians 7:10-16, 1 Peter 3:7.

52. Be **BALANCED** in **KNOWLEDGE** and **UNDERSTANDING**

Question and answer: "How can I lead a life of balance in regards to Bible knowledge?"

We should not build our faith or Biblical knowledge on one truth only to neglect other truths, which are equally important. You can over-emphasise or give more prominence to some issues or doctrines, e.g. Israel, Calvinism, Revelations etc and under-emphasise on others.

Jesus should be our first love and our central theme. It is a good idea to read the Bible through every year, as you may forget other truths. Ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten you. The Holy Spirit will only bring to remembrance that which you have read! Isaiah 28:9-10, Hosea 4:6, 6:3, 1 Corinthians 3:2, Hebrews 5:12, 6:1-2.

John 7:16 Jesus said "My doctrine is not Mine but He who sent Me"

John 14:26 "The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to remembrance all things that I said to you"

You cannot build a doctrine on certain selective Scriptures, Romans 15:4, 16:17. You have to take all of them and apply them within their context. You cannot twist or manipulate Scripture to make them fit a doctrine, Matthew 26:23-29, John 5:39. Any half-truth cannot make the whole truth. Beware of half-truths as you may get the wrong half! We can have understanding in some areas but not in others, Isa. 28:9-10, Acts 4:13, 18:24-28, 19:1-11.

Wisdom: We need to get as close to God as possible. Are you a part of the 120, the 70, the 12 or the three disciples? Matthew 17:1, or we can be close to Jesus' heart, John 21:20. The closer we get to Jesus, who is the Truth, John 14:6, then the more balanced we will be in our teaching.

Fact: People can be controversial, often just to justify their imbalance.

We need to be careful from whom we get our teaching - they may be in error, Luke 6:39-40. We should judge all things with Scripture, Acts 17:10-11, 1 Thessalonians 5:21.

Teachers need to be godly and not self-promoting, 2 Corinthians 10:18. Teachers should proclaim and teach 'the whole council of God', Acts 20:18-28. We should not focus on our differences in doctrine (but we should expose heresy), but on what we have in common; don't major on the minors, 1 Timothy 1:3-4, Titus 3:9, Hebrews 13:9. Edify one another, Hebrews 12:14.

Think: Am I too focused on one doctrine, or do I desire to know the whole truth? Psalm 111:2.

More Info: Matthew 15:15, Luke 24:27, John 7:14-18, Acts 2:42, 1 Corinthians 13:12, 2 Corinthians 3:18, Ephesians 4:11-16, 1 Timothy 6:3-4, 2 Timothy 2:15, 3:10,16, Titus 1:9.

53. DOCTRINE and HERESY

Question and answer: "How do I know if something is heresy?"

If a person or an organisation teaches contrary to the doctrines as found in the Bible, then this is heresy and false teaching! These teachers may be ignorant of biblical truths, Acts 8:8-24, 18:24-26. Some deliberately distort, Galatians 1:6-7, 3:1, 2 Peter 3:16-17, take away, or add to biblical truth, Deuteronomy 4:2, Galatians 1:8-9, Revelation 22:18-19. These teachers appeal for financial gain, (2 Corinthians 12:17-18), 1 Timothy 6:3-10, Jude 11. Some are under demonic influences and seek its desires, 1 Timothy 4:1, James 3:14-15, Jude 16-19.

1 John 2:22 'Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son'

2 Peter 2:1 '...there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction'

The Bible is the inspired Word of God. It is totally trustworthy and is our supreme authority in all matters of faith, conduct and doctrine, Romans 15:4, 2 Timothy 3:15-17, Hebrews 4:12, 2 Peter 1:19-21. 'Test all things...' 1 Thessalonians 5:21.

There are many cults in the world. They often call themselves 'Christian' to be accepted by society.

A 'Christian' cult is a group of people who have changed very important biblical doctrines and who deny such truths as: the Trinity, the deity of the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ. They often preach salvation by works, instead of by God's grace, Romans 5:15-19, Galatians 5:4-10, Ephesians 2:8-9. Some say that the grace of God gives you liberty to sin, Jude 4. Some have 'new holy books or gospels' Deuteronomy 4:2, Galatians 1:8-9, Revelation 22:18-19. All cults teach much error that is contrary to biblical truth.

Wisdom: Believers should have a good working knowledge of the Bible, Acts 17:11, 2 Timothy 3:14-16. If something is taught as 'truth' then it must line up with what Scripture says, Acts 17:2, 18:28. God does not speak or reveal anything that is contrary to His word, 1 Corinthians 15:2-4. Fellow believers who teach truth are known 'by their fruits' Matthew 7:15-23.

