

Righteous Adjustments

Introduction

2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

It says, “for instruction in righteousness.”

I’m not sure if I have ever heard a pastor teach on how, to speak the truth. I find that to be missing the mark. Ever hear a pastor teach on how, to avoid hypocrisy? I’ve actually heard pastors speak about hypocrisy as if it is unavoidable, therefor justifying or excusing it. We all make mistakes, and my teaching will surely have error in it. This is another reason we must work together using the Bible, spirit, and each other to learn the truth.

The bottom line is that we must be progressively growing with God’s righteousness. That’s what the Bible says to do.

We are to continue to improve toward what is perfect and grow more into that perfection. It’s not only achievable to improve in kindness, truth, and love, but God commands it.

Most people I encounter will not give themselves over to such growth continuously. My experience is very much like the parable of the sower in Matthew 13, Mark 4, and Luke 8.

People can be quick to read, observe, and listen, but resist new developing action. You may pick up in my podcasts and website how I am emphasizing transformative action through experience. There are many reasons for this that would take up a whole series of podcasts in itself. For now, I will just share briefly how inaction toward progressive growth is destructive.

If I did not heed to seek and experience God’s righteousness I would be dead or in jail. And if I did not continue to grow, if I chose to settle to fit in

with what the crowd does, for mainstream participation, my marriage would be suffering, and I would have inner turmoil.

In the beginning my character was so destructive I engaged in illegal activity and surrounded myself around dangerous people. Ten years later, I was fitting with the law and was a successful adult with a job, savings, house, car, wife, etc. But I was emotionally detached and feeling empty.

As a nonconformist, it was easy for me to see beyond the crowd, group, and church to find answers. I read what the book said to do and immediately would see how the groups were not doing it. Using the ideas of the "Scientific Method" I developed a theory that if I aligned myself more with the book said to do, despite what others might think, that my life both inwardly and outwardly would improve. I was to submit myself to the test. And over the past 15 years I slowly put into practice more and more what the Bible says to do.

It would have made my journey easier had I a teacher who knew through experience what the Bible says to do.

We are to test and examine our teachers to ensure they are indeed teaching righteousness. I am witnessing right now a church going through the hiring process. They are interviewing applicants for a youth pastor position and have selected graduates from universities. This church has been teaching about transformation. I would think personal transformation experience would be a priority, but none of the applicants shared with the congregation on Sunday's interviews about any transformative experience. I mentioned inquiring transformation via the live feed chat, but no one seemed to respond.

How did Jesus select teachers? I don't see where Jesus evaluated credentials or education.

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

"They had been with Jesus." They had been with a teacher of God's righteousness. "Uneducated and untrained men" were made Apostles of

Christ because of who they were with and their faith. They did not go to school nor fit in with the current religion.

Luke 6:40 A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher.

When selecting teachers, I believe we should keep this in mind. How well is our teacher transforming into the Christ-likeness. If our goal is to transform, we need teachers who have transformed to where we can sense it clearly. But then we cannot sense what we do not know. So we also, will need others who have experienced transformation to help us discern good teachers.

I believe Jesus looked straight at the person to analyze their character and faith to determine who would be a good candidate. I believe Jesus discerned a person's faith.

It takes someone, who has walked the walk, themselves to be able to discern. I challenge people with difficult questions. I like to test with uncomfortable questions to bring to light the character of the person I am with. This is often socially awkward, but effective. Few people honestly want to change and get real about spiritual inward development. So I like to just get right to it to see who will stick around.

John 6:41-71 describes Jesus sharing hard teaching which brings many disciples to leave.

Transformation involves a heavy choice of dedication to God. And each of us needs to convince ourselves to commit to the process. Without the commitment, little growth can occur.

We need teachers who have transformed and can share details about their transformation experience. My experience is shared in bits and pieces throughout the Inward Authority podcast episodes.

One more crucial point about teaching Christian behavior. We need to set the bar higher. We are to train excellence, not mediocrity. The Bible emphasizes us to grow in righteousness, not settle with worldly expectations. Jesus spoke against mainstream religious ideas. Paul wrote

letters to correct and improve the churches. We are either moving in correction and growth or not.

In my experience with everyone I have encountered over the past 30 years while pursuing this spiritual development through trial and error, it's been proven time and time again, that if we are not growing with God we are growing with spiritual destruction.

There is a popular description of this in the book Alcoholics Anonymous. Page 129 "Father feels he has struck something better than gold. For a time he may try to hug the new treasure to himself. He may not see at once that he has barely scratched a limitless lode which will pay dividends only if he mines it for the rest of his life and insists on giving away the entire product."

The rewards of being with God is to live by God's righteousness.

Spiritual growth, whether in good or in evil is subtle and slow to develop. It is difficult to notice immediate results. The affects take time to create change. To create trust in others we need to be honest and reliable for a while. To build love where hurt exists involves mercy, compassion, and love to be given freely over time.

Spiritual development is a process that begins with how we orient our thoughts. Are we setting our minds and hearts to grow into God's righteousness or toward other ungodly things.

Romans 5:3-4 And not only *that*, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, [c]character; and character, hope.

James 1:14-15 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.

The Bible provides many examples of how we need love, mercy, and forgiveness. God commands it. And we need discipline. We need to say no to evil thoughts and say yes to pursuing righteous ones. We will need to seek inward understanding of how God's righteousness is good through action and conversations.

Some teachers may try to sugar coat or soften messages to avoid people leaving. I believe such a message may raise a congregation with a malfunctioning faith.

Jesus spoke the truth boldly with love and many were hurt by it. In Matthew 19:21-22 Jesus said to him, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.” But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

Let’s compare our faith with those in the Bible to and test ourselves for how we are growing in it. If our faith is going to be right or righteous, then it ought to be growing more in alignment to the examples of people with righteous faith in the Bible.

Congregations will probably only aspire to transform as far as the leader. And let me be clear, the leader is the one teaching. If someone is teaching and declares they are not a leader, that just doesn’t make sense.

The teacher or pastor who speaks lessons to a congregation formulates a message in attempt to convince others toward a particular action. Anyone at a church who provides direction or assistance is some form of leader.

I don’t believe we can lead many people to God without demonstration of how to get there. We need practical experience. Do as I say, not as I do, just isn’t righteous teaching.

For some, I am a leader. I will emphasize over and over that we must learn from God and the Bible, but the truth is, some will still see me as a bench mark. This is another reason I press myself to give in more to Godly instruction. The more experience I can share, the more likely others are to grow from it.

One message I would hear from people in meetings is, “you can only take someone as far as you have gone.” That means I cannot help someone with spiritual transformation if I have not done the work myself. And in my experience over the past 30 years, I have encountered many people in meetings who talk the talk, but do not or no longer walk the walk. We must

discern carefully to see who is really giving themselves over to God's righteousness to be transformed by it.

Spiritual development is a matter of life and death. We can die in bits and pieces in our relationships, sanity, hearts, and souls. These bits and pieces can change subtly without our awareness. We must examine ourselves and pay continuous attention to the process. We must measure our productivity with God's righteousness while taking simple steps toward improvement.

I believe we all can benefit tremendously through practicing God's righteousness in increasing measure. I believe we will also need to collaborate with others about the inward process. Our minds can believe doubt, defensiveness, fear, resentment, and many things to convince us away from sincere honest service to God.

If we can commit ourselves to follow and obey more and more God's righteous ways, we can grow and experience the love and peace God promises us. We can learn to feel content in all things. We can experience love and belonging with others. We can know God's righteousness, share from our experience, and save souls.

We can do this if we can see how it works through our inward participation and seeking it out. We can grow our faith in God through exploring God's goodness more each day. We can experience Godly good, if we can choose to give ourselves over to it.

Righteous Inward Attitude

Humble Ourselves, think and speak the truth, create a willing heart and mind

Imagine God communicating to your soul that in order to find true happiness and freedom you will need to change everything about your inward being. How would you respond? Would you be willing to take on a new life with God? Or would you continue doing things your way regardless of God's instructions?

I evaluate myself with these kind of questions. I evaluate my willingness and productivity daily. I believe we must bring these questions into our consciousness to ensure we are committed with heart, mind, attitude, and action to grow with God's righteousness. Growing and improving has nothing to do with coasting or going through motions.

In order to transform our faith we need to transform our understanding and beliefs. We need to shape our thinking progressively to witness and experience God's righteousness so we can know it inwardly.

We must begin each day humbling ourselves with a serving attitude to do God's will through prayer and reflection. We can pray for humility and willingness.

Prayer may be best with sincere truth. Praying without giving full attention with our heart, mind, and spirit, can miss the mark. We can ask God for guidance to do God's will, with sincere dedication, think about what God's will is, imagine how to act and speak in order to grow in it. Then we can think ahead about how we can practice righteousness with others. We can reflect upon God's character and begin contemplating how we can practice such character in our thoughts, attitude, choices, words, and actions.

We must remind ourselves that we cannot grow with God and hold on to our current state of being. We are to give ourselves over to be changed and renewed. Our thinking and behaving will be changing as we grow. We are to progressively let go of our current identity to adopt a new identity growing in God's righteousness.

There are three inward qualities we can pray for continuously to help shape our inward being; Humility, willingness, and sincere truth.

Humility, Truth, & Willingness

NIV 2 Kings 22:19, 2 Chronicles 34:27 "Because your heart was responsive and you humbled yourself"

Notice the word "Because" in these verses. Think about what that means. It's similar to the statement, "Because you worked, you will get paid."

Our choices which shape our attitude influences spiritual consequences. Thoughts which stimulate selfish pride are spiritually destructive. Thoughts which create a humble and sincere readiness to serve God can stimulate spiritual fruit.

Here is a thought that can be very helpful in our spiritual walk. It goes like this, "Not my will, but yours be done." If we can say, pray, and sincerely position ourselves to mean this statement each day, it can help us grow more into God's righteousness.

We can also quietly request to God with full sincerity guidance on how to act better with God's righteousness. Then pray for strength to act upon that guidance.

NIV Romans 12:3 For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you.

biblehub.com defines sober as: "to be of sound mind, to be temperate"

This means clarity and calm in thought or at peace. That means not hurried, worried, angry, excited, anxious, depressed, or fearful. The goal is to think calmly, patiently, and peacefully whenever possible.

