



PATHWAYS TO HOLINESS

A Guide to Self-Examination and
Spiritual Growth



TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	2
PART I PATHWAY TO EXAMINATION	
How to Use The Guide	3
Introduction	4
Self-Examination Questions: HEAD	11
Self-Examination Questions: HEART	16
Self-Examination Questions: HANDS	26
PART II GROWING THROUGH EXAMINATION	
Growth Chart: HEAD	34
Growth Chart: HEART	35
Growth Chart: HANDS	36
PART III GROWING RESOURCES	
Resource A Sample Prayer of Repentance and Confession	38
Resource B Reading the Bible Meaningfully	39
Resource C Converting Bible verses to Prayers	41
Resource D Types of Discipleship Relationships	42
Resource E Spiritual Discipline Reminders	44
Resource F Serving One Another in the Body of Christ	44
Resource G Strategy for Spiritual Warfare	46
Resource H The Disciple's Generosity	49
Resource I Fasting Tips	50
Resource J Taking Every Thought Captive	51
Resource K Sharing My Story	52
PART IV WORKS CITED AND RESOURCES	54

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide will focus on three primary areas: the head, heart, and hands. It begins with making sure of our own salvation (2 Peter 1:1-12). It will highlight meditating on scripture, personal questions, and intentional prayers of repentance. You will be given instructions and sample prayers. Make the most of the experience by:

Prayerfully and honestly complete the self-examination.

1. Rinse and Repeat. Take a pathway (head, heart, hands) a week for examination and cycle through it.
2. Connect it with periods of fasting.
3. Connect it with funerals and birthdays. Use the self-examination questions as well as reading Ecclesiastes and Philippians in single settings.
4. Read and pray the Scriptures.
5. Use this simple prayer of confession (based upon Psalm 51; further explanation at the end):
 - a. Lord, Forgive me (specifically list what you are confessing and believe God will honor His word to forgive);
 - b. Lord, Change me (plan on how to begin forsaking the sin you have confessed);
 - c. Lord, Use me.
6. Take the assessment on a separate sheet of paper so you can repeat at least annually (i.e. on your birthday).
7. Have your guide, journal, pen, and Bible with you.
8. Read the assigned passages while praying and listening to worship songs.
9. Be honest and vulnerable. Honesty before the Lord is vital.
10. Answer the questions with answers like: never, seldom, often, always, etc.
11. Reading each passage and working through every question slowly, thoughtfully, and humbly.

Prayerfully and honestly confess and praise.

1. Confess any sin God exposes and praise Him for the growth that is evident.
2. Confess every sin the Holy Spirit reveals and take whatever actions He calls you to.
3. End each day by thanking God for His grace and forgiveness and asking the Holy Spirit to fill you.

Prayerfully and honestly investigate your areas of strengths and weaknesses.

1. Make note of which questions made you feel ashamed.
2. Make note of which questions made you feel God's good pleasure.

Prayerfully and honestly create and commit to spiritual growth.

1. Use the growth charts to list areas of your head, heart, and hands you will be giving focused attention to.
2. Generate 1-3 goals for each area of focus.
3. Create a plan to accomplish those goals.
4. Share with someone. Accountability increases success and repetition.

Prayerfully and honestly plod forward to spiritual growth!

INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS THE "PATHWAY TO HOLINESS" GUIDE?

"You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness, but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him *be* the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen." (2 Peter 3:17-18).

Last words are significant. Peter's last words are an appeal to guard and grow. He warns us to guard ourselves from being carried away by error. But He does not want us simply to stay in "prevent defense" mode. He exhorts believers to deliberately, actively, and wisely grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ. This guide provides each believer with pathways of self-examination and pathways for knowing, loving, and serving Christ more faithfully. But remember...

Closeness with God doesn't happen by accident. Building a close relationship with God requires intentional heart work: slowing down, admitting my real thoughts and feelings, and trusting God instead of myself. Once we draw near in closeness with Christ, how do we keep that relationship close and avoid drifting into empty habits and tasks? Consider and take action with the following admonitions.

Value The Relationship, Not The Ritual. Though we may not begin with a heart of delight in doing the disciplines or serving Christ, we can grow into that. Often, the process of growth begins as a discipline. Disciplines help to create habits. That discipline grows into a duty. I now feel the responsibility of serving and knowing Him. Ultimately, discipline and duty become a delight. Now, I serve Him from a posture of "want to" and desiring to please the Father.

Maintain Your Heart For God Each Day. Like any relationship, a friendship with God has to be nurtured and maintained. It's very easy to drift from God (Hebrews 2:1); keeping our hearts close to him takes spiritual effort each day. Before we get overwhelmed at the thought of adding more work to our lives, understand this: maintaining our heart for God isn't about adding a bunch of burdensome stuff to our to-do list. It's about opening our hearts and searching for God's presence in our lives.

To serve God with a complete heart requires sacrifice but produces contentment. To have a close relationship with God, we need to not only serve him with our actions, but also with all our thoughts and with a complete heart.

Learn from Jesus and his relationship with God. Jesus' life was far more than "just" an example for us to follow. He was sent and accomplished the glorious work of redemption for us. However, as disciples, we follow Him. How did He handle stress? How was He graceful with conflict and His enemies? How did He use the early mornings? Did He attend worship services? And so on and so forth. Read the Gospels. Learn. Imitate. Repeat.

Let God's Word teach you how to live your life. If our relationship with God doesn't show up in the way we live or treat people, our heart may actually be drifting away from him: James 1:26. While reading the Bible and praying in the morning are good things to do, my relationship with God won't be close unless I let God teach me how to live my life the rest of the day.

Put your trust in God, not in yourself. Trust is an important part of any close relationship, and our relationship with God is no exception. Trusting in ourselves prevents us from trusting God and making space for him in our hearts. I am putting trust in myself when: I am relying on my own ideas, opinions, or abilities instead of praying or reading Scriptures; trusting my emotions over what God says in the Bible; cutting back my time with God when I'm stressed instead of relying more on God for help; overthinking things and trying to figure everything out on my own instead of praying for and trusting God's guidance; taking control of my time, circumstances, or schedule instead of humbly asking God and others for their advice or help.

THE SELF-EXAMINING OF MY HEAD, HEART, AND HANDS

Psalm 139:1-6, 23-24

"O LORD, You have searched me and known *me*. You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You understand my thought from afar. You scrutinize my path and my lying down, And are intimately acquainted with all my ways. Even before there is a word on my tongue, Behold, O LORD, You know it all. You have enclosed me behind and before. And laid Your hand upon me. *Such* knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is *too* high, I cannot attain to it...Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; and see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way."

2 Timothy 4:7-10, 15-16

"But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women. On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness; for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and *also* for the *life* to come. It is a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance. For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers...Take pains with these things; be *absorbed* in them, so that your progress will be evident to all. Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you."

"The triune God is the love behind all love, the life behind all life, the music behind all music, the beauty behind all beauty and the joy behind all joy. In other words, in the triune God is a God we can heartily enjoy—and enjoy in an through his creation." — Michael Reeves

"The prayer of examen produces in us the priceless grace of self-knowledge" — Richard Foster

"An unexamined life is not worth living." —Socrates

Richard Foster, in his book entitled *Prayer*, exhorts us to pray the "prayer of examen." The word examen is related to our word "examine." It comes from Latin and "conveys the idea of an accurate assessment of the true situation." The Prayer of Examen, then, is a way to invite God to help us see clearly— both His presence in our lives and the condition of our soul. Foster calls this training "The Examen of Consciousness (or Presence)". Because we can rush through our days and miss what God is doing around and in us, in this method of prayer we invite the Holy Spirit to help us go back over a recently-passed period of time—the last day or the last week—and to show us where God was moving. This is the examen of consciousness—where and how does the Holy Spirit help us become conscious of God?

Was He speaking to us in the beauty of the sunrise we barely noticed as we walked the dog? Was that Him speaking in the depth of our heart when we had an insight into a problem? Did He bring a scripture verse to our awareness at a meaningful time? Did He give us the gift of a special mercy, or a call from a friend, or an opportunity? Was He appearing to us in the presence of a person in need? As we walk with Him prayerfully through the day that has passed, we might discover He was at work, shaping our life, in myriad ways. It can be helpful to jot down a list of the ways we become aware of His presence.

The second facet of the prayer of examen is that we ask for God's help to see any ways we have resisted Him or sinned against Him in the same period of time. This is the examen of conscience how is God inviting us to repent? How does He want to shape our life and transform us so we are more like Him? Were we short with a family member in the morning? Did we harbor bitter thoughts toward a co-worker? Did we neglect to tip a service worker? Did we brush off someone the Lord brought to our attention? Because we ask our Father to help us look into our heart and see our sin and failings, we trust Him not to allow us to justify ourselves and remain blind to our sin. But also, because our loving Father is with us as we look at our sin, we also trust Him to protect us from self-hatred or scrupulosity. He does not shame or condemn us. Unexpectedly, it is this prayer of our conscience that helps us to know God's forgiving love in a deeper way. We can stop feeling vaguely guilty and can have an honest conversation with God about what troubles Him about our lives. Then we can go forward with a clean conscience and pure heart.

The prayer of examen trains the "eyes of our heart" to see God, and it gives God space to show us the ways He is inviting us to grow: to overcome our sin nature and to produce the fruit of His Spirit in our hearts—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. To attempt this practice, please find a quiet space where you will have at least ten minutes of uninterrupted solitude. When you are ready, please follow the following pattern in your prayers.

A SAMPLE PRAYER OF EXAMEN

Expressing Gratefulness

"He is not far from each one of us, for 'In him we live and move and have our being.'" (Acts 17:28)

Father, thank you for this day that You have made and that I am alive in it with You. Thank you for these quiet moments. I am grateful that You are always with me, and I welcome Your presence. Please enlighten the eyes of my heart that I may see where and how You have been with me and how You want to shape me.

"Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights," (James 1:17)

Father, please go with me as I review the past day (or week). What gifts from You did I receive? Where did You show me Your goodness, beauty, or mercy? When did You speak to me—In my heart? Through Your word? Through another person? What are You inviting me to? Help me to take time to thank You for each of these ways You have helped me to discern Your presence. Father, You are "the love behind all love, the joy behind all joy, the beauty behind all beauty." Thank You for helping me to see and perceive you. I love You.

Asking for Forgiveness

"Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow," (Psalm 51:7).

Father, thank You that You love me too much to let me continue in paths of sin. Please show me, in the last period of time, when did I ignore You, shut You out, or fail to love You or my neighbor?

If you have noticed any ways that you were closed off to or even working against the goodness and presence of God, please take a few moments now to ask for His forgiveness. Consider, is there something you feel prompted to repair or commit to do differently in light of what you have seen?

Father, thank You that you are gracious and kind, overflowing with steadfast love and mercy. Thank You that if we confess our sins, You are faithful to forgive us. (1 John 1:9). I trust You have forgiven me, and I am so thankful. I love You. Please change me from the inside out to be more like You.

Inviting His presence

“Give us this day our daily bread,” (Matt 6:11).

Look ahead at your coming day (or week). What do you anticipate? Ask the Lord to be with you in all that this day holds for you—each meeting, chore, trip, etc.

Father, please help me to stay in step with you in this coming day. Please be in me and all around me and help me to be aware of your nearness. You are my Lord and my life, and I love you. Amen.

FIRST THINGS FIRST: EXAMINING OUR SALVATION

As we begin this process, we must have confidence in our relationship with God. If we are uncertain whether we have received His love, grace, and forgiveness, we will not experience the freedom available when we come to Him in confession and repentance. Answer a few questions:

Do you ever experience doubt about your salvation?

Do you have uncertainty about whether or not you have a personal relationship with Jesus?

Do you sometimes find it difficult to approach Jesus with confidence that you belong to Him?

When you sin, do you ever feel like you are not a Christian, or that you need to clean yourself up before you spend time with Jesus?

Doubting our salvation can be caused by several different reasons— undealt with sin, the enemy creating doubt and uncertainty to hinder our confidence in the Lord, a lack of understanding about the Gospel, or even the Holy Spirit revealing our need for salvation and inviting us to experience it. Regardless of the source of doubt, there is good news! God desires for us to know with certainty that we are saved, be confident in His love for us, and know that He hears us when we pray. 1 John 5:13-14 says, “I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life. And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.” Let’s take a moment to remember what salvation is, what it does in our lives, and how we receive it.

What is Salvation?

Salvation is a gift that God has provided for us by His grace through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Ephesians 2:1 says, “And you were dead in the trespasses and sins.” This simply means that without Jesus, we are all spiritually dead because of our sin. Sin has separated us from the spiritual and

eternal life that is found through a relationship with God. The devastating reality is that there is absolutely nothing we can do on our own to change this condition, and that is why we need the Gospel!

The word “Gospel” means “an announcement of good news.” The good news is that though we are dead in our sin, God loved us so much that He sent Jesus (God in the flesh) to live a sinless life, to die in our place for our sin, and then resurrected to life on the third day, defeating death and hell for us. Jesus stood in our place, receiving the punishment we deserved because of our sin. He then invites us into a relationship with Him so that we can receive eternal life (John 17:3). This is all a work of His grace! Ephesians 2:8-9 says, “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.” We are reminded here that our salvation is not dependent upon what we do for Jesus but on what Jesus has done for us.

What happens when we are saved?

When a person experiences salvation, two things occur. First, we are “made righteous” (Romans 3:21-22; 2 Corinthians 5:21). Righteousness simply means God’s moral perfection. This is what is required for us to have a relationship with God. Because of sin, no one possesses righteousness inherently, no matter how good or bad we are (Romans 3:9-12). But when we place our faith in Jesus, God transfers our sin to Jesus, and Jesus’ righteousness is transferred to us. Instantly and permanently, we are spiritually clothed in the moral perfection of Jesus. Secondly, we are “made alive” (Ephesians 2:4-7; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Titus 3:4-6). This simply means that we are given the gift of the Holy Spirit, which makes us alive in Jesus. The presence of the Holy Spirit eternally seals our salvation and begins to transform us from the inside out to reflect the nature of Jesus (Ephesians 1:13-14). There will be both a noticeable and progressive difference in a person’s life because they are a new creation. We will not be perfect, but we will be different!