Some of the major cults are the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Mormons, Christian Science and the Christadelphians.

We are called to love and witness to all people, including members of the cults and other religions. Don't argue with them; politely ask them to give you their testimony. They won't have one because the cults have never met the living God. Speak in love and sow doubt into their mind.

Never accept their accursed pamphlets, their society's 'bible' (with its false translations) or any other so-called 'divine or holy books'.

Evangelical Christians are united by their belief in the central teachings of the Bible, 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, and Ephesians 4:4-6. We should all believe the entire Bible and try to understand the whole counsel of God by revelation of the Holy Spirit, who came to guide us into all truth, John 16:13.

Fact: Man is universally sinful; He is guilty of sin and subject to God's wrath and condemnation, Romans 3:19, 6:23. Jesus the incarnate Son of God gave His life as a substitute for sinful man, John 3:16, 1 Timothy 2:5-6. Jesus can redeem anyone from the power of sin and its consequences. Man can be justified solely by the grace of God, through repentance and faith in Christ's death and resurrection from the dead, Romans 3:21-26, Ephesians 2:8-9.

Jesus is God: He received and accepted worship, Matthew 2:2, Luke 22:70-71, John 20:28. He forgave sins, Matthew 9:2. He existed from the beginning, Micah 5:2, John 1:1-2, 14. He is sinless, John 8:46, Hebrews 4:15. He is the Creator, John 1:3, 5:17-19, 7:28-29, 9:33-38, 10:30,33, 17:5,11, Col. 1:16. Jesus is One with the Father, John 17:21.

The Holy Spirit is God: A building cannot be grieved, as it has no feeling, but we can grieve the Holy Spirit, Ephesians 4:30, as He is a person, John 14:16, 16:8, 12-14, Romans 8:26. He has a will, Acts 16:6-7 and a mind, John 3:8, Romans 8:27. He is the Creator, Genesis 1:2 and Eternal, Hebrews 9:14. He is called God, 1 Corinthians 12:4-6, 2 Corinthians 3:17, Acts 5:3-4. He gives life, John 6:63. He convicts of sin, John 16:8. He intercedes for us, Romans 8:26-27.

The Trinity: "Let us make man in our image" Genesis 1:26. Jesus' Baptism, the Father's voice, the Spirit's infilling Matthew 3:16-17. Baptise believers in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, Matthew 28:19. Unity of the Godhead, John 15:26. The Apostolic blessings, 2 Corinthians 13:14, Revelation 1:4-5.

Doctrine is very important and it must be kept pure, John 7:16-18, Acts 2:42, Ephesians 4:14, 1 Timothy 4:13-16. Everything must be judged by Scripture. The body of Christ needs to be protected from false teachers. Matthew 7:15-23, Acts 20:29-31, (1 Timothy 1:19-20, 2 Timothy 2:17-18), 2 Peter 2:1-3, 10-22. Excommunication from a church is always the final option, Hosea 9:15, Rev 1:20-2:1-5, and chapters 2 and 3. A little leaven will spread, Matthew 16:5-12, 18:15-17, 1 Corinthians 5:5-7.

Think: Do I know how to witness to cult members if the need arises?

More Info: Isaiah 48:16, Zechariah 2:9,11, Matthew 24:23-26, John 7:16-17, 15:26, Acts 2:42, Romans 16:17, 1 Timothy 4:1, 6:3-4, 2 Timothy 4:3-4, Titus 1:9-16, 2:1, Hebrews 3:7-11, 6:1-2, 2 Peter 2 (all), 3:1-3, 1 John 2:22-24, 4:6-8, 2 John 9-10.

54. MOVING ON to EMBRACE the FUTURE

Question and answer: "I have had many disappointments as a disciple, is this normal?"

We will all have many disappointments; we may get let down or feel that we have been used. These disappointments should not hinder us, but strengthen us, and they can be used as stepping-stones for our growth as we move into the future.

We have to understand that God is sovereign, which means that He is in control, Hebrews 13:5b-6. We can dwell on past failures and disappointments, Luke 9:62, or we can learn lessons from them and then move on, Isaiah 42:9.

Romans 8:28 'All things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose'

Jesus said, 'If you love me, you will obey me' John 14:15, 21. In fact, Romans 8:28 teaches us that all things work together for good to those who obey God. How can we enter into God's goodness, if we refuse to walk where He is calling us?