NKJV James 4:6 But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.

Who gets grace, the humble. And who is responsible for us to become humble, we are. We are to humble ourselves.

I humbled myself when I began going to 12 step meetings. I humbled myself to do many things I did not want to do. Here is a very brief list of things I did which I did not want to do. Show up, show up early, talk to people, read, read out loud, say something with the group, get a home group, get a sponsor, do the steps, get a service commitment, show up and do the service commitment, wash ash trays, pick up cigarette butts, ask for help, call for help, pray, pray sincerely, talk about my fear and resentments on a continuous basis.

There are thousands of things I have done over the years because I know those things are part of God's righteousness and spiritual productivity. I've done it for so long and so many times it is somewhat normal to me. But I want to be clear that for every good I have done there is even more evil I continue to obey and battle. I have progressively said no to evil and yes to God's righteousness. For me, evil is present all day long. Temptation is continuously knocking at the door and sometimes it wins. It takes perseverance each day for me to stay focused. I will not grow with God if I'm not stepping up to the struggle.

There is enough selfish pride, fear, and other forms of evil existing within my beliefs to ensure I will always be needing more development with God's righteousness.

Slowing down and thinking deeper to widen my focus and see more around me improves my ability to sense spiritual good. When I am rushed and multitasking I reduce my mental ability to be present spiritually with compassion. Growing with God involves growing with peace.

Slowing down can also be humbling. When we are driving we can let other cars go ahead of us and even drive the speed limit. We at meetings or church we can give other people our seat. We can practice helping others move ahead of us. These simple humble acts can feed us spiritual good if we sincerely give ourselves over to them.

A quick concordance search in the Bible with the word slow will highlight that we are to be slow to anger. Anger is response that develops from a perceived threat. When life is not going the way we want, we can become angry. When traffic is too slow, bills are too high, and relationships seem unfair we might respond with anger. Yet we are to be slow to anger. We are to think less of ourselves, our self-importance. We are to have a higher level of tolerance to things not going our way.

Thy will, not mine, be done.

We are to seek God and wait. We are to choose to obey God's instructions over our own ideas. We must read, understand, learn, and practice doing more of God's righteousness and learn from the experiences. Choosing God's ways will require a sense of humility, slowing down, pausing, and

waiting. We will need a practice of thinking to ourselves to slow down, be calm, and to walk patiently.

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

Proverbs 23:4 Do not overwork to be rich; Because of your own understanding, cease!

It can be helpful to ensure our goals are to live a balanced and unhurried life. Because God's righteousness is rich with love and compassion we will need to develop more sincere connections with others.

1 Peter 5:6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time,

We can humble ourselves through honestly seeing how God's righteousness is best and how defective we are outside of that righteousness. We will need to be willing to search our souls or life for our spiritual productivity. We will need to evaluate and correct our thoughts, words, attitudes, beliefs, and actions. We will need to understand how our inward choices have affected others and our relationships.

Willingness

John 5:39-44 You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life. "I do not receive honor from men. But I know you, that you do not have the love of God in you. I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive. How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that *comes* from the only God?

Most of my life involved selfish pride and defensiveness. These protected me from violent people in my youth. And when I got sober chose better relationships, I still practiced selfish pride and defensiveness. No one taught me how to love. I had to learn on my own how to grow in it. I had to be willing to come to love so I may have life. An empty heart is no way to

live. The only way to fill my heart is to learn to love. And the only way to learn to love is to do it.

Jesus teaches us to make this a priority. And I believe that if I do not make this a priority, then God is not a priority. I had to choose to resist how I learned to live my life, while practicing ways contrary to my understanding.

Please watch the video on “The Backwards Brain Bicycle.” It is a great example of what we can go through to learn a behavior contrary to our understanding. And please pay attention to the willingness and dedication required to learn it.

Are we willing to seek the honor that comes from God? Are we willing to obey God’s righteousness in order to receive such honor? Are we willing to trust God’s directions even though they may not fit with our own understanding?

1 Corinthians 9:17-18 For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship. What is my reward then? That when I preach the gospel, I may present the gospel of Christ without charge, that I may not abuse my authority in the gospel.

The difference between freely giving and stewardship has to do with purpose and motivation. When I am paid to help others, I am helping them out of stewardship. I may also practice sincerity and have compassion, but it is still primarily done out of stewardship. There is a Tradition in Twelve Step programs designed to protect against this potential problem. The Traditions are to help guide spiritual principles.

Tradition Two’s short form states, “For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.”

Spiritual assistance is to be given freely as a servant. No-one in the group is to receive any form of payment for their services. Our serving each other is to be done freely. Service is to be done because it is God’s will. The steps are guides to receive a spiritual experience. We can receive spiritual rewards for our service.

There is significant meaning and purpose behind this principle. We must learn the spiritual meaning of this principle, through doing it. We must be willing to freely give of ourselves to help others through love, peace, forgiveness, mercy, truth, justice, patience, kindness, gentleness, and faithfulness all working together.

2 Corinthians 8:8-15 NKJV describes how we are to give to each other and receive from each other through willingness and readiness.

1 Timothy 6:18 Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share,

1 Peter 5:2 Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but **willingly**, not for dishonest gain but eagerly;

We must be willing to endure hardships. 2 Timothy 2:12 If we **endure**, We shall also reign with *Him*. If we deny *Him*, He also will deny us.

Hebrews 6:15 And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.

Our growth is to show willingness and endurance. Our choosing to participate increasingly in God's righteousness will often involve doing things we would rather not do. It can be uncomfortable during the development period, yet afterwards, it can bring peace and spiritual freedom. Let's humble ourselves and choose to willingly serve God.

Truth vs. deception

We will need to guide our thoughts toward truth in order to grow in truth. Since inward individual truth, or our belief, is impacted by our own perceptions and what we decide to be true, we will need to validate our understanding. The more thorough we are with verifying and validating our understanding the more we can experience truth.

I have on my agenda to create a podcast about improving discernment and objectivity. Please listen to all my podcasts because information on how to do such things will come in bits and pieces. For now, I highly

recommend learning online about how to think more objectively and discuss it with others.

Each day we ought to assess ourselves for our own misunderstandings. Growing in truth is to eliminate error and do right. For us, God is right and we are to eliminate how we are out of alignment with God's righteousness.

When the goal is for us to pray everyday and we don't, there may be some misunderstanding within our thinking or beliefs. Our own faith is the problem. If our faith is not as strong as Abraham's, then we have room for improvement. And our faith is a product of how we perceive things. We each decide what is good or true for us each day. We can think more cautiously about such choices and bring God's interests into how we judge what is right or true for ourselves. Growing faith will require self-discipline within our thinking and perceiving.

When we convince ourselves to continue in ungodly behavior or to participate in it, we are following a misunderstanding. It's misunderstanding because it is not with God's righteousness. God is the true or righteous way.

Making corrections has been a gradual growing experience for me. My mind was trained and filled with unrighteousness. I never experienced anyone who woke up the next day and turned into a perfect righteous servant of God. Instead, I have experienced hundreds of people over the years who decided to dedicate themselves to God having serious struggles and failures along the way. Many, in my experience, do not completely give themselves over to God continually for a decade. Instead, it often develops into a coming to serve God when life becomes too uncomfortable.

Deception exists deep within our physical bodies. When the body is trained to do something and then does that action over many years, it does not easily forget and seeks to repeat it. Even when we decide deep within our hearts we are going to change, our bodies will seek to do the opposite of what we desire. We must identify this truth, acknowledge it, and bring it to light with humble confession. We must face the reality of our condition. There is an old saying in meetings, "Secrets kill."

The truth we are to focus upon is the truth that can save souls. We are to discern carefully our spiritual growth and struggles, then discuss them with others who are also doing this journey.

2 Thessalonians 2:9-10 The coming of the *lawless one* is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

“Receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.”

My life was busy. I had a lot going on with work, God, church, service commitments, marriage, and the house. My mind was constantly full of activity. It was easy to hear information and then forget what was just explained to me. I had to practice holding onto to spiritual guiding messages. I had freeze my mind from distracting thoughts and zoom in on messages that told me to change.

I had to respect, appreciate, value, prioritize, and love truth that was trying to correct my soul. If my soul was to be saved, it needed to follow correction. And I knew I had to increase my mental focus upon corrective truth enough to promote new action toward it.

God’s truth is convicting when it is received inwardly. We need to decide it is true. Jesus spoke masterfully about the Bible and demonstrated it. Jesus was all about living right with God. Jesus did not fit in with the world and did not desire to fit in with the world. Jesus desired all people to fit in with God and God’s righteousness.

We ought to discern God’s righteous truth and live more with increasing love toward peace. We must truthfully grow in our ability to be at peace in all things. And this will often require a lot of new training.

I married a woman who is just as stubborn as I am. I wanted our marriage to follow a system I believed in and she wanted it to follow a system she believed in. Our systems were very different. We were both introverts and unskilled with peace. We had many similarities. We both had pride, impatience, fear, resentments, and were quick to assume things about each other. We struggled.

There is an old saying in meetings, “If you want to find your character defects, get into a relationship.”

When proud people believe in their understanding and methods, they can be slow to adopt new ones. And we were slow to adopt new ones. One principle I learned in my development was to keep the focus of correction more toward myself. My wife has many character defects and I wanted to judge our relationship based upon her character. I wanted to blame her. But the righteous spiritual principles would highlight the need for me to look at my part. And when I removed her part from the picture and only looked at my character, I easily knew I needed improvement.

When I am in a system with others, and I see how I need to improve, my mind will evaluate others to see if they are changing. And when I understand no one else is changing, a question develops in my thought saying, “why should I.” “Why should I do it if no one else is doing it.” This question is prompting me away from growing with God and experiencing better salvation. If I choose to believe and follow that thinking.

I have been successful sometimes with shaking off that thought and doing things no one else seems to be doing. It’s not easy. It’s so much easier to fit in with the crowd and go with the flow than to pave another path into God’s truth. But this process has brought more fulfillment into my life.

Accepting corrective truth and paving this new path keeps me free from much grief, anxiety, anger, depression, and negativity. I can feel alone at times, but far less than I would had I followed the crowd. Speaking sincere inward truth with others has helped with suffering of loneliness.