How do we experience salvation?

Jesus tells us in Mark 1:14, “Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.’” According to Jesus, two words give us the answer to salvation: repent and believe! Repentance means to turn from whatever we have been trusting in and turning to Jesus, submitting to Him as the Lord of our life. This leads us to the second word—believe. To believe means to place our faith in Jesus’ death and resurrection as our only hope for the forgiveness of sin. This is not just intellectual agreement or knowledge, but a transfer of trust from whatever you have believed in to fully rest your life on Jesus and Jesus alone! This can only occur through the prompting of the Holy Spirit, leading us to a definitive personal response of repentance of sin and belief in the Gospel. John 1:12-13 says, “But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.” No one is born a Christian or inherits the faith naturally. It does not happen by growing up in church or in a Christian family. For a person to be saved, there must have been a moment of personal response to the Gospel.

Do you remember a time when you recognized a deep sense of lostness because of sin leading you to a personal response of repentance and belief in Jesus, surrendering your life to Him as Lord? (If so, write out that experience). When/if this happened in your life, did you experience a noticeable difference?

If the answer to either question is ‘no’, you can do it right now! Cry out to God in prayer, repenting of your sin and placing your faith in Jesus’ death and resurrection as your only hope of forgiveness. Surrender to

Him as Lord and ask Him for new life! Please reach out to a pastor or someone at the church for further conversation of next steps.

If 'yes', spend a few moments in prayer, thanking God for His salvation. Ask Him for a deeper confidence in the salvation He has provided. In your journal, write a brief testimony of your salvation and about the changes that Jesus caused following it.

What is evidence of salvation?

Jesus says in Matthew 7:21, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven." Paul says in 2 Corinthians 13:5, "Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!" Both Jesus and Paul want us to be certain of our salvation through personal examination. Now that we have seen what salvation is, what it produces, and how we receive it, let's take a few moments and contemplate five confirmations of salvation. As you read these, examine your own life.

Confirmation 1

There will be an awareness of the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives, confirming that we belong to God. Romans 8:16 says, "The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God." This simply means that the presence of the Holy Spirit will be evident in our lives. He will cause us to be convicted over sin, give us desires to love and please Jesus, and empower us to overcome sin.

Confirmation 2

Salvation produces new desires because we have received a new heart. Ezekiel 36: 26-27 says, "And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules." We receive a new heart with new desires to follow in obedience to Jesus. This does not mean we will stop sinning, but we will live differently and want to obey His Word.

Confirmation 3

There will be a personal relationship with Jesus. John 10:27-28 says, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand." John 17:3 says, "And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent." Jesus says those who belong to Him hear Him, recognize His voice, and follow Him. According to John 17:3, eternal life is a personal, intimate relationship with the Father through Him. Salvation is not just intellectual knowledge about Jesus, but a friendship with Him.

Confirmation 4

We will desire spiritual growth and will see spiritual progress. 1 John 3:3 says, "And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure." 2 Corinthians 3:18 says, "And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit." We will have a desire to grow in holiness and to be transformed from the inside out, and this transformation will happen over time in the life of every true believer.

Confirmation 5

True followers of Jesus will love other brothers and sisters in Christ and will want to have fellowship with them. 1 John 3:14-16 says, "We know that we have passed out of death into life because we love the

brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death. Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.” Followers of Jesus will possess a genuine love for other believers. There will also be a desire for regular fellowship and connection with God’s people.

Take a moment of examination and prayerfully answer the following questions:

- Do I see the confirmation of the Holy Spirit in your life? If so, in what way(s)?
- In what ways has Jesus changed me since I received salvation?
- Do I daily enjoy a meaningful time with God through Bible reading and prayer?
- When making choices, do I seek Christ’s guidance first?
- Is my relationship with Christ motivated more by love than duty or fear?
- Am I able to overcome temptation and sin through the power of the Holy Spirit?
- When God makes me aware of His specific will in an area of my life, do I follow His leading promptly or with frustrated delay?
- Do my actions demonstrate a desire to build God’s kingdom rather than my own?
- Does peace, contentment, and joy characterize my life rather than worry and anxiety?
- Do I trust Christ to help me through any problem or crisis I face?
- Do I remain confident of God’s love and provision during difficult times?
- Do I have a desire to love and obey Jesus?
- In what ways am I seeing His power at work in my life to overcome sin?
- Would I describe myself as a person who has a personal relationship with Jesus?
- If so, what does that look like in my life?
- Do I find it easy to talk to Jesus in prayer?
- Do I desire to spend time alone with Him?
- Do I ever get a sense of God speaking to my heart?
- Do I have a hunger for reading God’s Word?
- Am I living in pursuit of Godliness and Christ-likeness? If so, what does that look like?
- Am I seeing more and more spiritual victory in my life over sin, or do I live in defeat?
- Am I a person who could be described as having a genuine love for people?
- Is there a desire in me to be connected to church and other believers?
- Do I find it easy to show love and extend forgiveness to others because of Jesus?

If you saw very little evidence of true salvation after examining these questions, we encourage you to reach out to a trusted friend or minister. If you sense assurance of your salvation after examining these questions, be encouraged to continue on this journey with confidence that as you come before the throne of grace in confession, God hears you and welcomes you to come to Him.

SELF-EXAMINATION: HEAD

Do I Thinking Biblically?

“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.” - Joshua 1:8

We often see this call to meditate day and night in the scriptures. This means to think deeply or to ponder on it continually. God’s desire is for our minds to be filled with His Word. As His Word fills our minds and thoughts, the Holy Spirit will direct us in obedience. We cannot experience the renewing of our minds without God’s Word. The transformation of our mind doesn’t happen simply by trying to stop thinking wrongly but by taking those thoughts “captive to the obedience of Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5).

Prayerfully and honestly ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer the following questions:

Do I regularly attempt to forsake sin?

Do I tremble at the holiness of God and have a healthy fear of God?

When I make decisions, do I consider the holiness of God?

Do I realize that when I sin, I am sinning first and foremost against God?

Do I have a regular rhythm of reading the Bible daily?

Am I taking intentional time daily to meditate on and memorize scripture?

Do I use God’s Word to battle temptation, or do I try to resist it on my own?

Do I take the Lord’s supper with deep examination of judgment?

Do I frequently sing the worship hymns with reflection on the words?

Do I listen to sermons and seriously consider my obedience to God’s instructions?

Is my mind is filled with thoughts of how to experience greater holiness?

Do I desire to be more like Jesus and pursue spiritual cleansing?

Do I regularly read the Scriptures to thoroughly examine my heart?

Is holiness is my top pursuit?

When I attend church or Bible study, do I have a habit of bringing my Bible?

Would I say that I live each day with a genuine hunger for God’s Word, or does it feel like labor to read the Bible?

If you recognize that God’s Word has been neglected in your life, confess this to the Lord and ask Him to give you a deeper hunger for it. Realize that your mind will not be transformed without making this a priority in your life. Write down a few key verses from today and begin to memorize them to help you honor the Lord with your thoughts.

Am I Thinking Sinfully?

What we think matters! Sin begins in the mind. We can only be as filled with God as we are willing to be emptied of self. When it comes to sin, we often give our attention merely to the outward action of sin. The truth is that sin originates in the heart and mind. In reality, we are either honoring the Lord or dishonoring Him in our thought life. If we are going to walk in purity before the Lord, we must deal with any and every sinful thought. As you walk through this session, ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you every area of your thought life that is sinful. Listen to His voice, confess every sin, repent, and ask Him to renew your mind.

Prayerfully read the verses below and answer the following questions related to the various categories of your thought life:

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” - Romans 12:2

“We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ...” - 2 Corinthians 10:5

“Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!” - Psalm 139:23-24

Is my Thinking Earthly?

“If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.” - Colossians 3:1-3

As believers, we are commanded to place our minds' attention on spiritual things, not earthly things. This is a call to be Kingdom-minded. We are to be a people who think about God's Kingdom, His mission, and purposes for our lives. Jesus has raised us to live for eternal things, and our ability to live this way will be impacted by our thought life.

Prayerfully and honestly ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer the following questions:

Do I get more excited about God's Kingdom than work, sports or recreation?

Am I careful to not give God my leftover time and energy?

Do I daily meditate on key verses from God's Word?

Do I genuinely love God and am not guilty of seeking God more for what He can do for me?

Are my desires in submission to seeking God's glory?

Am I willing to pray for God's will even when it does not fit my plan?

Does my love and worship decrease when things don't go my way?

When I get disappointed, do I "cool off" toward God and church?

Is my mind often consumed with earthly or temporal things like recreation, work, or hobbies more than spiritual or eternal things?

Do I find myself being more focused on personal wants and desires than serving Jesus and others?

Are there patterns in my thought life that place more emphasis on what others think of me and how to gain their approval rather than seeking Jesus' approval?

When I dream and imagine my future, how much of my thoughts are considering God's desires and His plans for my life?

If what we love the most is indicated by what we think about the most, what does my thought life indicate I love the most?

If you have noticed a thought pattern indicating that you are more focused on “things below” than “things above,” ask Jesus to forgive you and give you a renewed mind. Write down any sinful thought patterns that stand out the most and ask Jesus to show you specific ways to set your mind on Him.

Am I Thinking Immorally?

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” Matt 5:27-28

Jesus raises the bar on sexual purity. This is a call to mental holiness. He points us beyond the action of sexual immorality, showing us that sexual sin is as much an act of the mind as an act of the body. If we are going to be a people who walk in sexual purity, we must deal with our thought life.

Prayerfully and honestly ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer the following questions:

Do I resist lustful, unclean thoughts frequently in my mind?

Do I watch programs or movies that stimulate improper thoughts and feelings?

Am I conscious of unclean thoughts or motives?

Do I resist wandering eyes?

Do I keep my phone and computer holy?

Are my affections and priorities revolving around Jesus rather than people and things?

Am I more passionate about spiritual things than earthly things?

In coming to worship, are my primary purposes to bow before God in utter repentance and obedience?

Is my mind often filled with holy fear and reverence for God?

Do I really love and reverence God and not just seek His benefits?

Do I find myself allowing my mind to wander into lustful or impure thoughts?

Am I allowing my imagination to create impure images in my mind?

Are there old memories of past sexual sin that I allow to fill my mind?

Do I have impure thought patterns that would be embarrassing if people were able to see them?

Do I ever intentionally view things or watch things that create impure mental images?

If you have discovered areas of your thought life that are impure, take a moment to confess and repent of it immediately. Ask the Holy Spirit to cleanse you on the inside. Identify thoughts that need to change and target the moments, times, and places in your life where you struggle the most. Allow God's Word to replace any lustful or impure thought that comes to mind. Address sinful thoughts in prayer and scripture as soon as they enter your mind! Is there anyone you need to confess this to? Who can you invite into this fight for accountability?

Is my Thinking Self-Deprecating?

"For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well." - Psalm 139:13-14

As believers, we are commanded to place our minds' attention on spiritual things, not earthly things. This is a call to be Kingdom-minded. We are to be a people who think about God's Kingdom, His mission, and purposes for our lives. Jesus has raised us to live for eternal things, and our ability to live this way will be impacted by our thought life.

Prayerfully and honestly ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer the following questions:

Am I often filled with feelings of insignificance or insecurity?

Do I find myself living with anxiety, fear, or worry about how others feel about me or if I have their approval?

Do I obsess with my physical appearance in a way that indicates I am seeking to find value and worth in it?

Are there moments when I internally put myself down or feel that I am not good enough?

Do I ever question whether people really love me or if I am worthy to be loved?

If these questions indicate that you are battling low self-worth, recognize that those feelings and thoughts are contrary to what God says about you (Psalm 139). It is sinful for us to believe something about ourselves that contradicts His Word. Confess and repent of those self-deprecating thoughts. Identify the specific thoughts that you are having most frequently and submit them to Jesus. Ask the Holy Spirit to allow God's Word to give you a new self-image.

Am I Thinking Selfishly?

"Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus." - Philippians 2:3-5

We are called here to live a selfless life as opposed to a selfish life. This is literally a call to have the mind of Christ. This is a life that doesn't just think about what is best for us, but one that considers what is best for others. If we are living self-focused, self-absorbed lives, we are not living with the mind of Christ. God is deeply focused on the attitude of our hearts. The root of all sin is a lack of fervent love for Christ. The very root of sin is the love and worship of self over God. A pattern of worry is not just a weakness; it is a willful sin.

Prayerfully and honestly ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer the following questions:

Do I find myself often looking out for what is best for me, or do I think regularly about what is best for others?

Am I fully resting in God's promises or am I frequently anxious?

Do I ask God to deeply search my life?

Am I truly become broken and contrite over my shortcomings or do I think, "Oh well, no one is perfect"?

Do I have to be at the center of attention?

Do I think of the needs and desires of others before my own?

Do I need to be noticed and praised by people?

Do I resist being critical and harsh with people?

Do I respond with forgiveness and love when someone hurts me?

Do I actively do good to those who have done me evil?

Do I resist the need to carry an internal catalogue of grievances against friends or family members?

Do I resist withholding kindness because they don't deserve it?

Do I live content and not driven by materialism?

Do I spend more time in relationships thinking about what people do for me than finding ways to serve them?

In conflict, do I listen to the heart of others or ignore them by thinking about my response?

Are there times when I do for others because of what I can get in return?

Do I ever pursue God for what He can give me rather than simply because I love Him?

If you are convicted of self-centered thinking in any area, take a moment to confess it to the Lord. Ask Him to purify your heart and give you the mind of Christ. Take a moment to reflect on Jesus' life and identify specific ways that Jesus demonstrates selflessness. Thank Him for His sacrifice, and ask Him to show you what this looks like in your life and relationships.

Do I have Unhealthy Thinking?

“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.” - Philippians 4:8

We are often bombarded with negativity in our culture. There is a constant influx of negative posts on social media, news outlets, and conversations. As believers, if we are not careful, we will have our minds full of negative messages that will dominate the way we think. We are called in this verse to be a people who do not allow negativity to fill our minds but rather allow our minds to be dominated by those things that honor the Lord and are praiseworthy.

Prayerfully and honestly ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer the following questions:

Do I typically tend to highlight the negative in situations, or do I give my attention to the positives?

Do I assume the worst in people or look for the best in them?