Wisdom: Don't live in denial; accept what has happened. Fear would have you dwell on past failures, so as to paralyse you, Proverbs 24:16. You must learn from it and understand that nothing that you do or say can alter what has happened. See it as water under the bridge Hebrews 12:2-3.

Life is best lived looking forwards, but best understood looking back. The Apostle Paul (formerly known as Saul) persecuted Christians, even to death, Acts 7:58, 8:1-3, but then he met Jesus and became a mighty man of God, Acts 9:1-22. Peter, one of the inner circle of the twelve disciples, denied that he even knew Jesus, Matthew 26:69-74, Luke 22:54-62. All of the disciples fled when Jesus was arrested, Matthew 26:56. Peter lost his right as a disciple, Mark 16:7, and was so discouraged that he went back to his old occupation as a fisherman, John 21:3. Jesus reinstated Peter, John 21:15-17, and he then became a great leader of the early church, Acts 2:14-41.

Fact: You cannot change your past but you can learn lessons from it.

Many disciples have burned their bridges of comfort or security; - there is no turning back, they can only move forward with Jesus. When God calls and commissions you He will give you the grace and strength to succeed in His good pleasing and perfect will. Many have acted in faith and obedience to the call of God, but sometimes still seemingly fail or are let down through no fault of their own. This could be a 'first-fruit' to the Lord. The call, ministry etc has to die before it can be resurrected for God's glory alone, Exodus 23:19a, John 12:24.

Think: Am I prepared to leave the past and to move into the future?

More Info: Numbers 23:19, Hosea 8:7, Proverbs 3:5-6, Matthew 28:20, Romans

8:31-39, 15:3-5, 1 Corinthians 10:11, 15:36, Galatians 6:7, Phil. 1:6, 2:12-13, 3:8-16, Heb. 12:11.

55. Our DEPENDENCE on GOD

Question and answer: "How do I depend more on God?"

As a disciple we are told to bear fruit to bring glory to God. In Him we move and have our being, Acts 17:28, He is the potter and we are the clay. We need a revelation that 'Without God we can do nothing', John 15:5 and until we understand that, we will spend much of our energy on fruitless endeavours. Trust in Him and let Him guide you, 2 Chronicles 16:9, Psalm 25:14, Proverbs 3:5-6.

Psalm 123:1-2 'Unto you I lift up my eyes, O you who dwell in the heavens. Behold as the eyes of servants look to the hand of their masters, as the eyes of a maid to the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look to the Lord our God until He comes and has mercy on us'

King Hezekiah brought about a great spiritual awaking in the land of Israel, 2 Chronicles chapters 29-30, 31:20-21. But Israel was about to be attacked by the Assyrians and Hezekiah trusted in God against all odds, 32:1-8. For a time God withdrew from him in order to test him and to find out what was in his heart, 32:31.

God may test us in difficult times to see if we have the right motives; we can also be strengthened as we trust God and give Him the glory, Job 23:10, Isaiah 48:10-11, Jeremiah 12:5.

Wisdom: When God speaks, we need to step out in faith, Matthew 17:20, Hebrews 11:6. Gideon with an army of three hundred men came against an innumerable army, Judges 7:12-22. A little shepherd boy called David killed the mighty warrior Goliath, because he trusted and believed in His God, 1 Samuel 17:26, 43-50.

When we do step out in faith, we need to continually seek God for guidance and wisdom, Isaiah 55:9, Jeremiah 10:23. We need to check our motives and hearts desires, Psalm 66:18, Proverbs 5:21. The foundations need to be firm and based on Godly principles, Psalm 37:4-5, 127:1.

Fact: We are warned not to trust in man for help, Psalm 146, Isaiah 31:1, and Jeremiah 9:4, 17:5-8. Man can let you down; Judas betrayed Jesus, Peter denied His Lord and the disciples fled, Matthew 26:56, 69-74. Even Mark let Paul down, Acts 15:38-39.

Often it is easier to seek man's help for money, help etc, whereas we should be seeking God's help and His will in any given situation, 2 Chronicles 16:12. Some situations are outside of the realm of human intervention and only God can intervene, 2 Chronicles 20:12-24, Matthew 8:26.

Think: Am I dependent on God, or do I put too much trust in my own abilities and talents?

More Info: Ezra 8:21-23, Psalm 20:7, 25:15-21, Ch 46, Proverbs 16:3, Jeremiah 9:24, Mark 11:24, Luke 18:1, John 14:12-13, 15:1-16, Hebrews chapter 11.