And following God through corrective truth in this manner has removed feelings of emptiness and spiritual bankruptcy. I no longer feel like a zombie in a dead system. I feel so much more alive and productive.

Back to my marriage. When I committed to improve my character through corrective truth, my wife responded in good ways. As I became more patient, her character improved. As I clarified my assumptions, our understanding and communication grew.

It is a very difficult thing to sit with someone who resents me and is quick to attack with patience and self-control. But I knew this needed to be

done. I did not want to do it, but if my relationship was to improve, I had to do it. I had to be the one to step up for God's righteousness in our relationship. Waiting for her to change was not working. I had to walk more correctly with God's goodness. And as I did our relationship improved. This took years to grow and develop.

I had to speak a lot of corrective truth about her behavior and mine. I knew we both had to face corrective truth. Our interactions or lack there of needed God's corrective truth. And my growth, as always, came in spurts. When I am off the corrective path, she helps me. It really is a beautiful thing to experience growing with God with another person. It takes a lot of investment, but it fills the soul in indescribable ways.

I learned when I grow in God's righteousness, just about all my relationships improve. But I have to choose to commit to make corrections with my character despite what anyone else is doing or problems life is bringing me. No excuses. Just grow in God's righteous ways.

Each day, we will need to practice humbling ourselves. We will need the willingness and readiness to step into God's corrective truth. We will need to choose to believe we can grow more correctly with God and that it is good. Remember, this is the first thing we ought to seek. See Matthew 6:33.

Faith

I did a concordance search on the word faith and found a pattern that surprised me. Most of the healings Jesus performed were credited to the person's faith. Mark 6 describes how Jesus could not do miracles in his home town due to the lack of faith of the people there. I'm saying this to emphasize the power of our own faith. What we believe seems to be the magic ingredient of our spiritual condition.

Matthew 9:29 Then He touched their eyes, saying, "According to your **faith** let it be to you."

Mark 10:52 Then Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your **faith** has made you well." And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus on the road.

Luke 7:50 Then He said to the woman, “Your **faith** has saved you. Go in peace.”

There is debate about how faith is developed. There are students of the Bible, who study it all their life, and yet, do not thoroughly do what it says. There is an old saying, “seeing is believing.”

Before I practiced the 12 steps, I was very skeptical and doubted. But after I gave myself over to them wholeheartedly and learned what they can produce, I believed. I continue to press further with the theory that if I continue to give myself more and more to God, my life will continue to improve. And it does. But it involves a continuance of giving away myself for the benefit of God’s righteousness in others.

Our faith can always grow and we ought to be seeking growth with it.

Luke 17:5 And the apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our **faith**.”

Acts 14:22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting *them* to continue in the **faith**, and *saying*, “We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.”

Think about the words, “Continue in the faith.” The disciples were exhorted to continue in the faith. They had to go through tribulations with their faith.

2 Corinthians 5:7 For we **walk** by **faith**, not by sight.

As I explored trusting God and doing God’s will I began to experiencing many coincidences that helped to shape my faith. I needed to look, seek, contemplate, and act upon God’s righteousness to witness the results of it.

Romans 4:12 and the father of circumcision to those who not only *are* of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of the **faith** which our father Abraham *had while still* uncircumcised.

Our faith is measured by how we walk in our faith. And if we believe in God’s righteousness, that we are to live by it, then we will walk in it and

that will be evident to others. Our believing in God's righteousness and living it out creates a powerful testimony that can save souls.

The tight rope walker

I heard a story about a professional tight rope walker who was going to walk a tight rope over the Niagara Falls. Before he began he looked at the crowd and asked them if they believed he could do it. They all cheered him on with excitement. He successfully went back and forth across the rope without any problems. He then got a wheel barrow and asked the crowd if they believed he could make it across with the wheel barrow. They cheered him on screaming, 'yes we believe.' Again he was successful without any problems. He then said, I am now going to push the wheel barrow with a person in it," and asked the crowd if they believed. The crowd again screamed with excitement and yelled with encouragement, 'Yes, we believe.' The tight rope walker looked at the crowd and said, "can I get a volunteer." And then the crowd went silent.

We need to be willing to give ourselves over to God's righteousness more and more.

I believe God's righteousness is good for me and that I need it. I believe it enough to give myself over to be corrected by it. I believe it enough to make it a priority to be changed by it. So when God says, get in the wheel barrow, I begin moving toward it to get in. Sometimes I get in, sometimes I don't. But I acknowledge God is saying to get in it and I own my choices.

Faith is an action that brings results. Our faith brings results of what kind of faith we have. If we want to measure our faith, we can simply evaluate our souls or lives. We can examine our thoughts, attitudes, words, and actions. We can evaluate our relationships with love, forgiveness, mercy, truth, justice, sincerity, and compassion. Are we returning evil with good to those we love? Are we moving in the direction of peace? Our actions come from our choices and our choices are made through our contemplation and what we believe is the right thing to do. Whether it is God's righteousness, or self-righteousness.

If we are increasing our experience with God's righteousness, we will be positioning ourselves to witness Godly good. It will still be up to us to be

willing to accept it. When God calls us to get into the wheel barrow of doing Godly good, we can step up with faith and get in.

Within each of us exists thinking errors that can interfere with our abiding in God's righteousness. We will need to identify, confess, and pray for the willingness to let go of our participation in this kind of thinking. We can learn to do this with diligence, perseverance, patience, continuance, self-discipline, and dedication.

Fear, uncertainty, and doubt often makes its presence within me while contemplating options. There are options with God's righteousness and then there are other options of vanity, pride, greed and selfish ambition. Growth with God can be about refusing options that are ready and willing to be done while choosing an option I may be trying for the first time in my life.

Jesus calls religious teachers fools. I highly suggest reading all of Matthew 23 and discern how Jesus is making people feel. Imagine how you would feel either standing there with Jesus or with your religious teacher.

Matthew 23:17 You blind **fools!** Which is greater: the gold, or the temple that makes the gold sacred?

Because of sinful practices, habits, customs, rituals, media, traditions, and society, my mind continues to think foolishness.

Luke 24:25 Then He said to them, "O **foolish** ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!

Matthew 17:17 Then Jesus answered and said, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him here to Me."

1 Corinthians 3:1-3 And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual *people* but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able *to receive it*, and even now you are still not able; for you are still carnal. For where *there are* envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like *mere* men?

There are logical and identifiable reasons for our reluctance to obey God. Learning them can help us with humility, for the moment we are consciously aware of them. We can easily forget how misled we are. I had to learn the truth in my self-deception to be open to change I did not believe I needed. I had to prove myself wrong to see I needed to change.

Let's look at some facts about the human mind and how it distorts reality on a regular basis.

There is list describing a hundred different forms of cognitive bias on wikipedia.

One such bias is called "Anchoring" which is defined on wikipedia as "The tendency to rely too heavily, or "anchor", on one trait or piece of information when making decisions."

For example, if I use five verses in the Bible that describe one idea, but someone will not believe because of one verse they believe says different, that could be anchoring, a cognitive bias.

If five witnesses give one account and one gives a different account, what would a fair judge decide to be true? If we are going to discern truth carefully with fairness and without partiality, we will need to increase our awareness about our own thinking errors, so we can begin to make corrections.

People experience irrational phobias. There are so many fears out there that are based on mistaken beliefs developed by thinking errors. People have fear of spiders, planes, being alone, being in crowds, blood, and water. There are even more extreme phobias out there like pogonophobia- the fear of beards. Maybe it's time for me to shave. But that would illicit an anxiety reaction in my wife because I would look different. So, I'll keep it, for now.

The point here is that many of us not only have such phobias, but how we choose to respond maintains them. Few people will give themselves over to correct their irrational fears. In such cases, fear is the master.

I had very thick boundaries and feared trusting anyone. I feared displaying or sharing any form of sincerity. I was okay to share anger, but not love or

gentleness. I was afraid to give compliments and praise, because my beliefs informed me they were unnecessary. It took some time to practice applying compliments and encouragement and to witness the positive results, before I became convinced that they were good. Please listen to more podcast episodes for examples about this.

We will need to admit we have faulty thinking. Admitting our weakness can position us to see how to correct our defective thinking. We can investigate to find solutions. We can then incorporate the solution to correct it. If we want to increase our faith, we must correct our perception, understanding, and beliefs with God's righteousness. This will require new and different action.

Learning God's righteousness involves our participation with mercy, forgiveness, compassion, truth, fairness, peace, and love. We will need to know all of these better within our hearts, minds, and experiences.

It's been my experience and the reported experience of hundreds that growing faith involves facing our fears through tribulation. The stories in the Bible about faith involve serious dedication to loving, trusting, obeying, and serving God. These are verbs. These are about action. God blesses those who love God with the kind of love that shows confidence in God, like getting in the wheel barrow.

When I first began my journey I came to a group to listen to new ideas. I selected someone from that group to help guide me toward transformation. I gave myself over to new instruction from people. I put that instruction into practice and my life slowly began to change. My experiences changed. The way I acted was different and the way other people treated me became different. And my faith in God grew.

Hebrews NKJV 11:1-2 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a *good* testimony.

Obtaining a good testimony requires action that is risky. Obtaining a good testimony means doing things that are very different and extraordinary.

The NIV says it this way, “Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for.”

Notice the words “ancients were commended for.” Are we being commended for our faith? Do we have a good testimony? And remember, when the Bible uses the word good, it often means something supreme and amazing. Do we have an amazing testimony? Hebrews 11 describes examples of what faith looks like when people have it. Please read it and compare your own faith with the examples.

Faith is something that can grow. The truth is, we can practice God’s righteousness better. We can do something today that is new and different more in God’s righteousness. We can take small steps each day to improve. What we choose to do will prove our faith. Let’s exhort, encourage, and prompt each other to think and act beyond our norm to grow in God’s righteousness.

Matthew 6:30 uses the statement “O you of little **faith**?”

In Matthew 15:28 Jesus says “**great** is your **faith**!”

2 Corinthians 10:15 mentions “as your **faith** is increased”

Acts 16:5 So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily.