Do I give my attention to the difficulties in my life and often overlook the blessings?

Considering Philippians 4:8, would those closest to me say this passage describes me?

Do I find myself praying more to God about what I need rather than thanking Him for who He is and what He has already given me?

If you see a pattern of negativity, recognize it as sinful behavior and ask Jesus to forgive you. Pray for a renewed mind that allows you to see God's blessings in your life. Take a moment and make a list of God's goodness in your life. Think about some of the hard moments you have experienced, and look for the blessings God gave you through those hard times.

SELF-EXAMINATION: HEART

The Heart is Sinful

Jesus is most concerned about our hearts because they are the root cause of our sin. The Bible tells us that our heart is wicked (Jeremiah 17:9-10). Jesus desires for our hearts to be transformed and fully devoted to Him, but when our hearts are filled with pride, idolatry, divided devotion, or anger that goes unchecked, it grieves the work of the Holy Spirit in us. As you walk through this session, ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the true condition of your heart and respond in repentance to everything sinful that He exposes. Be thorough in your examination, respond to the conviction of the Holy Spirit, and be specific about every sin you need to confess.

Prayerfully read the verses below and answer the following questions related to the various categories of your thought life:

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? ‘I the Lord search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds.’”
- Jeremiah 17:9-10

“Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!” - Psalm 139:23-24

“The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.” - Luke 6:45

Take a moment and list some of the sinful areas of your heart that immediately come to mind. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal specific sins of the heart you must confess.

Pride and Arrogance

“The LORD detests all the proud of heart. Be sure of this: They will not go unpunished... Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.” - Proverbs 16:5,18

The Psalmist makes it clear that pride is a problem. The Bible repeatedly communicates that God detests humanity’s pride and desires for us to walk before Him and others in humility. Pride is the pathway of destruction; it causes us to be indifferent toward Jesus and arrogant toward others. Every great work God does in us begins with personal brokenness and humility. According to James, God resists the proud but offers grace to the humble in heart (James 4:6).

Prayerfully and honestly ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer the following questions:

Do I find myself judging and criticizing others for their failures but giving myself a pass?

Do I put up walls or become angry when people highlight sin or weaknesses in my life?

Is there any part of me that walks in self-righteousness, thinking that I am more spiritual than others?

In all honesty, am I more bothered by the sin of others than I am broken over my own sin?

Do I have a genuine hunger for more of Jesus right now, or have I been somewhat complacent?

Application: If you hint the slightest evidence of pride in your heart, confess and repent of it. Be specific and ask the Holy Spirit to give you a humble heart. If there is anyone in your life that you have acted arrogantly towards, humble yourself and seek their forgiveness. Ask Jesus to give you a deeper awareness of your sin and need for grace.

Partiality and Prejudices

“My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory...If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself,’ you are doing right. But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers.” - James 2:1, 8-9

We see explicitly that there is no room in the hearts of believers for any kind of prejudice or partial treatment of people. Every person is valuable because they are made in the image of God, regardless of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or gender. This kind of sin is so damaging to people and to our witness as believers. We cannot say that we love God while simultaneously mistreating people made in His image. We must address the smallest hint of this type of sin.

Prayerfully and honestly ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer the following questions:

Do I befriend people based upon what they can do for me?

Do I avoid the “less beautiful, wealthy, etc.”?

Do I find myself judging people I do not know on the basis of their appearance, race, or economic status?

Do I seclude myself by only sharing life with my own race, culture, or social status by intentionally avoiding people who are different than me?

Do I view those who are better off financially than me with jealousy or resentment?

Are there times when I look down on people who are not as blessed financially as me?

Do I ever treat people differently (good or bad) on the basis of their appearance, race, or social status?

As you worked through these questions, did you see evidence of partiality or prejudice tendencies in your life? If so, ask Jesus to forgive you and to remove this from your heart. Pray that the Holy Spirit will give you a genuine love for all people. Ask Him what steps you need to take to live differently.

Anger and Hostility

“Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God... What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you?” - James 1:19-20; 4:1

Anger is inconsistent with the work of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit produces patience and kindness, but a sinful heart produces anger. When our temper flares, leading us to outbursts of anger or the inward disposition of hostility, this is an indicator that our heart is not aligned with the Holy Spirit. We must repent of this condition. Colossians 3:8 gives us these instructions: “But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice...”

Prayerfully and honestly ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer the following questions:

Would others describe me as self-controlled or short-wicked?

Do I frequently lose my temper outwardly or find myself inwardly angry at people?

Are there people in my life who feel the need to “walk on eggshells” in fear of me becoming angry?

Would Jesus describe me as being short-tempered, or would He describe me as patient?

Which set of words describe me the best: “patient, kind, and gentle” or “angry, irritable, and frustrated”?

Do I get easily angered or offended when people wrong me, or do I usually extend grace to them, giving them the benefit of the doubt?

Colossians 3:8 makes it clear that if there is anger or hostility in our hearts, we should rid ourselves of it. If you see anger or hostility surfacing in any area of your life, take a moment to confess it to the Lord. Identify any relationships you have where anger is most predominant. Seek their forgiveness. Reflect on the love of Jesus and His patience and grace towards you. Ask Him to give you a heart like His!

Idolatry and Affections

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.” - Deuteronomy 6:4-5

God desires and demands an undivided heart. He calls us to love Him with all of who we are and refuses to share us. Often, we are guilty of giving our heart and affection to the things of this world.

We grow cold in our passion for Him and give our devotion to our hobbies, friendships, family, money, career, ministry, and many other things. The Bible calls this idolatry, yet we can never be fully satisfied with these substitute idols. A life of fullness can only be found in complete devotion to Jesus.

Prayerfully and honestly ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer the following questions:

Do I find it easier to scroll through social media or watch my favorite media programs than to spend time in God’s Word and prayer?

Are there activities in my life that cause me to be unfaithful to church or personal time with the Lord?

Would I describe my relationship with Jesus right now as one of full devotion?

Is it easy for me to pray, worship, and study the Bible, or when I try, am I constantly thinking about other things I should be doing?

Based upon what I think about, prioritize, or talk about the most in my life, what would be considered the “first love” of my life?

Spend some time listing any and everything in your life that is competing for your affection and devotion to Jesus. Repent of idolatry and ask Jesus to rearrange these things in your life. Be willing to lay aside any activity that is hindering or rivaling your affection for Jesus. Ask Him to rekindle your passion for Him and to help you love Him with all of your heart! Start by meditating on and remembering His love for you.

Talking Sinfully

How we speak is a reflection of our heart. Luke 6:45 tells us, “Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks.” What we say and how we speak is an indicator of what resides deep within us. When we are untruthful, deceptive, harsh, vulgar, or critical with our words, it dishonors the Lord and is harmful to others. As we walk through this session, rely on the Holy Spirit to show you areas of speech that must be repented of and surrendered to Him. Be completely humble, honest, and transparent, allowing Him to cleanse you from the inside out. Prayerfully read the verses below and ask the Holy Spirit to forgive you and help you begin the journey of renewing your mind by surrendering your thoughts to Christ:

“The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.” - Luke 6:45

“Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.” - Ephesians 4:30-32

“If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person’s religion is worthless.” - James 1:26

Inappropriate Speaking

“Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving.” - Ephesians 5:3

As followers of Jesus, our speech should be set apart and above reproach. Paul makes it clear here that crude, filthy, or immoral talking should be eliminated from our lives. This would include cursing, dirty or questionable joking, and conversations that are inappropriate. We are called to holiness not just in the way we walk but in the way we talk. Our speech should reflect the righteousness we have received in Jesus.

Prayerfully and honestly ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer the following questions:

Am I careful to not speak words that are crude and inappropriate in public AND private?

Do I use God's name in any way other than worship, honor and praise?

Do I engage in unfitting jokes or conversation?

Do I let the filthiness of society creep into my speech?

Do I tell the truth and do not lie?

Do I exaggerate to make myself look better?

Do I cheat in any form?

Do I mislead people for my own gain?

Do I follow through with promises, vows and commitments I make to God and others?

Is my word my bond and am I reliable? Do I honor what I said I would do?

Do I frequently use curse words when I am angry or when I am around certain people?

Do I find delight in telling or participating in jokes that are vulgar or inappropriate?

When I'm angry, does cursing or vulgar language seem to be my default speech?

In conversations with close friends, do I allow suggestive or inappropriate content to be commonplace?

If an unbelieving person were to hear me speak, what would their opinion of Jesus be?

If you recognize that you have unconfessed sinful language or speech, take a moment and seek forgiveness. Submit this area of your life to Jesus and ask Him to give you clean speech. You may have to go to family or friends whom you have damaged with your speech and ask their forgiveness. Eliminate music, movies, or environments that fill you with unwholesome speech. Replace it with more of God's Word.

Harsh Words

“Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.” - Ephesians 4:29-32

It is clear in this passage that how we talk to and about one another matters. In fact, speaking harshly to or about another person grieves the Holy Spirit. This literally means that it breaks His heart when we talk in a way that tears people down rather than building them up. Any outburst of anger, slander, or malicious speech should be eliminated. It should be replaced with a kind, tender, and forgiving heart that speaks to

others in a Christlike manner. The transformation of our mind doesn't happen simply by trying to stop thinking wrongly but by taking those thoughts "captive to obedience to Christ" (1 Corinthians 10:5).

Prayerfully and honestly ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer the following questions:

Am I guilty of critical, angry speech?

Am I winsome or do I argue and fight with others?

Do I resist being irritable and cranky?

Am I slow to raise my voice?

Does my speech reflect an underlying calm and patience with those around me?

Do I speak kindly to those in my family?

Do I have a tendency to speak harshly or rudely to people but justify it under the banner of being a truth-teller?

Am I critical in the way I speak to or about people, using my words to tear people down rather than build up?

Do I lash out in anger when someone offends or wrongs me?

Am I more likely to verbally justify my actions, or am I a person who is quick to apologize and seek forgiveness and restoration?

Do I speak with kindness to my spouse or family, or do I have a tendency to be cranky, harsh, and short with them?

If you recognize this kind of sin in your speech, confess it to the Lord and repent. Acknowledge that you have grieved the Holy Spirit and ask for His forgiveness. If there are people that you have hurt with your words, humbly seek their forgiveness immediately. Ask the Lord to give you an understanding of the root cause of this behavior. Surrender it to Jesus and allow His Spirit to transform you in this area.

Gossip and Divisive Speech

"For I fear that perhaps when I come, I may find you not as I wish, and that you may find me not as you wish—that perhaps there may be quarreling, jealousy, anger, hostility, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder." - 2 Corinthians 12:20

We live in a culture filled with controversial and slanderous dialogue. As followers of Jesus, there should be a distinction between those who belong to Him versus those who do not know Him. In the Bible, "slander" is the word "Diablos," which is translated as "Devil." When we gossip, slander, and stir up controversy, we imitate the enemy's tactics.

Prayerfully and honestly ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer the following questions:

Do I excuse my gossip or slander by saying, "I am just stating the facts"?

Do I speak evil of people behind their back?

Am I a peacemaker who strengthens unity?

Do I resist taking part in some contentious argument?

Are rumors and gossip perpetuated by me, or do I end them when they get to me?

Am I a person people come to when they have complaints because they find it easy to talk negatively about others to me?

Do I tend to paint people negatively when they are not around?

When there is controversy, do I defuse it or add fuel to it?

When I am wronged or frustrated with people or the church, do I feel the need to make sure other people know about it?

We have been called to walk in unity. If you see a tendency to gossip or participate in negative and divisive conversations, ask the Lord to forgive you and change your heart. Jesus says, "Blessed are the peacemakers" (Matthew 5:9). Ask Him to empower you to be a person who uses your speech to build up others and preserve unity. Commit to guarding your tongue in this area.

Complaining Conversation

"Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world." - Philippians 2:14-15

As believers, we are called to give thanks in all things (1 Thess. 5:18). Far too often, we become a people who grumble and complain, forgetting the blessings of the Lord. When our speech is filled with negativity about situations and circumstances, we are not walking in the Spirit but in the flesh. When the Spirit of God is in control, He gives us a heart of worship, enabling us to praise Him in all things.

Prayerfully and honestly ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer the following questions:

Do I gripe and complain about situations in my life?

Do I give thanks in all things and at all times?

Am I filled with an attitude of gratefulness and praise instead of grumbling and complaining?

Do I make excuses for my grumbling by saying, "I have good reason to complain?"

Do I look on the bright sides of things?

Am I a person who tends to be very vocal about the difficulties and hardships I face?

When conversing with people who ask me about my life, do I give my attention to God's blessings or life's challenges?

In my prayer life, do I spend more time asking God for things or thanking Him for what He's already given me?

Would people closest to me describe me as an optimist or a pessimist?

Which verse describes me more: "...because the Lord has heard your grumbling that you grumble against him..." (Exodus 16:8c) or "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice." (Philippians 4:4)?

As you have reflected on these questions, if the Holy Spirit has shown you the slightest hint of grumbling and complaining speech, ask the Lord for His forgiveness. Spend some time reflecting on His goodness. List the blessings He has given you, and spend some time in prayer thanking Him for each one.

Lying Tongue

"Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another." -Ephesians 4:25

God has made it clear in His word that speaking lies is inconsistent with His character and nature. He even included it in the Ten Commandments. God is a God of truth. In Jesus, we are called to reflect His nature by "putting away falsehood" and "speaking the truth." Often, we are guilty of stretching the truth in exaggeration or altering the truth for selfish purposes. This dishonors the Lord and hinders His activity in our lives.

Prayerfully and honestly ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer the following questions:

Do I ever lie, exaggerate, or alter the truth to paint myself in a better light with others?

Am I honest about how I report my taxes or do business with others?

Do I ever add or subtract details about situations to mislead someone?

Do I always keep my word and commitments to people, institutions, and God?

Am I a person who is reliable or dependable, or am I at times untrustworthy?

The absence of integrity is a sin. If you have discovered any area of your life where you are untruthful, repent immediately and ask the Lord to empower you to walk in truth. Identify the cause of your untruthful tendencies. Often, it is driven by fear or insecurities. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you the root cause and surrender to Jesus.