2 Thessalonians 1:3 uses the line, “because your **faith grows** exceedingly”

2 Peter 1:5 “giving all diligence, add to your **faith** virtue”

We can add to our Inward Authority virtue which can bring experiential knowledge. We can add to our faith through new Godly experiences with God’s righteousness. We can make Righteous Adjustments within our thoughts, choices, attitude, words, and actions. We can do this.

Everyday we will need to dedicate ourselves to seek God. We will need to investigate how to improve our inward being to align better with God’s righteousness. And as we make improvements with our thoughts, attitude, words, and actions, we can watch closely for results. Over time in doing

this, we will be able to gather evidence that will prove how living by God's good righteous ways produces good fruit. Our belief can become enhanced and our faith can grow.

One Mind toward God

1 John 3:3 All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

My being a nonconformist really helped me grow with God. A conformist looks to what other people do and mimics their behavior. They do what they see others do. But we are to do what the Bible says to do.

It's about conforming to God, not people. And to have one mind together the way the Bible teaches it, is to have a group of people growing differently, because each of us are different. We have different personalities, family systems, hobbies, and interests. If we are authentic and real, which is the goal, we won't look alike, talk alike, or act the same. To me, that's just not sincere, genuine, and true.

When I began to grow my mind, heart, and soul with God's ways, I was guided into a process of cleaning and correcting my soul or life with God. I needed to confess my wrongs and make them right. I needed to admit my resentments and fear and pray to have them removed. I needed to cease participation in faultfinding and useless arguments. Fighting needed to stop. Pride needed to be crushed and humility embraced. I needed to practice love and tolerance with others. All this was summed up to me as to "clean house, trust God, and work with others."

This process is a gradual progression, if we increasingly walk in that direction. If we don't, we won't progress. We can progress in what we practice.

Plain and simple: As we recognize our inward resentments, fear, self-centeredness, pride, and dishonesty, we can humbly and sincerely ask God to help us let them go. We inwardly can cling more to serving God, and little by little, release our continued practice of sin. We ought to practice this each day to grow our inward being with God's righteousness.

You can write these instructions down and practice them. You can, but it's a choice that may go against your habits, customs, and desires.

If we are to grow toward one mind with God, we each need to make continued adjustments out of our norm and into God's righteousness.

Anyone who has gone through the 12 steps and has had a spiritual experience can probably relate to this process. Those who have done it can understand a little more about spiritual development than those who have not.

When God's directions do not make sense with my life or understanding, I'm the one that needs to change. Usually when I am stressed, worried, or angry, I'm the one that needs inward correction with my faith in order for me to grow in peace and love. Even if the whole world changed, until my thinking moves more in line with God's grace, I can't really participate much in it.

Let's read 1 John 1 line by line and take it in, as deep into our understanding as we can, let it reshape our beliefs, and possibly correct our faith.

1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life—

We can hear, see, and handle the Word of life. We can experience it. We can demonstrate it. We can pick it up, practice it, and display it for others to witness.

2 the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us— 3 that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. 4 And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.

biblehub.com defines manifest as “apparent, clear, visible”

The word of life or eternal life was manifested to Apostles. Apostles then declared it to others. Notice in line 3 the statement “that you also may have fellowship with us.” This fellowship they were offering has everything to do with living by spiritual principles and obeying God’s righteousness. To have fellowship with God and Jesus is to walk more and more in obedience with the Holy spirit to where we can better manifest the word of life. This means we are to increasingly be different, Godly different.

5 This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.

Remember, the opening of this chapter is emphasizing that we “may have fellowship,” but the word may is not certainty. We need to make some choices. Verse 5 is informing or reminding that God is not about darkness and to have fellowship with God, we will need to walk increasingly into the light. This means we are going to need to look at ourselves for darkness and begin making inward corrections into the light.

Sometimes, we will carry within our minds both the option to follow light and the option to follow darkness. Since we all sin, we will choose darkness from time to time. Yet we will develop within us progressively which one we chose to obey the most. If we pursue light more than darkness, we will progress and develop more in God’s righteousness. We will sacrifice parts of our sinful selves to be shaped differently with God.

6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

Here again as I’ve mentioned in other podcast episodes is a conditional word, ‘if.’ It says, “if we walk in the light as He is in the light.” I don’t believe we need to walk exactly like God or Jesus, but we must walk in a way that is shaping us more into God’s righteousness. (listen to the spiritual growth formula series to better understand this point)

Jesus struggled as he sought to serve God with everything. (read John 15) We can grow like this. We can see where we have darkness or sin and begin making corrections. I believe walking in the light in fellowship with

God or Jesus is to turn our lives over to grow in that process and act accordingly.

8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

This verse is similar to verse 6 and is emphasizing a very important point. Self-deception exists and may be the leading inward activity in each of us which stunts or even blocks progress with God's righteousness. We must evaluate ourselves long enough to expose our own self-deceptive ways. The fact of the matter is that we all believe inward lies which guide us into doing things we know we should not do.

Let's read verses 6 and 8 together one more time.

6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

These verses may be a good evaluation tool. We can evaluate ourselves like this:

Do we say we have fellowship with God and Jesus? If so, are we walking in darkness with little or no progression in righteousness? Do we walk increasingly in the light as Jesus did? Is God's righteous ways within our minds each day in a way where we are living by them?

9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

Notice verse 10 is repeating again the message in 6 and 8.

The process of correction I have learned, practiced, experienced, and read in the Bible is to confess sin and then begin making inward corrections. I imperfectly walk toward perfection with my thoughts, choices, attitude, and actions. I grow understanding about my darkness through seeking it out and then take corrective steps into the light.

The process is all about correction. Here are simple steps laid out for this process.

1. We agree we have sin.
2. We acknowledge and identify our sin.
3. We confess our sin with willingness to stop it in our minds.
4. We obey God more each day within our minds.
5. We walk in Righteousness in our thoughts, attitudes, words, and actions.

Romans 12:16 Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.

These are good instructions to write down and place in our car or on our mirror at home. If we are going to have the same mind, we need to think similar things, similar things God instructs us to think.

2 Corinthians 13:11 Finally, brethren, farewell. Become complete. Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

The “God of love and peace” will be with us, if, we are “of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace.”

Philippians 2:2 fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

Being of one accord is being increasingly more like Jesus as Jesus taught us to live.

1 Peter 3:8 Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous;

Fellowship

Love is a central ingredient to God’s instructions. Loving God is to have fellowship with God. Ending idolatry is to have God become our inward authority.

Fellowship is defined at biblehub.com as “The state or relation of being or associate,” “on equal and friendly terms,” and “partnership” or “joint interest.”

To have fellowship with God and Jesus is to have “Joint interest.”

The thoughts within us can be nudged to grow to learn and understand why God’s righteousness is beneficial. We can learn this, if we make it a priority to learn it.

We will need to discover within ourselves more about our own thinking.

Let’s now take good look at our own fellowship. What are we seeking for fellowship? Where do we like to go? What do we like to do? Who do we like to spend time with? What kind of character is promoted in such places? Is there sincere truth and love like Jesus promoted? Can we say or do something to promote more of God’s righteousness?

Fellowship with God is to fellowship with God’s character more and more. Wherever we go and what ever we do, we are to see how we can live more by God’s ways there.

I was a volunteer in youth groups for over a decade at three different churches. One of the most profound teachings I experienced was a drama skit. A teenager was going out with friends to a party. Another teen played the role of Jesus and wanted to go along to the party. But the teen did not want Jesus to go with him. The teen told Jesus to stay behind. Jesus persisted and said, “I want to go with, please let me go with you.” But the teen insisted Jesus not go.

Don’t we all get in these situations when we put away the “being nice” or “doing right” for some other behavior? I’ve been in 12 step meetings where I have heard others say, “I just need a break from all this work.” They say this because a lot of times it can feel like work. It can be a struggle, but it’s not the doing good that makes it a struggle. It’s the desiring ungodly activities and not having them that makes it a struggle. If we give up everything to God, we will give up our desires for such things too.

I want to get back to the story of Jesus wanting to go with the teen. In the skit, Jesus kept insisting on going and the teen insisted Jesus stay behind. The skit finished with the teen nailing Jesus to the wall with arms out and then leaving Jesus to attend the party. You see, in reality, we choose what principles and character we will associate with in our thoughts, attitudes, words, and actions.

1 Corinthians 1:9 God *is* faithful, by whom you were called into the **fellowship** of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Ephesians 5:11 And have no **fellowship** with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose *them*.

To choose to associate more with God involves disassociating with ungodliness behavior. We can do this imperfectly and gradually over time. We can expose our unfruitful works of darkness and pray for strength to cease our participation with them.

For more on this read Matthew 10:32-42.

Philippians 2:1-4 Therefore if *there is* any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy,

Let's pause a quick second. Notice the heavy repeated use of the word "any." I'll read it again. "Therefore if *there is* any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy,"

This seems to be saying that if we are Christian or professing to be Christian, in any way, then we are going to do the following, which is . . .

2 "fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others."

Notice the line "Let nothing be done through selfish ambition." Selfish ambition is a form of self-seeking and self-thinking. Our thoughts are to grow in helping others with God's righteousness. We are to love as Jesus

loved, speak the truth as Jesus spoke it, be sincere like Jesus, and the like.

We are to grow in fellowship with God. We are to follow God as Jesus followed God.

3 “but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.”

As we look out for others interest the way Jesus did it, we will do it more as Jesus did it. We can do this in a way that shows we are seeking to fellowship with God’s righteousness. We may even experience disassociating ourselves from friends who want to fellowship with darkness.

We can humbly encourage and bless others with truth, love, mercy, and peace. We can become more sincere, genuine, affectionate, kind, gentle, bold, and faithful. We can if we apply ourselves to learn and practice it more.

Of course this is a process we can grow in gradually. These are skill sets we can develop. As we practice them more and more we can become more and more familiar with them which can also improve our confidence.

When I first began my transformation I was instructed to join a group and get a service commitment. I became a coffee maker. I had to show up 45 minutes early to prepare the coffee. I had to stay after to clean the 5 gallon pot. My service, service for God and to others, was needed for my spiritual growth. If I refused to give myself over to serve and help others I would have deprived myself of the necessary spiritual experiences there to help me transform. I needed to serve to grow with God. Jesus was very clear about this serving process.

Luke 22:27 For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves.

Fellowship with God will involve our fellowship in serving.

When I began my journey I was a broken man. I had been betrayed, robbed, and beaten. I trusted no-one. Then I was told I needed to love people. I couldn't do that. My mind was convinced to do the contrary. My faith and beliefs were set to protect myself from others. I began helping and serving people, but with skepticism and distrust. Although I did not have love, I was progressing toward it with the willingness to learn. I humbled myself to begin the journey.

I began experiencing people being sincerely honest about themselves with their struggles and spiritual solutions. I listened to stories that sounded genuine about transformation. I got to witness myself change and others around me. The evidence was overwhelming that there was something better. This character of serving others by God's righteousness is a powerful ingredient for transformation. We must humble ourselves to help others grow with God. Yet it must never be about us nor other people. It must always be about God. We are to feed each other God's spiritual goodness; the fruit of the spirit.

Galatians 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

We can grow this fruit, God's nurturing righteousness, just as Jesus describes in John 15. We choose what we will abide in and we are commanded by Jesus to abide in God's love.

John 15:12 This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

We need people teaching and demonstrating this process. I wish I could say, watch me and do what I do, but I am far from this kind of love. I am growing toward God's perfect love, but I am not there. I am not that goal. Yet the progress I have made can be helpful to others.

We each have to accept the journey and walk in it on our own. We each will have our own reshaping to experience. Fellowship with God is always the goal.

Each day it will be best to set our eyes upon how we can seek God's righteousness in our thoughts, attitude, words, and actions. How can we

grow spiritually good fruit? Are we seeking fellowship with God's righteousness? Let's do it today. Let's humbly and sincerely be with God's spiritual good grace.

Conscience

Acts 23:1 Then Paul, looking earnestly at the council, said, "Men *and* brethren, I have lived in all good **conscience** before God until this day."

We all have a conscience. But not all of us listens enough inwardly to hear spiritual truth.

Acts 24:16 This *being* so, I myself always strive to have a **conscience** without offense toward God and men.

Romans 13:5 Therefore *you* must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for **conscience'** sake.

1 Corinthians 8 is entitled "Be sensitive to Conscience" It describes how we are to be sensitive to others conscience as we encourage toward truth, love, peace, and other forms of righteousness.

1 Corinthians 10:29 "**Conscience,**" I say, not your own, but that of the other. For why is my liberty judged by another *man's* **conscience**?

2 Corinthians 1:12 For our boasting is this: the testimony of our **conscience** that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, and more abundantly toward you.

John 8:9 Then those who heard *it*, being^[h] convicted by *their* conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest *even* to the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

Forgive Resentments

Early Beginnings

When I began this spiritual journey, I had many resentments. I remember being around mentors who would say out loud, “today I don’t have to be offended.” I was fascinated how they would so easily decide not to be offended. They were practicing a new choice of how to respond to life’s struggles. I needed people demonstrating this around me. There is something powerful with teaching by demonstration. It’s just the right way to do it. Like Jesus did it.

Wikipedia defines resentment as “a mixture of disappointment, disgust, anger, and fear”

I began learning about resentments by seeing where I was resentful. I had to make a list of my resentments and talk about them with someone. My resentments were too many to list, so I used categories. Teachers, police, government, life, the world. I got more specific with family and friends.

I was told to practice praying to God, a God I did not understand, to help me let go of my resentments. It was very confusing. This seemed like a stupid idea to me, but my way of doing things wasn’t any smarter. I surrendered my failing ways to try something new. I gave up my misery for the mystery. I surrendered my better ideas to do things I did not understand. I believed these people had changed and I wanted to know what they knew. And I knew that meant I have to do what they did.

I remember repeating the serenity prayer multiple times, just so I didn’t hit someone. Restructuring habits is not a quick fix. It takes time and practice.

I went through my early days guarding others and myself from myself. I didn’t talk much because I had nothing good to say and if I did speak I would only need to make amends for it later.

Early on, living more right with God was a regular practice of restraint. It was a struggle to reduce my participation with evil.

I really hated God at first, but did not know it. I detested mercy, meekness, and gentleness. I believed those were for cowards and the weak. And I did not want to be weak. I feared having any resemblance of weakness.

The truth is, I did not know God. I did not understand good nor righteousness. In fact, it wasn't for another 10 years before I read descriptions about God and accepted them into my heart and mind. I accepted these descriptions as God's instructions for me to live by more and more. These Godly attributes began to reveal God's righteousness to me as I abided in them.

When I saw God's righteousness was love, peace, patience, gentleness, and kindness, I felt afraid. I was impatient, still resentful, harsh, aggressive, and rude. My mind was trained against kindness and gentleness. But I saw and accepted that these traits were with God. I wanted to know God more. I decided to journey more toward these traits to learn the good in them. It's been a very slow going process, but one that continues to produce very good results.

The Bible doesn't use the word resentment. It discusses anger and bitterness.

Ephesians 4:31 Get rid of all **bitterness**, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.

The instructions say to get rid of it. We need to get rid of our bitterness, resentment, and impatience. We need to improve our tolerance of others.

There are some forms of bitterness that can be socially acceptable, but still spiritually destructive. Just because others around us is okay with it, doesn't make it okay with God.

When I'm driving, I struggle with merge lanes. Not the lanes, but the drivers who try to race up and squeeze in front of me when I have already let someone else in. I hold my ground and do not let them push me out on these occasions.

In these situations, my mind experiences discontent. I object to their behavior and think about how wrong they are. I feel bitterness. And if they get by me and sneak in I can feel offended. Sometimes I react with anger. I might label them a jerk or rude. Bitterness happens.

Bitterness is unavoidable. Disappointment in life is unavoidable. But when it comes we can learn how to handle it with grace. We can practice turning toward God for assistance in how to handle such things.

The cause of the disappointment most to the time is my ideas are not in agreement with reality. Chances are that these drivers drive like this all the time. They probably try to race up and squeeze in often. It's their normal. They are not doing anything different than what they always do. I am insisting that they drive according to the rules of the road. And this is my error. In reality, not everyone follows the rules. In reality, there are always deviations of the norm. For my mind to better fit reality is to understand there are deviations and that these people live by different principles. They have different value systems. And it has absolutely nothing to do with me. So I do not need to take it personally.

If I persist with faultfinding, complaining, blaming, and arguing, I will stimulate misery, discomfort, agitation, and disagreement. If I seek to promote peace, mercy, and forgiveness the outcome can become something far more comfortable and beneficial. Humility must become more important than pride.

Proverbs 14:10 Each heart knows its own **bitterness**, and no one else can share its joy.

I used to watch sports games and want my team to win. I would not only want my team to win, but I would get upset if they lost. I would feel disappointment. And I would associate with others who would laugh and poke fun at my team's mistakes. My so-called friends would try to rub it in. I came to believe that this way of living needed improvement. I decided to end this idolization of teams. I stopped associating with those who wanted to play this game and stopped watching sports.

I didn't get so angry that I screamed and broke things. I would just feel tense and stressed. And my wife could sense it. It impacted her and our relationship. I believed it wasn't living by spiritual principles. It was living to condone spiritual destruction. I chose to let it go. Doing so without resentment helped to improve my spiritual well-being.

Jeremiah 4:18 "Your own conduct and actions have brought this on you. This is your punishment. How **bitter** it is! How it pierces to the heart!"

Our own conduct and actions bring consequences. Our choices affect us and those around you. I need to assess myself for where I place my hope. Is it my sports team, a promotion, a new shiny thing, or program to watch. Or is it peace and love with God.

I can check my wants and desires and they will testify if I need to change direction within me. If I desire someone to suffer or hurt for whatever reason, then I'm the one that needs adjustment. I'm the one that has moved away from God. I'm the one that is fellowshiping with evil. I'm the one that is experiencing spiritual destruction.

Hebrews 12:15 See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no **bitter** root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.

The goal is to live with love, peace, truth, justice, and all of God's righteousness. When I fellowship with God, I fellowship with God's goodness within my thoughts, words, and actions.

Vanity and pride are often culprits to promote resentment, faultfinding, blaming, and argument. I have been in many arguments with others where the battle becomes centered around my pride. The goal becomes focused on getting others to see that I am right. Fear and resentment become the motivating principles in such cases. Humility, the way to God, can become distant and unwanted.

Sometimes I realize I'm practicing evil and that my mind has already decided to keep God out of it. God is not desired. I've got other ideas that are better than God's. It's like I'm sprinting down the path of resentment realizing I'm going the wrong way and to suddenly try to stop would involve injury. In these cases, I need to simply slow down, get my balance, and turn back toward God.

You see, bitterness happens, pride happens, spiritual battles happen. We need to really investigate ourselves with humility and truth. We need to compare our goals, desires, and methods to God's instructions. We need to give ourselves over to God's spiritually corrective ways.

So many times I have humbled myself and made amends for my pride. It's never enjoyable. But it is always good. It always helps to build the

kingdom of God. My relationships always improve, not necessarily the way I want them to improve, but always toward Godly good.

Sincerity, truth, humility, and willingness to serve God are absolutely necessary.

Mountains out of Molehills

Sometimes I can emotionally over react. It's like a switch just flips. These such occasions were frequent in my younger years, but now it's rare. It can still happen. I have identified inward conditions that set me up for such reactions. When I am over tired, hungry, rushed, or feeling pressured I can experience a reduction in patience and tolerance.

Two popular sayings I hear now and then is that we can, "Make mountains out of mole hills" or "pole vault over mouse turds."

Resentments exist in different severities. There can be less threatening situations like having bad service, high prices, or long lines. And there can be more severe situations like betrayal or physical threats. Now if we react to a more trivial situation with heavy emotion as if it was a major issue, we may be making mountains out of molehills.

If we get angry because of shopping carts, lines, traffic, sports, make up, overcooked food, kids laughing too loud, missing our favorite show, video games, a spill on our clothes, or a bad performance golfing, then we might want to check ourselves inwardly and make adjustments.

Being angry with any of these simple matters can mean we are out of line with God's righteousness. Anger applied to normal situations like this can have spiritual destructive results that we may not yet understand.