Sinful Relationships

God has created us to live in community with people, but in a fallen and sinful world, this can be full of challenges. We are all broken people, and often this brokenness surfaces in relationships. Selfishness, immorality, unforgiveness, and bitterness can create deep wounds in and through us. Jesus desires us to reflect Him in every relationship, no matter how difficult. When we have sinful relationships with others, it impacts our relationship with Him. As we work through this session, ask the Holy Spirit to help you examine every relationship in your past or present to see if there is any relationship with unresolved conflict, sin or wounds needing repentance or reconciliation.

“I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” - Ephesians 4:1-3

“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.” - Ephesians 4:30-32

“But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints.” - Ephesians 5:3

Prayerfully and honestly ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer the following questions:

The Home

Do I harbor the slightest bitterness or resentment?

Are my family relationships consistent with God's Word?

Husbands

Am I respecting my wife and children/family?

Do I love based on grace and not performance or how I have been treated?

Am I providing spiritually, emotionally, physically, financially for my family?

Have I taken responsibility to lead my family in devotions and prayer?

Am I promoting a loving atmosphere of spiritual nurture and training?

Am I submitting to the Lord Jesus and my wife?

Do I discipline my children with consistency and love?

Do I consistently talk to my children about spiritual values?

Wives

- Do I treat my husband with honor and respect?
- Do I point out his weaknesses and faults?
- Do I patiently forgive and treat him kindly in spite of his shortcomings?
- Do I meet his needs and desires?
- Do I have a submissive spirit toward him?
- Do I do all I can to bring my attitude in line with the pattern God has set for me in Scripture?
- Is my attitude in my marriage one of thanksgiving and love rather than complaining and anger?

Parent

- Do I model excitement and joy about worshiping God?
- Do I consistently express love for Christ's Church and not a negative complaining attitude?
- Do I lovingly and consistently communicate with each other?
- Do I consistently take time to have meaningful conversation with my children?
- Do I listen when my children talk to me?
- Do I respond with love and understanding instead of quickly becoming angry?
- Do I model moral purity by the things I talk about? What I do when no one is looking?
- Do I demonstrate holiness by the things I watch or read?
- Am I approachable and loving?
- Do I consistently model honesty and respect for others?
- Do I readily admit my own sins and failures?
- Do I make excuses for my behaviors without repentance?

Children or Teenagers

- Do I honor and obey my parents?
- Do I ignore my parents' guidance?
- Do I treat my parents with disrespect or anger?

Adults

- Do I regularly call/visit/serve/care for my aging parents? Or do I shirk that responsibility?
- Do I give my parents consistent time and attention?
- Do I support my parents emotionally or financially?
- Do I help them with needs around their home?
- Are there any unresolved harsh words or feelings between me and my parents?
- Am I willing to do what God requires of me?

Sexual Immorality

"For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God." - 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5

God's will for every believer is sexual purity and holiness. It is not possible for a believer to walk in fellowship with Jesus while practicing sexual immorality. This could be personal immorality through lustful thoughts or pornography, which uses a person as an object of sexual gratification. It could be sexual involvement with someone outside of the boundaries of biblical marriage, which is adultery or fornication.

Prayerfully and honestly ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer the following questions:

Have I committed any form of sexual immorality, uncleanness or perversion?

Do I watch television or movies that feature immorality and violence?

Do I dress in ways designed to be modest?

Do I read things that are good and beautiful?

Do I carefully guard what my eyes see?

Do I see a pattern of lustful thoughts for someone I am not married to or do I use pornography in my life?

Am I involved in any relationship outside of marriage where there is sexually inappropriate conversation or sexual activity?

Am I sexually active in any way outside of marriage? If I am married, is there any relationship outside of my marriage where I am allowing physical attraction or emotional connection to go unchecked?

Have I fully repented of all past sexual sin, and if married, have I been completely honest with my spouse?

If the Holy Spirit is convicting you of any area of immorality in your life, take some time to repent of it. Be specific about each sin and ask the Holy Spirit what steps need to be taken to walk in complete healing and holiness. It might require you to confess to a spouse or friend, end an inappropriate relationship, or place guardrails in your life.

Bitterness and Unforgiveness

"And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you." - Ephesians 4:30-32

When we allow bitterness and unforgiveness to remain in our lives, it grieves the Holy Spirit. Bitterness grows from unforgiveness and is like cancer in our soul that will ultimately destroy our joy in life. The enemy wants us to hold grudges, be filled with animosity, and allow wounds to go unhealed. Yet Jesus calls us to forgive one another as He has forgiven us. Forgiveness is the pathway to freedom and healing.

Prayerfully and honestly ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer the following questions:

Are there people who have wounded me, and whenever I see them or think of them, I am filled with anger, fear, or insecurity?

Have I experienced past abuse or mistreatment that I have never shared or found healing from?

Do I have bitterness or unforgiveness towards anyone in my past or present that I am holding on to?

Are there any failures in my past that control me today because I have not forgiven myself?

Do I have walls in present relationships because of past hurts?

If you recognize any person in the past or present that you have not forgiven or are harboring bitterness toward, begin the journey of forgiveness right now. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you the strength to forgive. Acknowledge the offense to the Lord, share with Him your hurt, confess the sin of bitterness and unforgiveness to Him, and release it to the Lord. Remember that forgiveness is a process that takes time. It isn't forgetting the pain; it's choosing to no longer live in it. If you have past abuse or trauma that you have never shared or dealt with, seek the help of a parent, trusted friend, minister, or counselor who can help you begin the healing journey.

Unreconciled Relationships

“So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.” - Matthew 5:23-24

Jesus makes it very clear that unreconciled relationships affect our relationship with Him. When we hurt or offend others, we must seek reconciliation with them. Often, we are too prideful or arrogant to humble ourselves and seek the forgiveness of people we have wounded. Jesus calls us to swallow our pride and to seek reconciliation with anyone we have wronged or offended.

Prayerfully and honestly ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer the following questions:

Am I quick to genuinely say I am sorry when I have hurt or offended someone, or do I dismiss, excuse, and explain it away?

Is there anyone in my life I have wronged, even in the smallest way, or I have not sought forgiveness from?

Have I sinned against anyone in action or speech against their knowledge that I have not asked forgiveness for?

Do I need to seek forgiveness from anyone I have held bitterness or unforgiveness towards?

Have I ever mistreated my spouse, children, friends, or coworkers but just moved past it and never asked for their forgiveness?

If you can identify any unreconciled offense you have caused in any relationship, confess it by name to the Lord. Ask Him what He wants you to do to seek reconciliation. It might be a phone call, a card, a text message, or a visit. Do and say whatever He tells you and humbly owning it without excuses. Remember, we are not responsible for how they receive it, but we are responsible for our obedience. Ask the Holy Spirit to prepare their heart and yours and immediately do whatever He says.

SELF-EXAMINATION: HANDS

Sinful Disobedience

As followers of Jesus, our posture before Him should always be complete surrender. This means that we walk in obedience to everything revealed to us in Scripture and obey the prompting of the Holy Spirit in our lives, remembering that God's Word and God's Spirit will always be in perfect harmony. When we walk in disobedience of any kind, it quenches the Holy Spirit's work in our lives. Disobedience can come in two ways. It could be commission (doing something God has commanded us not to do) or omission (not doing something that He has commanded us to do). We will examine both categories to allow the Holy Spirit to highlight any areas of disobedience.

"So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin." - James 4:17

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand." - John 10:27-28

"But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing." - James 1:25

Commission: Substance and Food Abuse

"But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap." - Luke 21:34

The Bible is unmistakably clear that drunkenness is a sin. We often only apply this to the use of alcohol, but this includes any substance, including prescription drugs or sleeping medication, that we misuse, rely upon, or have become addicted to. We are called to be under the control of the Holy Spirit, so when we are dependent upon or controlled by other substances, we are not walking in the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

Prayerfully and honestly ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer the following questions:

Do I have an unhealthy relationship with food?

Do I steward my body from any form of immorality or excess?

Do I resist harmful habits such as alcohol, smoking, pornography, overeating, etc.?

Do I make excuses avoiding fasting because of enslavement to food?

Do I honor God's first commandment by placing no thing ahead of God?

Do I ever find myself over-drinking or being impaired by a controlled substance (including prescription drugs or sleep aids)?

Do I currently use alcohol or drugs to cope with stress?

Do I currently consume alcohol despite seeing patterns in my own life or in my family history of drunkenness or alcoholism?

Do I ever misuse any prescription drugs, sleeping medications, or illegal drugs?

Is gluttony a problem for me?

Would people closest to me say that I drink too much alcohol or misuse drugs of any kind?

If you see a pattern of substance or food abuse of any kind, confess and repent of it. Remove it completely from your life. The Bible is clear on this subject. There are more verses in the Bible warning against the misuse of alcohol than there are verses about lying or adultery. Jesus calls us to a life of

sobriety, and this is not up for negotiation. If you are addicted, get help immediately. Jesus wants you to be consumed with Him, but if you are addicted, dependent, or misusing drugs or alcohol, it will limit His work in your life.

Commission: Identifying All Disobedience

“Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you?” - Luke 6:46

Jesus being Lord means that He is in charge of everything. If we call Him Lord, obedience should be a given. We have looked at two specific areas of sins of commission. Now, let’s broaden it some and identify other areas where disobedience may surface in your life.

Prayerfully and honestly ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer the following questions:

Do I ever cheat on my taxes or in business?

“Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.” - Romans 13:6

Do I truly serve Jesus with my money, or does my money get in the way of serving Jesus?

“No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money. ” - Matthew 6:24

Am I faithful to the local church, or do I allow activities to regularly interfere with my commitment to church?

“And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.” - Hebrews 10:24-25

Do I allow anything unholy or sinful in my life (movies, music, relationships, podcasts, etc.)?

“But as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”- 1 Peter 1:15-16

Omission: Neglecting Prayer and the Word

“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.” – John 15:4-5

The secret to the Christian life is abiding in Christ. It is the only way to the fruit-filled life that Jesus calls us to live. Jesus commands us in these verses to make abiding in Him a way of life. When we are prayerless or neglect time in the Word, we disobey His call for our lives and set ourselves up for failure. We must not walk in the sin of neglecting intimacy with Jesus.

Prayerfully and honestly ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer the following questions:

Do I reduce my distractions and busyness in order to give God focused time?

Do I pray for others on a regular basis?

Am I actively witnessing about Christ?

Do I resist making excuses why I cannot serve God?

Do I resist being lazy and irresponsible in my commitments?

Am I procrastinating on my Christian duties and responsibilities?

Am I determined to overcome the sins that keep cropping up instead of just putting up with them?
 Do I let Satan deceive me to believe I cannot be free?
 Do I do my very best and do not cut corners?
 Do I give God prompt obedience?
 Do I resist failing God in the same old ways?
 Do I earnestly fast and pray about those specific areas in which I never seem to make any progress?
 Am I faithfully spending time with Jesus in prayer and worship each day, or is it occasional when I have the time?
 Am I guilty of giving Jesus my leftover time, or do I prioritize time with Him each day?
 Do I regularly spend time reading, studying, and memorizing scripture daily?
 Have I developed a corporate prayer rhythm in your life, making room in my schedule to gather with the church in prayer meeting?
 Do I fully engage in Sunday worship, or am I more of a spectator watching others worship?

If you have not prioritized abiding in Jesus, stop right now and confess this to Him. Ask Him to show you why your heart doesn't long for Him more. Pray that He will give you a fresh love for Him. Take some time to make some practical adjustments in your schedule in order to prioritize time with Him.

Commission: Neglecting Personal Evangelism

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” - Matthew 28:19-20

Every follower of Jesus has been called to make disciples. Jesus' plan to reach the world with the Gospel is for His people to share it with the people around us. His desire is for us to invite friends, family, coworkers, and neighbors into a personal relationship with Him. If we are not actively engaging the world around us with the Gospel, we are being disobedient to the mission He has given us.

Prayerfully and honestly ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer the following questions:

Do I share my faith in Christ with non-believers?
 Do I regularly pray for non-believers?
 Do I make my faith known to my neighbors and /or fellow employees?
 Do I intentionally maintain relationships with non-believers in order to share my testimony?
 When confronted about my faith, do I remain consistent and firm in my testimony?
 Do I help others understand how to effectively share a personal testimony?
 Do I encourage my friends to support missions?
 Am I prepared to share my testimony at any time?
 Do my actions demonstrate my commitment to reaching others for Christ?
 Are there people in my life right now that I know are not believers, but I am neglecting the call to share the Gospel with them?
 Do I have a prayer list of people who do not know Jesus that I am actively praying for?
 Have I had opportunities to share the Gospel but, out of fear, chose to remain silent?
 Do I currently feel a burden for people in my life who are lost and dying without Jesus, or would I say that I give very little thought about it?
 Is there anybody right now that I know that the Holy Spirit has prompted me to share the Gospel with, but I have been disobedient?

If Jesus is convicting you of disobedience to His call to share Him with others, ask for His forgiveness. Pray for the Holy Spirit to place people on your heart who are lost. Make a list and begin to pray for them. Take some time to pray Acts 4:29 over your life: "And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness."

Omission: Neglecting the Filling of the Holy Spirit

"And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ." - Ephesians 5:18-21

We are commanded in this passage to be filled with the Holy Spirit, which is how we experience the fullness of God in our lives. It means that we are under the control and influence of the Holy Spirit, who then produces the power and nature of Jesus in us. According to this passage, it causes us to live lives of worship and humility. It is God's desire and expectation for us to be a people who continually seek the filling of the Holy Spirit through ongoing confession, surrender, and obedience to His work in us.

Prayerfully and honestly ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer the following questions:

Do I regularly allow sin of any kind to go unconfessed in my life?

Am I persistently seeking the filling of the Holy Spirit, or am I apathetic and indifferent toward Him most of the time?

Is every area of my life submitted to Him, or do I compartmentalize my life, keeping parts hidden and unsurrendered?

Do I find myself often trying to live in my own strength?

Do I obey the promptings of the Holy Spirit, or do I ignore Him to rationalize disobedience?

If you are not actively obeying the command to seek the filling of the Holy Spirit, confess this to Jesus and ask the Holy Spirit to forgive you for neglecting Him. We cannot fill ourselves, but we can cooperate with Him. Ask Him if there is any sin that you have not confessed, or anything He has called you to do that you have neglected. Surrender to Him and walk in complete obedience to His direction in your life.