Matthew 26:41 "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Disappointments will happen. And we are to trust God in all things. Disappointments happen when we want results from life to be different than they actually are. We can have a disagreement with reality. When our inward reality disagrees with outward reality, there can be conflict. And if we insist outward reality is the one that needs to change, we may be

participating in what many call irrational thinking. Trying to change outward reality to fit our inward reality, may be trying to play God.

I have had resentments with things in life being too slow like; computers, internet, traffic, school, stock market, movies, church service, conversations, lines at stores, cooking food, kids, pets, wife, and the government. My resentments from these situations come from how I expect things to go faster than they do. I want things faster. My problem is not other people or things, it's the unrealistic expectations that people and things in life should be faster than they are. For years I would argue with God about the pace of my spiritual development. God seems to always move so much slower than I want.

The answer from God is to wait, have patience, slow down, and be at peace. And to do that I have to change how I think. Instead of thinking hurry up, I can pray for patience. I can prompt myself to calm down and relax. I can learn to slow down. My new message I tell myself is, Chill out and be right with God. Relax and enjoy the beauty of life.

Here are some of the ways I think incorrectly. I can get resentments toward people with resentments. I can complain about people who complain. I can think I'm better than someone because they act so arrogant. I'd be more generous if others were more generous. If only everyone was as humble as me, life would be great. It's so much easier to point out faults in others than it is to recognize my own and walk in the solution.

I'm the one that needs to change. The truth is, God wants to help us, but we need to choose to be more with God in order for help to come. That means letting go of resentments and practicing forgiveness with mercy. We must care about others. We must love. We have to love to be more with God. We have to increase our love to be more with God. Resentments sabotage love. How can we love if we are in resentment?

Slow down

One valuable lesson I learned was to pause when I become angry. In order for me to adjust my heart and mind with God, I need to stop what I am doing and give attention to spiritual growth. I first need to see where my thoughts were going. Then I need to bring into my mind thoughts toward

spiritual good. I had to practice identifying my reactions to life and when I felt anxious, tense, or angry.

Here are some example situations I have experienced that have promoted resentment:

Growing impatient or intolerant of others around me.

Feeling hurried, rushed, or pushed.

Other people mocking me or putting me down.

Being treated unfairly.

Being lied to.

Thinking about others not doing their part.

Things not going my way or the way I think they should.

Thinking a lot about me.

Worrying about what other people think about me.

When resentment comes I can feel tense, heart rate can speed up, I can get a burst of energy or adrenaline, I want to get away from people, I can raise my voice, rationality is sacrificed, I can say things I don't want to say, and relationships can get damaged. My image and reputation can suffer. My soul will experience hurt.

I can pause, take a break, and pray for strength, patience, and compassion. I can pray for an open mind. I can evaluate myself to see if I am willing to be changed. I can try to see good in others. My mind needs to grow peace and love within me. I will need to choose to think about God's righteousness and bring my inward self more toward it.

Identify resentments

When I began my journey in transformation I was directed to make list of my resentments and to confess them. This is not something to sit on or postpone. We need to get at it. Motivation to make corrections can fade quickly. The right time to do it is now. Always now.

It took some investigation to really understand the impact of resentments. But I had to be attentive and get writing. Sometimes people will ask how they start and I will simply tell them to write down whatever comes to mind. We list the situations and people we have resentments with to help us better understand our inward condition. We can learn more about

ourselves through this process. The resentments do not have to make sense at this point. We just need to get it out on paper the things in life that irritate us and the disappointments that still bug us. Whatever has happened in our past that frustrates, or agitates us at any level ought to be considered to write down. Conversation with a helpful mentor or guide will be very beneficial.

I had to look carefully at how resentments affected myself and my relationships. I had to understand that my own perception, assumptions, and interpretations helped developed resentments.

Resentments can exist within complaints. I was instructed to stop faultfinding, blaming, and arguing. I needed to learn how to move from problem focused thinking toward solutions. Whenever things don't go the way I think they should, I'm to seek God for guidance. When agitated, I first see if I'm thinking a lot about me, my wants, and desires. Then I can humble myself and seek to serve God again.

Make the list

I was taught to list the people, places, and things I had resentments with. Whatever it is in life that has brought disappointment that I have yet to settle and resolve with forgiveness and peace. It's best to begin with the big ones and over time work our way through the list. We spend some time, not too long or short, but enough to many items down. This process is not something we do one time and never visit again. This process is something we ought to practice whenever we get resentments. The goal is to be at peace with forgiveness in our heart, mind, soul, and interactions with others.

The second part is to describe what happened. What was done that brought disagreement or hurt?

Since disagreement or disappointment happened, what were my expectations that were not met?

Did I experience envy, pride/vanity, fear, greed, sloth, wrath, or gluttony?

Was I participating in passive aggressiveness, being condescending, or dishonest? Was my conduct instigating in any way? Was I thinking about

God's righteousness and how to act in it or was I thinking about myself and my own desires?

We need to get all this down on paper and thoroughly understand the spiritual truth of our perception, beliefs, preferences, and faith. Was our faith about self-serving or serving God?

Begin and End right

We can begin our day with prayer to help set our minds toward God. Getting our minds set right with God is the best way for us to start our day correctly. Beginning the day thinking about our own wants and desires can be dangerous. Self-seeking and selfish ambition are not part of God's righteousness. We need God's righteousness for Godly good things to come.

At the end of Each day we can evaluate ourselves for thoughts and feelings. We can explore how if we had any resentments. Did we experience disappointment? We can recall if we had conflict with anyone and if there was argument. We can write down how we responded and if we may have hurt someone with our words or actions. Were we raising our voice, trying to control, impatient, intolerant, condescending, or passive aggressive? Did we sabotage love, sincerity, gentleness, kindness, or compassion? If so, we can begin praying to God for help to improve. It's always helpful to collaborate with a mentor on how to improve.

2 Corinthians 10:5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,

This is to become a regular daily practice for us. It is to never be about perfection, but instead, growth and improvement.

Selfish Ambition

Scripture verses used are either NIV or NKJV.

Selfish Pride

In my society people seek to grow pride, selfish pride. We want to be proud of ourselves. We praise ourselves. We accomplish goals so we can be praised. We are to have a high sense of self or self-esteem. Sometimes this is done through competition. We may put others down within our minds because it can make us feel smarter or superior. But too much can make us arrogant or self righteous. We seek to be good in the eyes of others, to be praised by others, so we can be happy. But none of this is righteousness.

Being better than others is not Biblical teaching. Being smarter than others is not Godly good. Having more money and toys is not God's righteousness. We are to humble ourselves and seek Righteous Adjustments.

The instructions in the Bible are to remove selfish pride, because going our own way is often not following God. Seeking to fit in with others, win approval, or please people are not part of God's righteousness. Our reliance is to only be with God and God's ways.

Luke 14:26 If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his **own** life also, he cannot be My disciple.

Pride is about vanity and self worship. Pride is about selfish praise. We are taught to be humble, not proud.

John 7:18 He who speaks from himself seeks his **own** glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him.

Pride often has the attitude of putting self first. We are to put God first. We are to seek first the kingdom of God. We are to be seeking the love, beauty, peace, compassion, mercy, forgiveness, truth, and justice that are God's righteous ways of living.

I am trained to pursue things that will make me feel good. I want to feel good. I can get the thought, "what can I do to make me feel good?" Let's identify the subject here. I am the subject. I am the focus. With this, God or serving God is not the focus. When my mind is correctly aligned toward God, I turn my thinking to serve God. I guide my attitude toward peace,

love, and God's righteous ways. I see what Godly good I can do for someone else. And in this process I begin to feel Godly good.

Romans 10:3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.

If I am experiencing resentment or selfish desires within my thinking I may struggle more with this process. I will need to forgive, confess, humble myself, and let go of such thinking. The more I cling to such thinking the more struggle I can experience.

Romans 12:16 Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your **own** opinion.

I'm learning how there is a spiritual kingdom. And I am part of that kingdom. I am not separate from this spiritual kingdom. Therefore, what I do affects others and what others do affects me and how I feel. When I go and do good for others I am doing good for myself.

In order for me to follow the instructions, I need to conceptualize the good in them. Comfort is less about what I do and more about my attitude doing it. When I don't feel like doing something, sometimes, it's because of my own attitude. I just don't want to and may not really know why.

Jesus teaches to return evil with good. But when I believe someone is talking trash about me or trying to exploit me, the last thing I want to do is to speak kind words to them with sincere compassion. My being is not designed to be nice to mean people. And that is the problem. But God knows this. The most difficult part of transformation is the self-discipline required to deny ourselves for the restructuring of our inward being. We must practice doing what we don't want to do.

There is an old saying around meetings, "surrender to win." This means I surrender my inclinations to practice new Godly good. I am to give up living by my ideas and live by Gods.

When Jesus says, "love your enemy," I am to do my best to love my enemy, but with God's love and it takes time and experience to understand

God's love. I need to do what I don't understand to see outcomes that are new and different. These outcomes present spiritual information to me that help me piece together this puzzle. I need to trust in the instructions and the process the Bible describes.

Psalm 132:1 Lord, remember David and all his **self**-denial.

Self-denial is a necessary regular practice for spiritual growth to occur. We cannot have things our way and God's way. We cannot have fellowship with the world and its ways and fellowship with God. We have to choose one over the other.

Luke 9:25 What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very **self**?

Our spiritual selves are sacrificed through reliance upon others, ourselves, or the world.

Romans 2:8 But for those who are **self**-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger.

I would pay very close and careful attention to the consequences clearly described in this passage. Correcting thinking requires very close and careful attention to our thoughts and acting in ways we do not desire.

Love and peace comes through our reliance, obedience, trust, and growth in God's righteousness. God's righteousness will be very different than self-righteousness.

Inwardly we are each conditioned and train to rely and trust upon different things. We can become dependent and reliant upon electronics, drugs, food, sex, books, work, money, people pleasing and so many other things. God's instructions are for us to be only reliant upon God. This requires a lot of retraining, rethinking, and different practices.

We can learn how we are reliant upon pride, envy, fear, and self-seeking. And because of pride and self-importance, it can be very uncomfortable to see our errors. We can be so conditioned to trust in self-seeking that we cannot even understand how not to be self-seeking. We must begin learning with new experiences.

God's instructions are for us to humble ourselves and we need to get going with it.

Proverbs 6:3 So do this, my son, and deliver **yourself**; For you have come into the hand of your friend: Go and **humble yourself**; Plead with your friend.

Pride and self-seeking can be like cancer to our faith. We each are individually responsible to handle it within ourselves. Ignoring it and postponement will only let it grow more and more. No one else can align ourselves, our beliefs, and faith to be more with God. We each individually must choose and act to abide in God as Jesus describes in John 15.

Paul describes love, the love we ought to practice, as not applying self-seeking.

1 Corinthians 13:5 It does not dishonor others, it is not **self**-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.

Matthew 23:25 Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and **self**-indulgence.

James 3:16 For where envy and **self**-seeking *exist*, confusion and every evil thing *are* there.

Another word used for self-seeking is covetousness. biblehub.com defines it as "one desirous of having more." It is spiritually destructive to practice envy and covetousness.

This has to do with selfish gain or greed. It's about self-improvement based upon worldly things or material gain. It's about improving status, personal power, or self-image. It's about making ourselves bigger, better, and more powerful.

Philippians 2:3 *Let* nothing *be done* through **selfish** ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.

2 Corinthians 12:20 For I fear lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I wish, and *that* I shall be found by you such as you do not wish; lest *there be* contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, **selfish** ambitions, backbitings, whisperings,

The Bible instructs us to avoid selfish ambitions. Are we going to choose to avoid it?

Mark 8:34 When He had called the people to *Himself*, with His disciples also, He said to them, “Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and **take up** his cross, and follow Me.

Mark 10:21 Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, “One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, **take up** the cross, and follow Me.”

Jesus Teaches us how to be happy

Let’s look at how Jesus teaches us to be happy.

biblehub.com defines the word blessed as “Happy.” The Bible describes ways to be “Happy.” Here are some descriptions in Matthew chapter 5 Jesus uses to help us understand how to be “Happy.”

Verse 3 “Blessed *are* the poor in spirit.”

I was introduced to the words “Spiritually bankrupt” in a 12 step program. It was describing an inward condition of despair and brokenness. I was indeed spiritually bankrupt. It’s a miserable state of being where there is little hope. Yet Jesus is saying the poor in spirit can be happy.

It’s highly emphasized that a person needs to hit a bottom in their walk before they will be ready to completely abandon themselves to God. To do what we do not want to do can sometimes only be done when we run out of choices.

My pride, ego, and self-righteousness had to be crushed and broken. I had to be humbled. I surrendered myself to serve God because I did not

have a better idea. I chose to become clay for the potter. I chose to deny myself, my own understanding, to pursue God and God's ways. My broken spirit helped me let go of the struggle.

Poor in spirit to me is decreased self-reliance and self-seeking with increased humble servitude and trust with God.

Some call it a place where we are beaten into a state of reasonableness where we become willing to try something new.

Verse 4 Blessed *are* those who mourn, For they shall be comforted.

I had a lot of pride and anger. I did not know how to mourn nor did I desire to do it. I feared crying. I saw it as weak. I repressed and stuffed my hurt. I had yet to learn through experience how grieving could bring relief and freedom. As I experienced mourning my trauma in life and coming to peace with it, I felt more peace and comfort.

Rarely will someone seek to comfort an arrogant egomaniac. People who are comforted are often those who appear hurt and vulnerable. When I humbled myself and my attitude, and then asked for help at a support group, it was there. It wasn't there the way I wanted it, but it was there.

Verse 5 Blessed *are* the meek

biblehub.com defines meek as "Mild and gentle."

I was in a group once when another man called me meek. He was complimenting me, but I resented him. I did not view meekness as a positive character trait. I saw it as weakness. But now I know it's not. biblehub.com says this "meekness is not weakness but rather refers to exercising God's strength under His control"

I am currently prompting myself many times each day toward meekness, peace, and love.

Verse 6 Blessed *are* those who hunger and thirst for righteousness

When someone is hungry or thirsty they will increase their diligence to get fed. God feeds us spiritual good as we participate in God's righteousness.

I was walking one day in Phoenix Arizona when it was 122 degrees. After about a mile my shirt was drenched in sweat. I bought a gallon of water because it appeared I lost a gallon. I drank what seemed to be a half gallon and then wrung my shirt out. I was thirsty. If I did not get the water I may have had a heat stroke. I directed my path directly to get water for survival.

The movie Rocky 3 has a theme about being hungry. I recommend watching it to help understand what being hungry means.

I was at a meeting and recognized someone who I knew from other meetings. I asked him why he was coming to this meeting and he responded, "I get fed better here."

Some have described the 12 step program as, "just one beggar showing another where the food is."

Psalm 34:8 Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!

Verse 7 Blessed *are* the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy.

I first practiced an entry level of mercy which is simply withholding punishment. I then grew to practice acts of kindness to help others in need, but I did it without much heart. Finally, I am now beginning to practice caring with compassion. You see, all these ways affect mercy. When I combine them all together they can intensify the spiritual power of righteousness. Merely withholding punishment without love is not God's mercy, because for God's righteousness to be done correctly will always include love. See 1 Corinthians 13 and 1 John 4.

Verse 8 Blessed *are* the pure in heart,

To be pure in heart is to purify ourselves from the corruptive ways of anger, fear, worry, anxiety, hastiness, self-seeking, and more. To be pure in heart is something we can grow and improve with little by little. The first steps for me was letting go of resentment, dishonesty, fear and self-seeking. I then had to make restitution for all harm I had done to others and myself. I

had to make things right inwardly and outwardly as best I could. This brought comfort and happiness.

Verse 9 Blessed *are* the peacemakers

The peace we can make begins within us. I cannot bring peace if I am angry, lustful, greedy, or seeking to gratify myself. I must build peace in my thoughts, goals, attitude, words, and actions. I must choose peace all day long. As I purify my mind and heart to follow and serve God's ways with sincere love and truth, then I can help others toward such peace. I can peacefully and patiently encourage others as I am in it.

I must avoid thinking how I can live peacefully and patiently in a world that is self-seeking and hurried. Thinking this way disturbs my peace. Instead, I need to focus on standing firm with living peacefully and patiently, whether the world accepts me or not. I believe if I live by God's righteousness, the world will find a way to be okay with me, in fact, it may even like me more.

I was told once that no matter what I do, 1/3 of the people will like me, 1/3 of the people won't, and the other 1/3 just won't care.

Verse 10 Blessed *are* those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake,

There are greedy, self-seeking, and angry people who will persecute those who seek to bring them peace. Before I experienced God and peace, I did not want anything to do with it. I would simply disfigure my face and walk away.

And then there are trolls who seek to agitate and evoke anger. If 2/3rds of the people will not be interested in what I have to say, I will need to get used to a lot of rejection. I'm not looking forward to it. But Jesus is describing there is more happiness to be found here.

When trolls come and try to push my buttons, I need to focus on God's love, mercy, peace, patience, and forgiveness. Retaliation is not good.

In the old days, If someone came to me advocating for peace, I would have tested them. If they endured and did not break, that would have convicted my soul that they really were good and not self-serving. This is the way of Christ as I understand it. We are to convict and win souls of

people through sincere demonstration of God's righteousness, through persecution and endurance. We are to be tested to truly reveal the good of God.

Fortunately, this does not have to be done perfectly. We simply need to demonstrate we mean business with God's righteousness. We need to demonstrate sacrificially that we trust God more than ourselves with increasing measure.

Happiness comes through our participation with God's righteousness. Self-righteousness can lead to emptiness and spiritual bankruptcy.

Psalm 119:36 Turn my heart toward your statutes and not toward selfish gain.

Deuteronomy 12:8 You shall not at all do as we are doing here today— every man doing whatever *is* right in his **own** eyes—

Each day we shift from self-seeking to God seeking. We inwardly shift our thoughts of pleasing ourselves toward helping others through Godly service. The most important moment is now. One moment at a time. One hour at a time. One day at a time. One step at a time. One choice at a time. We can have more spiritual happiness if we make it our goal and walk toward it.

Matthew 6:34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

Gratification Circle

I was in a class once where the instructor was teaching about a circle of self-gratification.

First there is emptiness, loneliness, or unfulfillment. This feeling prompts us to seek out something to make us feel good. We seek to avoid this discomfort and replace it with the feeling of comfort. We can find comfort in sex, chemicals, accomplishments, money, and food. Seeking comfort this way brings about unfulfillment in the end. This is a circle of self-gratification.

Are we going to seek fulfillment the way Jesus teaches us to do?

When I surrendered to God and began seeking righteous thoughts and actions, I began to experience a new way of life that would feed my spirit. The more Godly right behavior I participated in, the more my spirit was fed. As I trusted and obeyed this Godly good way of living, I was fulfilled more and more.

In John 4:13-14 Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."

In Arizona when it was 122 degrees outside, I was thirsty and that thirst was a sensation prompting me to get water. The senses of loneliness, emptiness, and brokenness are sensations that are prompting me toward God's righteousness. As I purposefully direct my thoughts, words, attitude, and actions into that righteousness, I can be fed more and more.

The path toward peace and freedom needs to be walked slowly each day. We can be filled with Good. We can feel Good. But we must choose it as a way of life.

Self denial

The Bible instructs us to serve and obey God, one God, and to only seek to follow that God, just as Jesus describes in John 15.

The struggle we all can have exists because the instructions do not fit our understanding. The way we see and know how to live life can be vastly different than the instructions in the Bible. The way we do things can be the way our friends, family, and church does them. Living honestly, peacefully, kindly, patiently, and boldly in truth and love will not always fit in with others. We need to do it anyway. When confusion comes, we do it anyway. We trust God instead of others, no matter who they are. We must

grow our ability to see our own faults and use improved reasoning skills to discern truth. It is absolutely crucial we have others around us willing to speak hard truth and we need to listen.

Choosing God, sometimes, can be choosing confrontation and disapproval both inwardly and outwardly. God can lead us down paths we won't want to go.

Here is popular example of this: A man climbing a mountain slips and is hanging on the edge of a cliff. The man says to God, "God, please help me." Then the man hears a voice from the sky saying, "Let Go!" The man looking confused says again, "God, please help me." The man again hears a voice saying, "Let Go!" The man then screams, "Is there anyone else up there?"