Surrendering Everything

We are called to live a life of absolute surrender to Jesus. This means that He is in control of every aspect of our lives. Often, we are guilty of picking and choosing what we want to surrender to Him. When we do this, we are in control, not Him. So when it comes to our family, career, ambitions, finances, and strongholds, we must relinquish everything to Him, allowing His will to be above ours. As we work through this session, ask the Holy Spirit to help you examine every aspect of your life and reveal anything that is not completely surrendered to Him.

"I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." - Galatians 2:20

"Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it." - Matthew 16:24-25

"So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple." - Luke 14:33

Surrendering My Family

“Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.” - Matthew 10:37

Jesus demands that our love and devotion to Him be greater than anything and everyone in our lives. This applies to every human relationship, including family. If we are not careful, we will turn our family into an idol that wars for our affection for Jesus. How do we combat this? We must surrender our family to Him. Our marriages, our children, our desire to have children — all of these must be submitted to Him. If single, our desire for a family must be surrendered to Him. Our love for Him and desire for His will must be above everything.

Prayerfully and honestly ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer the following questions:

Is Jesus at the center of every area in my marriage and family?

Am I willing to allow Jesus to do whatever He wants in the life of my children (including where they go to college or live, with their career, or in their health)?

Does my family’s ambitions and priorities get in the way of my faithfulness to Jesus, His church, or my calling in life?

If I am battling infertility, will I joyfully follow Him even if He chooses adoption over biological children?

If I am single, is Jesus enough for me, or am I spiritually discontent with my current season?

If Jesus took my family or dreams of a family, would I love Him still?

If you recognize any aspect of your family or desire for family that is not surrendered to Him, confess and surrender it immediately. Ask Him what it looks like for His will to be your greatest desire for your family.

Ask the Holy Spirit the specific changes that need to be made in your family for Him to be at the center. Willfully lay aside any plans, dreams, or ambitions that are not a part of His will for your family.

Surrendering My Finances

“Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, ‘How have we robbed you?’ In your tithes and contributions...Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need.” - Malachi 3:8, 10

We are called to “seek first His Kingdom” (Matt. 6:33). This means that in every area of our life, the Kingdom of God must be our priority, including our finances. It is our natural, sinful tendency to want to hold on to it or consume it for our own pleasures, yet we are called to live generous lives and leverage our finances for Kingdom purposes. We see in the passage above that we are called to tithe. This simply means that a tenth of our finances should be devoted to Kingdom work. According to Malachi, when we do not live generously in this way, we are “robbing God.” As Christians, we are called to partner with the local church to advance the Gospel through our generosity.

Prayerfully and honestly ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer the following questions:

Are you living generously and faithful to biblical tithing?

Are you guilty of wasteful and meaningless spending?

Do you have a spending plan that includes seeking the Kingdom first through giving generously, or do you give God your leftovers?

Are you guilty of receiving blessings from the ministries of the church but not giving generously to the church?

Does Jesus have full control over your finances and spending habits?

If you recognize that you have been “robbing God” in the area of your finances, surrender that to Him right now. Ask Him what changes need to be made in order to live more generously. It might require you to make a budget, or reorganize a budget in order to be a better steward of what Jesus has entrusted to you.

Surrendering My Career

“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”

- Matthew 5:14-16

Jesus tells us here that we have a very unique calling on earth as “the light of the world.” This means that in a world full of darkness, we are to shine the light of the Gospel. Wherever God has placed us, we have a purpose. When it comes to our jobs or careers, it is no accident that we are where we are. God has a plan for us to shine in our workplace for His glory. We often lose sight of this, leading to complacency, discontentment, or working for the wrong reasons. Jesus desires to give us meaning and purpose in our work regardless of what we do.

Prayerfully and honestly ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer the following questions:

Am I currently leveraging my employment as a mission, or do I see it merely as a place to make money?

Are there co-workers who do not know Jesus that I am actively praying for and sharing with?

Do I work hard at your job to please the Lord, or do I work hard for the recognition of people?

When people see my work ethic, integrity, or how I interact with people, does it make them think well of Jesus?

When was the last time I shared the Gospel with a coworker?

If you are convicted of not leveraging your career for Kingdom purposes, confess that to Jesus and seek His forgiveness. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you a burden for the people you work with. Identify people to pray for daily and ask the Holy Spirit for open doors. If you recognize that you have damaged the Gospel in any way, seek forgiveness from the person or people who have been affected. Allow Jesus to shine through you moving forward!

Surrendering My Strongholds

“For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete.” - 2 Corinthians 10:3-6

When it comes to strongholds, we must recognize the source of the struggle and the source of the power to overcome it. Strongholds are areas in our lives where the enemy holds us captive. Often, it’s a sin tendency that reoccurs repeatedly in our life—a spiritual battle. Because it’s a spiritual battle, we must

fight it with spiritual power. We fail when we try to gain victory over these strongholds in our own strength. The life of victory begins with surrender!

Prayerfully and honestly ask the Holy Spirit to help you answer the following questions:

What are the strongholds in my life?

Are there patterns of behavior, emotions, or situations that seem to trigger these sin tendencies in my life?

Am I guilty of trying in my own strength to overcome them only to end up failing?

Have I memorized any scripture verses that I can rely upon when I am tempted?

Are there places, people, or substances that continue to trip me up, but I continue to allow them in my life?

Make a list of the various strongholds in your life. Pray through the list in confession and renounce those activities in your life. Surrender them to Jesus completely. Acknowledge your inability to overcome them and recognize that it is only through Jesus alone that you have victory. Begin memorizing scripture (starting with the verse above) that will help you combat sinful temptations. These steps must become a way of life. Every time one of these struggles surfaces in temptation, confess it. Confess your inability to overcome without Jesus, surrender to Him, and speak God's Word to into the temptation...repeat!

PART II:

**GROWING THROUGH
EXAMINATION**

MY HEAD GROWTH PLAN FOR KNOWING GOD

This God-centered knowledge arises from spiritual transformation and leads to consistent Christian behavior and a change in one's fundamental orientation towards God.

Category (In what specific areas do I need to improve and develop?)	Objectives/Goals (What do I want to achieve?)	Initiative to Accomplish Each Goal (How will I accomplish each objective?)	Current Status Report (How am I doing?)
<p>Imitating God's Holiness, Morals, and Ethics: Love: A core attribute, described as abounding in kindness and faithfulness Justice: God is righteous and just Mercy: Undeserved favor; withholding what is deserved Grace: Unmerited favor Holiness: Being separate, set apart, and pure Goodness: Possessing moral excellence Faithfulness: Steadfast and reliable Patient/Longsuffering: Willing to wait and delay for repentance</p>			
<p>Lifestyle of Worship: do I view all of my life to be lived "as unto the Lord"?</p>			
<p>Meeting with God through the Bible: How will I use my Bible more significantly?</p>			
<p>Meaningful Prayer with God: how will pray more consistently?</p>			
<p>Self-Sacrifice for God through Fasting: do I have an unhealthy relationship with food hindering me from fasting?</p>			

MY HEART GROWTH PLAN FOR LOVING GOD

These affections are seen as deep, God-centered emotions that arise from spiritual transformation and are distinct from mere fleeting feelings because they lead to consistent Christian behavior and a change in one's fundamental orientation towards God.

Category (In what specific areas do I need to improve and develop)	Objectives/Goals (What do I want to achieve?)	Initiative to Accomplish Each Goal (How will I accomplish each objective?)	Current Status Report (How am I doing?)
Love: Love for God, Christ, or his truth			
Hope: Hope in God and his ways			
Fear: Fear of God.			
Sorrow: Sorrow for sin.			
Desire and Longing: For holiness, for God, or for God's presence.			
Delight: Delight in God's law or truth.			
Gratitude: A sense of thankfulness.			
Compassion: For others, such as the poor.			
Zeal: Vigorous devotion to God.			
Hatred: Hatred of sin.			
Humility: A state of humility as a religious affection.			
Joy: A feeling of joy, particularly in God.			
Imbalanced/Wrong loves: am I mis-prioritizing my affections? Giving God leftovers?			
Speech: do my words honor God? Why or why not?			
Thoughts: am I hiding sin in my mind?			
Attitudes: are my attitudes Christ-like?			
Motivations: am I doing the right things for the right reasons?			

MY HANDS GROWTH PLAN FOR SERVING GOD

These God-centered behaviors arise from a spiritual transformation and orientation toward God which leads to consistent Christian service.

Category (In what specific areas do I need to improve and develop)	Objectives/Goals (What do I want to achieve?)	Initiative to Accomplish Each Goal (How will I accomplish each objective?)	Current Status Report (How am I doing?)
Life in the Body/Church: how can I serve in my church more? Better?			
"One Another": am I doing these? Love one another Forgive one another Bear with one another Admonish one another Serve one another Build up one another Stir up one another Pray for one another Show hospitality to one another			
Spiritual Relationships: who is mentoring me and who should I be mentoring?			
Generosity: am I being liberal and kind with all of my resources?			
Stewardship of My Physical Body: am I loving myself well?			
Sins of Omission: what should I be doing that I am not?			
Sins of Commission: what should I not be doing, but I am?			
Marketplace Ministry/Missionary: am I leveraging my career for Gospel and Kingdom work?			

PART III: GROWING RESOURCES

RESOURCE A
SAMPLE REPENTANCE AND CONFESSION PRAYER
Psalm 51

“Lord, Forgive me” (1-9)

1. **Appeal honestly to God’s grace and mercy**—“Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; According to the greatness of Your compassion blot out my transgressions” (1)
2. **Ask and expect God to remove the guilt and make you clean**—“Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin” (2)
3. **Admit your sin against God, do not defend yourself**—“For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against You, You only, I have sinned and done what is evil in Your sight, So that You are justified when You speak and blameless when You judge. Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me. Behold, You desire truth in the innermost being, and in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom. Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.” (3-7)
4. **Make me hear and feel You restore joy and gladness to me**—“Make me to hear joy and gladness, let the bones which You have broken rejoice. Hide Your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquities.” (8-9)

“Lord, Change me” (10-12)

1. **Change my heart to love what You love and hate what You hate**—“Create in me a clean heart, O God,” (10)
2. **Give me a no quit spirit for the things of God**—“And renew a steadfast spirit within me.” (10)
3. **Do not take away what You have given me**—“Do not cast me away from Your presence, And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.” (11)
4. **Change my sorrow and guilt to joy**—“Restore to me the joy of Your salvation” (12)
5. **Uphold me through all of life without wavering**—“And sustain me with a willing spirit.

“Lord, Use me” (13-19)

1. **Use me to show others the goodness of your grace to sinners**—“Then I will teach transgressors Your ways” (13)
2. **Use me to see lost people saved**—“And sinners will be converted to You.” (13)
3. **Use my worship for your glory**—“Deliver me from blood guiltiness, O God, the God of my salvation, Then my tongue will joyfully sing of Your righteousness.” (14)
4. **Use my mouth as your witness**—“O Lord, open my lips, That my mouth may declare Your praise.” (15)
5. **Use my brokenness and life as an offering unto you**—“For You do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; You are not pleased with burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.” (16-17)
6. **Use me to do good and build up others**—“By Your favor do good to Zion; Build the walls of Jerusalem. Then You will delight in righteous sacrifices, In burnt offering and whole burnt offering; Then young bulls will be offered on Your altar.” (18-19)

RESOURCE B
READING THE BIBLE MEANINGFULLY
INVESTIGATE, INTERPRET, AND IMPLEMENT

INVESTIGATE—(What do I see?)

Preparing my heart and mind to hear from God

- *Read prayerfully.* Pray before, during, and after you read. Fellowship with God as He reveals glory to you in the pages of Scriptures. Ask the Lord to help you understand the meaning, application, and significance of God's Word (1 Cor. 2:11-16).
- *Read actively.* As you read, be careful not to insert your own ideas, thoughts, or framework into the text. Instead, let the text speak for itself.
- *Read patiently.* Remember, Bible study is hard work. You won't understand everything you read the first time you read it. That's ok. Don't give up. Keep looking!
- *Read repeatedly.* I often find that a passage really "opens up" after I've prayerfully read it 15 or so times. Each time you re-read, mark key words or phrases. Jot down questions and initial observations. Try to see how the various parts of the text relate to the whole. I'd encourage you to read the passage out loud, read it using different Bible translations, and hear the passage being read within its larger context using an audio Bible.
- *Read the context.* To understand your specific text, you will need to see it within its larger context. Notice what is before and after your passage. This will help you see how your text fits within the overall argument, flow, or message of the book.

Training my heart and mind to understand what God says

WHY—Why is this message in the Bible? Why is this passage in this place of the Bible? Why did the people react this way?

WHO—Who is speaking? Who was being spoken to? Who are the main characters? Who needs to hear this message? Who are the enemies and opponents of this teaching? Who wrote this? What are their roles/motivations?

WHAT—What is the main subject of these verses? What doctrines are mentioned in this passage? What is the historical, social, spiritual context of this passage? What is the context around these verses? What fallen condition is addressed (i.e. sinful attitudes, motivations, etc.)? What response is intended by this passage? What exhortations are in this passage? What is the indicative saying? What are the imperatives commanding? What specific words or phrases stand out/are repeated? What genre is this (parable, prophecy, etc.)? What do we know about the main characters?

WHEN—When is this passage taking place? When was it written? When did the events happen in history?

WHERE—Where is this passage taking place? What else has happened in that place in the New Testament or Old Testament? Where was the audience?

HOW—How does this passage relate to the rest of this chapter? Relate to the rest of this book? Relate to rest of this testament? Relate to the rest of the Bible?

There are certain "clues" that we can look for that will help us discover what the passage is saying:

- *Repeated words, phrases, or ideas.*
- *Contrasts.* Look for ideas, individuals, and/or items that stand in contrast with each other.
- *Comparisons.* Look for ideas, individuals, and/or items that are alike (ex. Ro. 5:12-21)
- *Cause and effect or condition statements,* such as "if... then" or "after...that." Cause and effect tells how something is or can be accomplished.

- *Connecting words.* Words that connect phrases or ideas (*and, but, or, indeed, therefore*).
- *Verbs.* Look to see if the verbs are past, present, or future tense.
- *Purpose or result.* Often indicated by the words *that, so that, in order that, for to this end*
- *Figures of speech.* Expressions that convey images; “Like a...”

INTERPRET—(What does it mean?)

What is the significance of these details? What concerns caused this text to be written? Why was this text given to us? What are the intentions of the author? What do we share in common with the people in the Scripture? “Why did the author write this book?” Why do we need the truth of the text?

IMPLEMENT (Now, what should I do?)

What difference does this make? What should I do differently because of this passage? What will it cost me if I don't? How can I pray this passage? How should we respond to the truth of Scripture? How does this apply to us? So what? What difference does it make? What am I to do or believe? How does it transform my actions for the coming week? What change does God require of me in my life or in my heart? What Am I Supposed to Do with This? “Why is our time in God's Word not as life-transformative as it should be?” What is one small step I can take this week?

9 Questions to Ask

- | | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| 1. Is there an example for me to follow? | 6. Is there a condition to meet? |
| 2. Is there a sin to avoid? | 7. Is there a verse to memorize? |
| 3. Is there a promise to claim? | 8. Is there an error to mark? |
| 4. Is there a prayer to repeat? | 9. Is there a challenge to face? |
| 5. Is there a command to obey? | |

Five Bad Substitutes for Application

What happens when you fail to apply Scripture? Let me suggest five substitutes for application. Every one of them is a dead-end street.

- 1. We substitute interpretation for application**—How easy it is to settle for knowledge rather than experience. The person who knows the truth but doesn't act on it is not simply making a mistake—making a poor judgment—he is in sin. In God's mind, knowledge without obedience is sin.
- 2. We substitute superficial obedience for substantive life-change.** Here, we apply biblical truth to areas where we're already applying it, not to new areas where we're not applying it. Result: no noticeable change in our lives.
- 3. We substitute rationalization for repentance**—Most of us have a built-in early-warning system against spiritual change. The moment truth gets too close, too convicting, an alarm goes off, and we start to defend ourselves. Our favorite strategy is to rationalize sin instead of repenting of it.
- 4. We substitute an emotional experience for a volitional decision.** That is to say, we study the Word of God, we emote under impact—but we make no real change. If all we do is water our handkerchiefs and sob a few mournful prayers, then go merrily on our way without altering our behavior in the slightest—then our spirituality boils down to nothing more than a vapid emotional experience.
- 5. We substitute communication for transformation.** We talk the talk, but we don't walk the walk. We think that if we can speak eloquently or convincingly about a point of Scripture, we're covered.

RESOURCE C

CONVERTING ANY BIBLE VERSE TO A PRAYER

Every passage of the Bible can be converted into a prayer. But how? Here is a method to sift a text into a way to talk with God. Consider these steps and begin formulating prayers from His Word.

Understand the general meaning/intent of the passage—

1. What is God's intent in saying what He said through this author?
2. Use reporter questions (who, what, when, why, when, how, where) to better understand the passage.

Summarize the text in 1-2 sentences. Use key words from the verse(s).

Think and then pray in categories:

Theology—What did God reveal about His nature, character, etc. in this passage that should create awe and wonder toward Him? How is the Son or Spirit glorified? In what ways should I trust God?

“I will rejoice/praise God for His [supply attribute], and thank Him that He is [supply attribute and explain the significance to you]...”

Confession—What sins of commission should I confess? What sins of omission should I confess? Am I saying what God would say about my sin? Have I confessed the sins of my mouth, eyes, ears, actions? My relationship sins? My public/private sins?

“I will confess my sin of [supply sin] because God is holy and sin separates...”

Intercession—Praying on behalf of someone else. That God would cultivate the verse in the life of another. Protect them from the warnings in the text. Humble them, awaken them, encourage them, exhort them, rebuke them, etc. Who does the Spirit bring to my mind that needs a passage like this? Using your prayer lists, pray the passage over them.

“I will pray for [supply person's name] that he/she would [supply reason from text]...”

Pardon—How does this passage guide me to: walk in the forgiveness God has given me? Rejoice in the forgiven life? Praise God for His faithfulness and patience toward my faithlessness?

“I will thank God for His gift of forgiveness regarding my [supply sin you confessed] and plead for Him to assist me in walking in forgiveness...”

My Sanctification—Because of this verse/passage, why should I fear God? Why should I obey God? What specific obedience is expected? How can I live holy? How should this passage shape my heart? How does this passage prune me?

“I will pray to recognize my need to grow and develop in [supply character trait, Christian attitude, etc.]...”

Request—How does this text address my spiritual needs? Physical needs? Emotional needs? Psychological needs? Interpersonal needs? Occupational needs? Financial needs? Separate requests into needs and wants. Does my request demonstrate trust in God? Glorify God?

“I will ask God for [supply request] because [supply reason]”

RESOURCE D

NEEDFUL TYPES OF DISCIPLESHIP RELATIONSHIPS

What are the desirable relationships of a disciple?

Who is your Lord?

Life's most important question: "Who is in charge?" Second most important question is: "What is my relationship to the one who is in charge?" What evidence is there that my life is all about me? What do I tend to worry about? What does that reveal about my faith? In what areas of my life am I still attempting to maintain control? What aspect of complete personal surrender to the leadership of Christ fills me with the most apprehension? What has prevented me from taking this step? What am I counting on to make me happy? What am I hoping for above everything else? What was the last personal dream that I am willing to surrender?

Who are you?

Do I live each day convinced I am a deeply loved servant and disciple of Jesus Christ? When have you felt not good enough in the eyes of God or the eyes of others? How have you addressed this issue? Do you feel that since you are not in a certain vocation that you are less than good enough? How has the church continued to promote wrongful shame? Church can be a place where shame and grace are not balanced. Christians hear what a Christian should be doing and they are overwhelmed with shame. Grace removes our anxiety about whether God will suddenly change his mind about who we are.

Who is your Barnabas?

Do I have at least one mentor in my life? What individuals have shaped my life with God in the past and/or are doing so in the present? I am somebody's disciple. Who has had the greatest influence on your spiritual life? What obstacles standing in the way of mentors in your life?

Who is your Timothy?

Can you name someone who has learned something about following Christ from you? What did they learn?

Where is your Antioch?

How is God using you in your own local church? How has God used the local church in your own discipleship? Why is community and fellowship in a local church helpful and necessary to a disciple of Jesus Christ? Is experiencing community in a local church easy to do? How does the local church provide accountability? Am I presently in a group that is challenging me sufficiently? To whom is the inner reality of my life with God regularly laid bare? Who has permission to help you hear God's voice for your life and to speak to you about that frankly?

Where is your Macedonia?

If resources were unlimited, what would you most like to do for the sake of Jesus Christ? Who right now can we picture calling to us, please come and help us? What is keeping you from going to your Macedonia? Is your Macedonia within the walls of your church or outside? Do you expect this to change in the future? When was a time that you knew that you obeyed the call of God? When was the time that you resisted?

What are the desirable characteristics of a disciple?

A heart for Christ alone—Jesus, as the only son of God, becomes the priority in all of life; we worship him with our heart, mind, soul, and strength. What is one area where you have substantially surrendered your life to the leadership of Christ? What is one area where you continue to struggle? What in your opinion is the hardest thing about living for Jesus in today's world? Have you ever had a season of tremendous hunger for God's word? What brought this about and what was the outcome?

A mind transformed by the Word—We progressively come to view the world as God views it, setting aside the world's values as our minds are continually renewed by God's Word. How much time every week am I presently committing the personal spiritual development and Bible study? How much time do I think God is calling me to commit? What priorities and activities need to shift in order to fulfill that call?

Arms of Love—as the hands and feet of Jesus in the world, we come alongside others in need, extend compassion, welcome the stranger, and live in a community of mutual care with other disciples. We are on a journey of unconditional love. Do you have a reputation of being loving? Have you had a powerful, personal experience of receiving God's love through other Christians? If so, how? Have you experienced God's call to love a difficult person? How did God provide and what did you choose to do?

Knees for Prayer—Our posture before God is one of a continual dependence, trusting deeply that God is in charge of everything, conversing always about how his work is being accomplished in and through our lives. Who has been your model or your hero when it comes to prayer? Why were they such an example? What has been your greatest personal obstacle in sustaining a life of prayer? Where would you like to be in your prayer life a year from now? Identify a time in which it was difficult for you to rejoice in the middle of your circumstances. How did God provide for you? Where did you see God at work in your life during this time?

A voice to speak the good news—We embrace the call to share Jesus with those who do not know him, addressing the deepest questions of both heart and mind, voicing hope and encouragement for people everywhere? What positive and negative associations do you have with the word evangelism? Where do these come from? What individuals helped you to come to faith in Christ? How specifically did they voice the good news to you? Sharing our faith involves varying degrees of motivation, skill training, confidence, and risk taking. Assess your personal readiness in each realm (1 Low; 10 High)

1. ___ motivation: I am eager to help others find real life in Christ
2. ___ skill training: I know how to share the basics of the gospel
3. ___ confidence: I am ready and able to be used by God
4. ___ risk taking: I am willing to step out on a limb to serve God

A spirit of servanthood and stewardship— We live as servants of God and each other, doing good through the gifts the spirit has given us, living generously and simply, seeking to bring about the fullest expression of God's rule in our culture. What is your deepest fear about risking your resources for God? How does the notion of heaven as your true home affect your daily life? Where do you think your church tends to let people off the hook when it comes to embodying servanthood and stewardship? What one activity or commitment, if practiced by the greatest majority of Christian disciples, would most move or impress non-Christians to consider the claims of Christ? What do I think about? What do I spend my money on? Where do I invest my time? ***Are these thoughts, investments, and commitments that I would want to be embracing during the final weeks of my life?*** What's preventing you from being sold out to God's priorities?

RESOURCE E

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES REMINDERS

The Characteristics Of The Spiritual Disciplines

1. The disciplines are most productive when practiced consistently.
2. Manage your expectations for what the disciplines can provide.
3. Performing the disciplines is a matter of a heart and time management.
4. While the disciplines should be practiced regularly, there will be seasons in which their frequency will need to intensify.
5. Somehow record what God reveals about Himself and what He teaches you as you practice the disciplines

Warnings Regarding The Spiritual Disciplines

1. Don't let them become a source of spiritual pride.
2. Don't confuse the practice of the disciplines with communion with God.
3. Don't expect the discipline to do the hard life change stuff.
4. Stay balanced with a general practice of many disciplines.

RESOURCE F

SERVING ONE ANOTHER IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

Because we have been given gifts by God, what are the implications?

1. God expects us to use them.
2. God expects us to use them in the context of the local church.
3. God holds us accountable for how we use them. He entrusted us with them.
4. God ministers to us and others through our use of them.
5. God designed the church to operate and be dependent on our gifts.
6. God's gift of individual gifts garners personal fulfillment.
7. Spiritual gifts should be used with humility, recognizing that they are not personal achievements but gifts from God.

Categories for the One-Another Texts

1. **With Submission, Have The Humble Mind of Christ.**
 - a. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count [one another] more significant than yourselves. (Phil 2:3)
 - b. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another. (1 Peter 5:5)
 - c. It is possible to externally "obey" the one-anothers with a mind utterly at odds with Christ.
 - d. It's possible to greet one another with a smile that hides bitterness; and encourage one another with a grasping, flattering heart; and bear one another's burdens with a messiah complex.

2. Without Favoritism, Offer Christ's Welcome.

- a. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty but associate with the lowly. (Romans 12:16)
- b. Welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you. (Rom 15:7)
- c. Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. (1 Peter 4:9)
- d. "Welcome one another" sounds nice in theory. For "welcome," of course, means more than "nod and say hello," and "one another" means more than "those others whom you like." ***The command calls us to warmly embrace, gladly associate with, and readily invite into our homes every other in our church — including those who seem "lowly" and those we feel strongly tempted to judge or despise.***
- e. But if Christ left heaven to welcome sinners like us, ...And if he greeted us in our lostness, then surely we can greet others in their "whatever condition".

3. With Courage, Speak Christ's Words of Life.

- a. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom. (Col 3:16)
- b. Encourage one another and build one another up. (1 Thess 5:11)
- c. Exhort one another every day. (Heb 3:13)
- d. Christians are a word people, a speaking people.
- e. Whether pastors or not, we all are stewards of God's life-giving word.
- f. We know that God intends to use *what we say* to work wonders in each other's lives.

4. With Redemption, Demonstrate Christ's Love.

- a. Always seek to do good to one another. (1 Thess 5:15)
- b. As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another. (1 Peter 4:10)
- c. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. (Gal 6:2)
- d. And so we are also hands and feet and shoulders. We not only speak his love but show it.

5. With Rejoicing, Freely Share Christ's Grace.

- a. [Bear] with one another in love. (Eph 4:2)
- b. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. (Eph 4:32)
- c. This love will hurt and it shines with Calvary splendor.
- d. **And local churches exist to show a different way of life — a different Lord of life.**

RESOURCE G

SATAN'S ATTEMPTS TO HINDER OUR WORSHIP OF GOD

The devil wants to hinder your worship of God this weekend, so he will work to distract and deceive you. Even before we get to worship this weekend, he wants us to:

1. **Mess up in sin.** If he can deceive us and then lead us to hide like Adam and Eve did (Gen. 3:8), he's at least temporarily won. Sin harms our relationship with God, blocks our prayer, and robs us of joy. The enemy delights in the sinful secrets of our lives.
2. **Give up the fight.** Perhaps you hear his voice today: "Why should you keep following a God who's letting these things happen to you? Why not just give up?" Job heard similar words from his own grieving wife when their world fell apart (Job 2:9), but still he worshiped God (Job 1:20, 2:10).
3. **Get puffed up with pride.** This problem is at the core of the rest of these problems (Prov. 16:18). We make ourselves our own God, set our own rules, and walk our own path. Then, we also think we can handle our spiritual battles. All of these are nothing less than idolatry of the self.
4. **Shut up rather than tell the gospel.** God has given us one plan to reach our neighbors and the nations: believers are to tell the gospel and make disciples (Matt. 28:18-20, Rom. 10:9-17). If we never get around to proclaiming the good news, a lost world remains in the enemy's kingdom.
5. **Split up our relationships.** This strategy is hardly new. The enemy enticed Adam to turn on Eve in the Garden of Eden (blaming her for their sin in Gen. 3:12), and he then turned brother against brother in Genesis 4:1-16. It's no wonder Jesus prayed so many times that His followers would be one (John 17).

Where is the enemy winning in your life? In the life of your church?

14 VERSES FOR THE BATTLEFIELD OF YOUR MIND

Spiritual warfare is a reality of life. If you are a follower of Christ, you have a bullseye on your back. If you're in a battle today, let these texts give you strength.

Genesis 3:14-15 *Then the Lord God said to the serpent: . . . I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.*
It was God Himself who put the enmity — the hostility — between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman; thus, He must have a purpose for the battle.

Exodus 15:3 *The Lord is a warrior; Yahweh is His name.*
It's really quite simple: God is our warrior. And He does not lose. Period.

1 Samuel 17:47 . . . *and this whole assembly will know that it is not by sword or by spear that the Lord saves, for the battle is the Lord's. He will hand you over to us.*
David got it right. The battle is God's, and He delivers according to His own plans.

2 Kings 6:16 *Elisha said, "Don't be afraid, for those who are with us outnumber those who are with them."*
God's forces may be unseen, but they are not unaware or unavailable. The size of the Enemy's forces need not worry us.

2 Chronicles 20:15 *This is what the Lord says: "Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast number, for the battle is not yours, but God's."*

Jahaziel spoke truth. If the battle is the Lord's, we do not need to be afraid or discouraged.

Job 1:9 *Satan answered the Lord, "Does Job fear God for nothing? Haven't You placed a hedge around him, his household, and everything he owns?"*

Even when God gives the enemy permission to attack us, Satan knows he cannot go beyond God's protection. The Enemy knows about God's hedges.

Matthew 4:10-11 *Then Jesus told him, "Go away, Satan! For it is written: Worship the Lord your God, and serve only Him." Then the Devil left Him.*

That's the way it works: Jesus says, "Get away," and the devil flees. He has to.

Mark 1:23 *Just then a man with an unclean spirit was in their synagogue. He cried out, "What do You have to do with us, Jesus—Nazarene? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!"*

The demons know who Jesus is. He's the Holy One who has come to destroy them.

Luke 22:31-32 *"Simon, Simon, look out! Satan has asked to sift you like wheat. But I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail."*

Not only must Satan get permission to sift us, but the same Jesus who gives him permission to attack us is the One who prays us through the conflict. He never leaves us alone.

Romans 16:20 *The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.*

The God who gives us peace is also the God who defeats the Enemy in the battle. God will keep His Word of Genesis 3:15 — Satan will not win.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10 *Therefore, so that I would not exalt myself, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to torment me For when I am weak, then I am strong.*

The Enemy's attacks may weaken us, but in God's plan we defeat him by our weakness — not by our strength. "God, make me weak" is, in God's economy, a prayer for victory.

Ephesians 6:10-11 *Finally, be strengthened by the Lord and by His vast strength. Put on the full armor of God.*

The strength we do have is God's strength. The armor we wear is God's armor. Victory in warfare is never about us — and that's a good thing.

1 John 4:4 . . . *the One who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.*

God lives in us. That's amazing. That's also our guarantee of victory.

Revelation 12:11 *They conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they did not love their lives in the face of death.*

Even if we die in the battle, we still win. When we get that truth right, the enemy can't hurt us anymore.

5 WAYS THE ENEMY LURES US INTO RECURRENT SIN . . . AND WHAT TO DO

Many believers struggle with sins that continue to haunt them, even when they fight hard to gain victory. Satan and his forces delight when Christians keep losing that battle. Perhaps understanding better what the enemy does will help us say “No” to his next attempt to lure us across the sin line:

1. **He attacks us in our aloneness.** It’s not a surprise that sins we often struggle with are hidden sins. It’s chasing pornographic images when nobody’s watching. It’s committing adultery, but only through sneaking around. It’s thinking about how important and talented we are, but doing so only in the privacy of our minds. It’s plagiarizing a sermon, trusting that nobody will ever find out. Secrets almost always = the enemy’s victory.
2. **He turns our attention to the temporary and emphasizes the fun of sin.** The fruit hanging from the forbidden tree captures our attention, even though we usually know any pleasure it brings will be only fleeting. That’s also why some sins become recurrent and domineering in our lives – the temporary “fun” of sin leaves us only wanting more (it NEVER fully satisfies), and we return to it again and again.
3. **He camouflages the consequences of our choices.** Adam died after he ate the fruit in the Garden of Eden, but it was 900+ years later; it’s the enemy who still says to us today, “If there are any consequences to your sin, they’ll be so far in the future that it won’t matter.”
4. **He pushes us to bank on the grace of God.** The enemy delights when we use the grace of God as permission to continue in our sin. “God will forgive you anyway, so what’s the big deal?” he asks. We buy into his teaching, continue to live in sin, and wrongly assume that God’s abundant grace gives us clearance to sin abundantly.
5. **He emphasizes our defeats . . . over and over again.** That is, He wants us to get so discouraged in our defeat that we give up the fight; we wrongly believe that even God won’t help us win this battle anymore.

If you’re caught in recurrent sins, recognize what the enemy’s doing – and turn back to God.

RESOURCE H
THE DISCIPLE IS CHARACTERIZED BY CHARITY AND GENEROSITY

Motivations and Purpose: Christian generosity is motivated by a desire to imitate Christ, who gave himself for humanity, and to reflect God's love and grace in the world.

1. **“Generosity is a willingness to give, share, or contribute freely without expecting anything in return.”**
2. **“God designed generosity to bring joy, fulfillment, and a sense of purpose to both the giver and the recipient.”**
3. **“God encourages generosity by making giving more rewarding than receiving.”**
Because generosity's ultimate goal is to foster a more compassionate and interconnected community; a family. Acts 20:35 sums it up in this simple but powerful phrase, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Generous Grace
2 Corinthians 8-9

1. Generosity is God at work through our gifts (1)
2. Generosity is a matter of the heart and not the quantity of our resources (2)
3. Generosity is stewarding God's generous gifts to us (2-3)
4. Generosity is not begrudging but is a gift of joy (3)
5. Generosity trains in the art of letting go (3-5)
6. Generosity trains me to think of others (4-5)
7. Generosity is a metric for maturity (7-8)
8. Generosity is a testimony of love for others (8)
9. Generosity is a form of Christ likeness (9)
10. We plan to be generous (9:1-5)
11. We give willingly and not with covetousness (9:5; Col 3:5; Eph 5:5; Luke 12:13-15)
12. We give with faith and not fear (9:6)
13. We give cheerfully, not reluctantly (9:7; Acts 20:35)
14. We give believing God is able to bless us (9:8-10). *Paul says that at all times God provides us with all that we need so there is never any time when we cannot be generous*
15. We give to fulfill God's purpose (9:8)
16. We glorify God by being liberal (9:11-14)
17. We give, always grateful to God for His gift (9:15; John 3:16)

RESOURCE I

FASTING TIPS:

Fasting defined: But fasting is the abstinence from food for spiritual purposes.

Before you fast:

1. **Plan your fast's duration and type**, starting small with options like one meal or a beverage. *Without a purpose and plan, it's not Christian fasting; it's just going hungry.*
2. **Prepare your home:** by removing tempting foods and setting aside a comfortable space for prayer.
3. **Inform others:** if your fasting will affect your regular routines with family or colleagues.

During the fast:

1. **Consume liquids:** like water, diluted juices, or vegetable broth to stay hydrated.
2. **Limit activity**, exercising moderately and resting when possible, to conserve energy.
3. **Minimize distractions:** by avoiding television, social media, and unnecessary outings.
4. **Fill the empty time with spiritual disciplines**, dedicating time to prayer, reading Scripture, and meditation.
5. **Expect and manage physical and mental discomforts**, such as hunger pains, fatigue, or irritability.

After the fast:

1. **Break your fast with light, simple foods:** to allow your digestive system to readjust gradually.
2. **Reflect on the spiritual insights and growth:** you gained during the fast.
3. **Continue the habits of prayer and Bible study:** to maintain your spiritual focus.

Fasting Checklist

There are 5 attitude preparations that will help you accomplish your faith goal. These are:

1. *Focus on your need.* You are choosing to not eat (or not participate in other activities) for a purpose. Write the need exactly; it will help you focus what you are doing in your mind and bring out your sincerity to follow through.
2. *Focus on what you will do.* You are going to do something about the need. You are going to bring the problem to the Lord God of the universe.
3. *Begin and end with a purpose.* Some people find they have missed a meal and decide to call it a "fast." Just missing a meal because of circumstances is not a fast unless you purposed beforehand to pray and use the time of not eating for a spiritual purpose. God knows your heart. Also, don't enter into a fast with the idea of seeing how far you can go or how far you can hold out before you have to eat. Begin with purpose and end at the assigned time.
4. *Remember the "inner journey principle."* Just as a person never takes a journey without first planning the journey within, so you must prepare yourself inwardly for a fast before you can be successful outwardly. In the same way that inner rings on a tree trunk tell of its growth, you will develop inner character as you control your outward diet.
5. *Make a vow.* Again, remember that fasting is a private vow that you make to God.

RESOURCE J

TAKING EVERY THOUGHT CAPTIVE

What Does it Mean to Take Your Thoughts Captive? Essentially, Taking every thought captive means gaining control over our thought life and aligning it with God's truth and righteousness. To take every thought captive, you must actively monitor, capture, and evaluate your thoughts, replacing negative or untrue ones with God's truth, often by using Scripture, journaling, prayer, and focusing on what's positive, honorable, and excellent. It's a daily discipline of mental training to align your mind with Christ, not letting harmful thoughts run wild but instead making them obedient to His teachings.

Imagine your mind as a garden. Weeds—unhealthy thoughts—can quickly take over if left unchecked. By taking our thoughts captive, we're essentially weeding out those negative, untrue thoughts and nurturing the ones that reflect God's truth. This means recognizing and rejecting thoughts that don't align with what God says about us and focusing instead on what is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, and admirable. It's a daily practice, but one that brings us closer to living a life that honors God.

Practical Steps to Start Taking Your Thoughts Captive

Become aware (monitor and capture)

Think about what you think about. Our thoughts are the catalysts that set our courses. This is where positivity or negativity and good or poor choices come from. The easiest thing to do is to let the mind run rampant, but we have to recognize that *not every thought is true*. Pay attention to your inner dialogue and identify specific negative or unhelpful thoughts as they arise. Write down your thoughts to see patterns, similar to a food journal.

Test and Evaluate with the Holy Spirit's guidance (filter)

But I should also be crying out, "O God, I know that mere intellect will not dismantle the deeply rooted errors of my mind, so I avail myself. I open myself to the Holy Spirit, and I seek your face." John Piper stated, "If anything is out of sync with the Bible's teaching, we should let it be destroyed." We submit everything we think — all our ideas, all our worldview, all our viewpoints — to God, and we say, "Let your word dismantle me if necessary."

Replace and Redirect (transform). Decide what to do with the thought. Is it true? Keep it! Is it a lie? Throw it out! Our thoughts are powerful. They're the motivation behind every action. Make it a priority today to evaluate your thoughts. Say goodbye to that little red devil. I promise, it will be a game changer! You can take captive *every* thought. Actively replace lies with truth. **Use Scripture:** Have verses ready to counter negative thoughts (e.g., fear with promises of being "wonderfully made"). **Pray:** Ask God for help to capture thoughts and renew your mind. **Focus on God:** Fill your mind with His Word daily through reading and meditation. **Practice Discipline and Action. Spiritual Habits:** Engage in prayer, Bible study, and confession. **Physical Activity:** Exercise can help clear your head. **Seek Support:** Share struggles with trusted friends or a Christian counselor for guidance.

RESOURCE K

Sharing My Story

If we believe the gospel is good news, true for all people, we cannot give up on making the case for our beliefs.”² One way of making our case for our beliefs is by having great conversations. How to begin? Consider these practical things that will help cultivate gospel conversations.

Start with prayer. Begin to pray for those you would like see come to faith. Ask God to give you people to pray for and then pray for them faithfully every day. Ask Him to provide you with the opportunity, courage, and right words to say. He promises to use you if you are willing.

Be a good, curious, inquisitive listener. Try listening to someone else; don’t interrupt or formulate your response in your head, but simply aim to listen and understand the other person. We can win a friend if we are simply willing to listen. Genuinely desire to learn their life and faith.

Good conversations are dialogues, not monologues. Be curious, ask lots of questions, and listen. Read the Gospels and consider how Jesus engaged with other people. Jesus asked questions. Asking questions opens up conversations rather than shutting them down. People are not projects. When we engage with others, we have the opportunity to demonstrate the love, care, and nature of Jesus. Here are some possible questions for conversations: Isn’t it possible that...? Might it be true...? How do you know...? What do you think...?

Share your story and listen to another’s. One of the most compelling gospel stories is your own story. How did you come to faith? What difference has it made in your life? First Peter 3:15–16 says, “In your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.”

Practice hospitality. When was the last time you invited someone over to your house for dinner, dessert, or a cup of coffee? Seek friendship, not conversion. In his book *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*, J.I. Packer writes: “The right to talk intimately to another person about the Lord Jesus Christ has to be earned, and you earn it by convincing him that you are his friend, and really care about him.”

Serve others. Everyone is carrying some kind of burden. Even the most “put-together” people have something weighing them down. Just because someone carries it well doesn’t mean it’s not heavy. Before starting a conversation and sharing the gospel, think about what the other person may need. Everyone needs love. Do they need to be encouraged? Prayed for? Do they need to be listened to and really feel heard?

Pray to God to Change Hearts. When you’ve loved, listened, and shared your faith, then trust God to do the rest. After all, only God can save! It’s the power of the Holy Spirit.

To share the Gospel, you can follow these 4 simple steps:

Tell them about God's plan—peace and life. God loves you and wants you to experience the peace and life He offers. The Bible says, *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life”* (John 3:16). He has a plan for you.

Share our problem—separation from God. Being at peace with God is not automatic. By nature, we are all separated from Him. The Bible says, *“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”* (Romans 3:23). God is holy, but we are human and don't measure up to His perfect standard. We are sinful, and *“the wages of sin is death”* (Romans 6:23).

Talk about God's remedy—the cross. God's love bridges the gap of separation between you and Him. When Jesus Christ died on the cross and rose from the grave, He paid the penalty for your sins. The Bible says, *“He himself bore our sins' in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; 'by his wounds you have been healed'”* (1 Peter 2:24).

Our response—receive Christ. You cross the bridge into God's family when you accept Christ's free gift of salvation. The Bible says, *“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God”* (John 1:12). To receive Christ, a person needs to do 4 things:

- Admit you're a sinner.
- Ask forgiveness and be willing to turn away from your sins.
- Believe that Christ died for you on the cross.
- Receive Christ into your heart and life.

Romans 10:13 says, *“Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved”* (ESV). Here's a prayer you can pray to receive Christ:

PART IV: WORKS CITED AND RESOURCES

Introductions and Surveys

A Survey of Old Testament Introduction, Archer, Gleason L. Jr.

Explore the Book, J Sidlow Baxter

What the Old Testament

Authors Really Cared About: A Survey of Jesus' Bible, DeRouchie, Jason S.

OLD TESTAMENT

The World and the Word: An Introduction to the Old Testament, Merrill, Eugene H., Mark F.

Rooker, and

Michael A. Grisanti.

A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the Old Testament: The Gospel Promised. Van Pelt, Miles V., ed.

History and Background

Easley, Kendall H. *Holman Illustrated Guide to Biblical History*. B&H, 2003.

Illustrated Manners and Customs of the Bible, Packer, J. I., and Merrill C. Tenney

Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary, Walton, John H.

Chronological Charts of the Old Testament, Walton, John H.

Introduction and Surveys

The Story Retold: A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the New Testament, Beale G. K. and Benjamin Gladd

An Introduction to the New Testament, Carson, D.A., Douglas J. Moo, and Leon Morris.

Theology

Theology for the Church, Akin, Daniel L., ed.

Systematic Theology, Wayne Grudem

Systematic Theology, A.H.Strong

Systematic Theology, Frame

Systematic Theology, Hodge

Biblical Theology, Kostenberger

Christian Theology, Erickson, Millard.

The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way, Horton, Michael S.

Biblical Doctrine: A Systematic Summary, MacArthur, John and Richard Mayhue, eds.

Christian Theology, McGrath, Alister.

New Dictionary of Biblical Theology, A. Carson, and Graeme Goldsworthy, eds.

A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New. Beale, G. K.

Spiritual Warfare in the Storyline of Scripture: A Biblical, Theological, and Practical Approach, Cook III, William F. and Chuck Lawless

Christ-Centered Biblical Theology: Hermeneutical Foundations and Principles, Goldsworthy, Graeme.

According to Plan: The Unfolding Revelation of God in the Bible, Goldsworthy, Graeme.

The Goldsworthy Trilogy, Goldsworthy, Graeme.

Apologetics

Expository Apologetics: Answering Objections with the Power of the Word, Baucham, Voddie, Jr.

Can You Believe It's True? Christian Apologetics in a Modern and Postmodern Era, Feinberg, John S.

Apologetics: A Justification of Christian Belief, Frame, John M.

Christian Apologetics, Geisler, Norman L.

Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics, Geisler, Norman L.

The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism, Keller, Tim.

Making Sense of God: An Invitation to the Skeptics, Keller, Tim.

Mere Christianity. Lewis, C.S.

The Complete Works of Francis Schaeffer: A Christian Worldview, Schaeffer, Francis.

The Case for a Creator: A Journalist

Investigates Scientific Evidence That Points Toward God, Strobel, Lee.

Knowing God, JI Packer

Hermeneutics

Inductive Bible Study, Kostenberger and Fuhr

How to Read a Book, Adler, Mortimer J., and Charles Van Doren.

Hermeneutics, Authority, and Canon, Carson, D.A., and John Woodbridge, eds.

40 Questions About Typology and Allegory, Chase, Mitchell L.

How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth, Fee, Gordon D., and Douglas Stuart.
Living by the Book, Fee, Gordon D., and Douglas Stuart.
Inductive Bible Study: Observation, Interpretation, and Application through the Lenses of History, Literature, and Theology, Kostenberger
40 Questions About Interpreting the Bible, Plummer, Robert L.

Prayer

Valley of Vision: A Collection of Puritan Prayers and Devotions, Bennett, Arthur G.
The Complete Works of E. M. Bounds on Prayer, Bounds, E. M.
Praying with Paul: A Call to Spiritual Reformation, Carson, D. A.
Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home, Foster, Richard J.
40 Questions About Prayer, Harrod, Joseph C.
Praying Together: The Priority and Privilege of Prayer in Our Homes, Communities, and Churches, Hill, Megan.
Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God, Keller, Timothy.
A Praying Life: Connecting with God in a Distracting World, Miller, Paul E.
Prayer: How Praying Together Shapes the Church (9Marks), Onwuchekwa, John.
Only a Prayer Meeting: Studies on Prayer Meetings and Prayer Meeting Addresses, Spurgeon, C. H.
Praying the Bible, Whitney, Donald S.

The Christian Life

Respectable Sins: Confronting the Sins We Tolerate, Bridges, Jerry.
The Discipline of Grace: God's Role and Our Role in the Pursuit of Holiness, Bridges, Jerry.
The Pilgrim's Progress, Bunyan, John.
Imitating God in Christ: Recapturing a Biblical Pattern, Hood, Jason B.
Every Good Endeavor: Connecting Your Work to God's Work, Keller, Tim.

Counterfeit Gods: The Empty Promises of Money, Sex, and Power, and the Only Hope That Matters, Keller, Tim.
Ministries of Mercy: A Call to the Jericho Road, Keller, Tim.
Habits of Grace: Enjoying Jesus through the Spiritual Disciplines, David Mathis
Gentle and Lowly: The Heart of Christ for Sinners and Sufferers, Orlund, Dane.
Rediscovering Holiness, Packer, J. I.
Don't Waste Your Life, Piper, John.
Desiring God: Meditations of a Christian Hedonist, Piper, John.
All That Jesus Commanded: The Christian Life according to the Gospels, Piper, John.
Reactivity: How the Gospel Transforms Our Actions and Reactions, Tripp, Paul.
Instruments in the Redeemers Hands, Paul David Tripp
Counterfeit Gospels: Rediscovering the Good News in a World of False Hope, Wax, Trevin.
Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life (Revised and Updated), Whitney, Donald S.
The Spirit of the Disciplines, Willard, Dallas.

CHURCH HISTORY AND HISTORICAL THEOLOGY

Historical Theology: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine, Allison, Gregg R.
The History of Christian Doctrines, Berkhof, Louis.
Historical Theology, Bromiley, Geoffrey.
Christianity Through the Centuries: A History of the Christian Church, Cairns, Earle E.
Historical Theology for the Church, Duesing, Jason G. and Nathan A. Finn (eds.).
The Story of Christianity, 2 vols, Gonzalez, Justo L.
A History of Christian Thought, 3 vols Gonzalez, Justo L.
Rediscovering the Church Fathers: Who They Were and How They Shaped the Church, Haykin, Michael A. G.
The Baptist Heritage, McBeth

Biography

To the Golden Shore: The Life of Adoniram Judson. Anderson, Courtney.
Confessions, Augustine.
Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther, Bainton, Roland H.
The Life of David Brainerd: Chiefly Extracted from His Diary, Brainerd, David, and Jonathan Edwards.
Andrew Fuller: Model Pastor-Theologian, Brewster, Paul L.
Augustine of Hippo: A Biography, Brown, Peter.
Martyn Lloyd-Jones: His Life and Relevance for the 21st Century, Catherwood, Christopher.
St. Thomas Aquinas: The Dumb Ox, Chesterton, G. K.
George Whitefield: The Life and Times of the Great Evangelist of the Eighteenth-Century Revival (2 Volumes), Dallimore, Arnold A.
John Newton, Aitken
Cardiophonia, John Newton
William Tyndale: A Biography, Daniell, David.
Through Gates of Splendor, Elliot, Elisabeth
Faithful Witness: The Life and Mission of William Carey, George, Timothy.
Go Home and Tell, George, Timothy and Bertha Smith
Calvin, Gordon, Bruce.
Timothy Keller: His Spiritual and Intellectual Formation, Hansen, Collin.
Charles Hodge: The Pride of Princeton, Hoffecker, W. Andrew.
The First American Evangelical: A Short Life of Cotton Mather, Kennedy, Rick.
George Whitefield: America's Spiritual Founding Father, Kidd, Thomas S.
Jonathan Edwards: A Life, Marsden, George M.
Living by Revealed Truth: The Life and Pastoral Theology of Charles Haddon Spurgeon, Nettles, Tom.
27 Servants of Sovereign Joy: Faithful, Flawed, and Fruitful, Piper, John.
Fierce Convictions: The Extraordinary Life of Hannah More: Poet, Reformer, Abolitionist, Prior, Karen Swallow.

Susie: The Life and Legacy of Susannah Spurgeon, Wife of Charles H. Spurgeon, Rhodes Jr., Ray.
J. I. Packer: An Evangelical Life. Ryken, Leland.

MISSIONS

10 Who Changed the World, Akin, Daniel L.
40 Questions About the Great Commission, Akin, Daniel L., Benjamin L. Merkel, and George Robinson.
40 Questions About Islam, Bennett, Matthew
Christianity & World Religions: An Introduction to the World's Major Faiths. Cooper, Derek.
A Light to the Nations: The Missional Church and the Biblical Story. Goheen, Michael W.
Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission, Köstenberger, Andreas J., and Peter T. O'Brien.
Nobodies for Jesus: 14 Days Toward a Great Commission Lifestyle, Lawless, Chuck.
Contextualization in World Missions: Mapping and Assessing Evangelical Models. Moreau, A. Scott.
Moreau, A. Scott, Gary R. Corwin, and Gary
Introducing World Missions: A Biblical Historical, and Practical Survey, B. McGee.
Expect Great Things: Mission Quotes that Inform and Inspire, Newell, Marvin J., ed.
Let the Nations Be Glad: The Supremacy of God in Missions. Piper, John.
The Insanity of God: A True Story of Faith Resurrected, Ripken, Nik.
Striking the Match: How God Is Using Ordinary People to Change the World through Short-Term Missions. Robinson, George G.

EVANGELISM AND DISCIPLE-MAKING

The Cost of Discipleship, Bonhoeffer, Dietrich.
Evangelism in a Skeptical World, Chan, Sam.
The Master Plan of Evangelism. Coleman, Robert E.
The Gospel and Personal Evangelism, Dever, Mark.
Discipling: How to Help Others Follow Jesus (9Marks), Dever, Mark.

Disciple Making Is...: How to Live the Great Commission with Passion and Confidence, Earley, Dave, and Rod Dempsey.
Growing Up: How to Be a Disciple Who Makes Disciples, Gallaty, Robby.
Transformational Discipleship: How People Really Grow, Geiger, Eric, Michael Kelley, and Philip Nation.
Evangelism in the Early Church, Green, Michael.
The Gospel Commission: Recovering God's Strategy for Making Disciples, Horton, Michael Scott.
Theology as Discipleship, Johnson, Keith L.
How to Give Away Your Faith, Little, Paul E.
Tell the Truth: The Whole Gospel to the Whole Person by Whole People, Metzger, Will.
Deeper: Real Change for Real Sinners, Ortlund Dane C.
Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God, Packer, J.I.
The Soulwinner, Spurgeon, C. H.

MARRIAGE AND HOME

Family Discipleship: Leading Your Home through Time, Moments, and Milestones, Chandler, Matt and Adam Griffin.
Raising Kids with a Heart for Mission, Akin, Daniel L.,
When Empty Arms Become a Heavy Burden: Encouragement for Couples Facing Infertility, Cutrer, William, and Sandra Glahn.
Give Them Grace: Dazzling Your Kids with the Love of Jesus, Fitzpatrick, Elyse, and Jessica Thompson.
Glimpses of Grace: Treasuring the Gospel in Your Home, Furman, Gloria.
His Needs, Her Needs, Harley, Willard F. Jr.
When Sinners Say "I Do": Discovering the Power of the Gospel for Marriage, Harvey, Dave.
The Meaning of Marriage: Facing the Complexities of Commitment with the Wisdom of God, Keller, Timothy with Kathy.
Marriage and the Family: Biblical Essentials. Köstenberger, Andreas J., and David W. Jones.

God, Marriage, and Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation, Köstenberger, Andreas J., and David W. Jones.
10 Questions Every Teen Should Ask (and Answer) about Christianity, McLaughlin, Rebecca.
Marriage and the Mystery of the Gospel, Ortlund, Raymond C. Jr..
This Momentary Marriage: A Parable of Permanence, Piper, John.
Peacemaking for Families: A Biblical Guide to Managing Conflict in Your Home, Sande, Ken, and Tom Raabe.
The Exemplary Husband: A Biblical Perspective, Scott, Stuart.
Sacred Marriage, Thomas, Gary.
Marriage: 6 Gospel Commitments Every Couple Needs to Make, Tripp, Paul D.
Age of Opportunity: A Biblical Guide to Parenting Teens, Tripp, Paul D.
Parenting: 14 Gospel Principles That Can Radically Change Your Family, Tripp, Paul D.
Shepherding a Child's Heart, Tripp, Tedd.
Instructing a Child's Heart, Tripp, Tedd, and Margy Tripp.
The Shepherd Leader at Home: Knowing, Leading, Protecting, and Providing for Your Family, Witmer, Timothy Z.

WORSHIP

Worship in Spirit and Truth, Frame, John M.
Worship Matters: Leading Others to Encounter the Greatness of God, Kaufflin, Bob.
True Worshipers: Seeking What Matters to God, Kaufflin, Bob.
Engaging with God: A Biblical Theology of Worship, Peterson, David.
Forgotten Songs: Reclaiming the Psalms for Christian Worship, Van Neste, Ray, and C. Richard Wells, eds.
Doxology: The Praise of God in Worship, Doctrine, and Life, Wainwright, Geoffrey.
Worship is a Verb, Webber, Robert E.
Rediscovering the Missing Jewel, Webber, Robert E.