Self-seeking is a tremendous problem. The commercialized world beats us to death with messages to buy things to make us happy. We are taught to be smarter and have more things than others. Second place is the first loser. Schools teach us to conform and fit in. Those who conform and fit in get more approval and support from the systems. We are taught about self-improvement, self-image, and self-help. How can anyone trained in this way of living not live by self-seeking methods?

As I grew into practicing spiritual principles, I learned others did not live by such standards. This new way of living was very different than the worlds. I was only 21 years old at the time, so I was still developing. I chose to stop relying upon my friends and family and recognized they were not following the principles I was following. I realized I was not going to fit in with them.

Some people read stories in the Bible for inspiration that leads to little or no change in how they live their lives. I believe the stories of Noah, David, and others in the Bible are examples of how we are to seek, follow, obey, and trust God. I believe these stories are demonstrations for us.

Practice humility

Psalm 113:6 Who humbles Himself to behold The things that are in the heavens and in the earth?

It is the spiritual inward condition of humility that can begin to position us to witness, observe, and receive Godly insight. Our pride and self-seeking behavior needs corrective action.

The proud and haughty thinker and seeker can be further from grace and closer to destruction.

Proverbs 16:18 Pride goes before destruction, And a **haughty** spirit before a fall.

James 4:10 **Humble** yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

We are to humble ourselves and then God will lift us. In James 4:10 it us who are responsible for creating within us a sense of humility.

Before spiritual good to come, I must accept this responsibility of humbling myself. I have many desires and self-interests that must be let go in order to grow and improve in God's righteousness.

I've chosen to let go of things, ideas, character, habits, relationships, jobs, careers, and self interests here and there throughout my spiritual development. My mind continues to try to convince me away from changing and a lot of the time it wins. But here and there, I know for the purposes of growth, I have to let go of some habits, traditions, methods, or character. And it's always like saying goodbye to a friend.

I change in ways where my identity changes. My personality changes. My relationships change. Where I go changes and things I do change. I have changed in ways where I do not even know who I am anymore. I'm kinda going through it again now. My words, thoughts, actions, attitude, and how I associate with others changes.

If I don't become a different person, I will not change. I need to be willing to let go of who I am to become something better with God's righteousness.

New Identity/Death to Self

Elisabeth Kübler-Ross created a description of this process known as the five stages of grief.

Wikipedia describes the stages as “denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance.

Like the example of a person hanging on a cliff and God saying let go, I first think with denial. The information does not fit with my understanding so I seek to find a way to invalidate the information. I might think, “that can’t be right,” and then my mind will search for a way it can’t be right. But what I’ve learned to practice is to stop that way of thinking and instead, think, “how can that be right, I mean it’s in the Bible, and the Bible right, so how is it right?” Much of the time I need to do what it says to really begin to learn how it is right, because it is spiritual information that cannot be understood merely through reading or observation.

Inwardly I go through a process of bargaining. I want to grow with God, but I don’t want to change. I don’t want to let go of parts of me for spiritual improvement. Sometimes I don’t want to go to groups, serve, meet someone to talk, or read the book. I never wanted to make amends for my wrongs or pay money back. Many times I didn’t want to tell the truth.

There were many things I stopped doing because I learned there were negative consequences. Some beginning ones were drugs, smoking, and violence. But then some latter ones were passive aggressiveness and sports where I had idolatry struggles.

Some of these, like ending tobacco use, were very uncomfortable and challenging. My mind would go back and forth with bargaining and anger.

When I am letting go of something I can miss it. I want it again. I can desire it. I can long for it. And it can be like burying a friend. I can be easily agitated, impatient, and get angry. It can be a struggle. A want or desire to have it again can formulate within my thinking. Thoughts can come and then I need to shut them down which can become an inward fight.

Overtime with new practice and learning I can see good in my new ways and desire them more. This helps me grow into acceptance. As I accept

more the new path I can feel sad for reasons I can not yet express. I'm mourning a loss of my old self.

The five stages of grief can shift back and forth within us. It is incredibly important to understand these feelings can be part of our growth with God. It's always best to consult with others who understand through experience.

Acceptance is the goal and final part of the five stages of grief. It's where we let go of our resistance, struggle, and fight about God's instructions and accommodate them more into our being. We learn to let go of thoughts with resistance, anger, resentment, sabotage, defensiveness, and rebelliousness.

Here are two very brief thoughts or prayers, "thy will be done" and "let go and let God." If we use these with all sincerity and do it slowly with purpose, they can be very helpful.

Humble self

The Bible teaches us to humble ourselves and serve. Many times I don't want to humble myself and serve. My first impression of this idea is not good to me. And yet it is good to God. So that would mean my current thinking disagrees with God. I'm the one that needs to change. I need to accept God's instructions to serve, even though I don't like it. I need to step toward service even though I don't know how. I need to practice to learn, just like anything else.

If I willingly continue to deny my participation with God's instructions, it will lead to destruction. No Godly good growth will be developed.

Conscious effort

Conscious endurance, learning to think a certain way can be exhausting at first, but with continued practice it can get easier. We can build endurance.

"All"

Ever think about the word all? I've been doing concordance searches in the Bible to understand the Bible better for 15 years. Today I was blown away finding that the word "All" was used more than God.

NKJV

God - 4208 times

All - 4794

Let's give our all more toward God.

Desire God's Righteousness

To decrease disappointment is to rely more upon serving God with a flexible and growth oriented mind. When I simply focus on doing right and stop seeking to control others views, life gets easier.

Think Righteous Things

God is about love and peace, so when I become focused upon anxiety and anger, I am the one in error. I need to change. I need to listen. I need to adapt to God's instructions. Refusing to cooperate may mean I am stiff-necked, hard-hearted, blind, dull, or rebellious. The Bible describes many people with these terms who are disobedient.

As the Book Alcoholics Anonymous says on page 62, "First of all, we had to quit playing God."

When I play God, I decide how things should be. I insist people, situations, or things are supposed to be different than how they actually are and I situate my beliefs to be disappointed and to bring about discontent or resentment within myself. My faith is responsible because it does not accept reality. My beliefs are in error. And I can blame outwardly for my inward responses.

The goal as described in the podcast episode “Righteous Adjustments - One mind” is to have fellowship with God which is the same interests of God.

Making Inward Righteous Adjustments involves correcting our thinking to be more aligned with God, because God’s ways are better.

Jesus says in Matthew 11:28-30 Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My **yoke** is easy and My burden is light.”

Jesus says “Take My yoke upon you.” Jesus is making us, responsible, for taking the yoke and putting it on ourselves. We, are the ones that need to place the yoke. Remember, being yoked with Jesus, is to do what Jesus teaches us to do. We will walk side by side with Jesus’ interests, ways, and righteousness. We will do it imperfectly, but we can grow in improvement with it, if each day we take the yoke and put it on.

To be a Christian, as the Bible describes a Christian, is to become more of that description. For more on this go to www.inwardauthority.com, God’s Character, and sub-section Christian Character.

We will need training. We will need to practice each day learning our thoughts. We will need to identify thoughts that promote discontent reactions. The word “Should” is an indicator of incongruence with reality. If I think or say, he should, she should, or they should, then I am saying things ought to be different than the way they really are.

If I become angry and blame my anger upon someone else then I am giving control over my spiritual condition to others.

Jesus didn't walk around blaming people. Jesus did blame people for their character and choices. Jesus trusted God for peace, love, and good things.

We are given instructions on how to grow good character and be at peace. We are given warnings about evil practices. It will be our choice of what we follow and obey.

People are different

One major misbelief many of us can suffer from is the idea that other people think like we do. We might think people know what we know and therefore know better than to do what they are doing. But this can be far from the truth. And if we are willing to face facts, the truth is, we don't know what they know a lot of the time. We draw conclusions based upon our judgements of what we see and hear.

I've been married for 21 years and I still need to clarify with my wife what she is thinking. We think very differently about many things.

We are all different in personalities, beliefs, desires, tastes, preferences, speed, how speak, how we see things, how we learn, and how we think. It would be wise to practice patience and better communication to learn more truth before drawing conclusions.

Quick Impressions

I live in a society where people jump to conclusions about each other based upon quick glances and interactions. And much of it is based upon superficial things and social conformity. I find it helpful to keep within my consciousness not to prioritize approval of people. I need to prioritize aligning with God and doing God's will. Godly people will approve of that.

We can only change ourselves

We need to practice more acceptance of others for who they are instead of trying to get others to behave the way we want them to. We can't change people. We can invite, encourage, coach, and help, but we can't change anyone.

Another popular saying, “you can lead a horse to water, but you can’t make him drink.”

Each of us will have to choose God on our own. When others do not want God, we can go seek out someone else.

Return evil with good

The instructions are to end our participation with resentments and any thinking about getting even or retaliation. We can shift our thoughts toward doing Godly good and trust in God’s principles to work for God’s good.

Romans 12:20 Therefore “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap **coals** of fire on his head.”

Every once in a while I encounter trolls. A troll is someone who is trying to instigate an argument. Their goal is to stimulate anger. If I respond in anger I will be inviting them to keep pushing my buttons. And trolls can smell anger from far away like sharks do with blood. If I get angry about something and a troll is around, they will be attentive and try to fuel that anger. It’s an ugly game for them with much inward hurt and dysfunction behind it.

I respond to such instigators with calm truth. I try to stay away from defensiveness and opinions and stay with facts without partiality. Remember from other podcasts, God is not partial.

When I stay with facts, encourage with compassion to Godly good, and avoid an angry response, the trolls sometimes just leave. Most the time they just become ridiculous and irrational to where I block them. But sometimes, responding with God’s righteous ways, can impress them.

Whatever the case, I realize the truth, that they are trolls. I do not place thoughts in my mind about how they are wrong or should be different. I accept them for who they are and how they choose to live.

Hiker and snake

A hiker was coming down a mountain when he came upon a snake. He saw the snake and became afraid. And then the snake spoke. The snake said, "please, do not be afraid. I mean you no harm. I wish to get to the bottom of the mountain. But I am a snake and I move very slow. Would please help me? You would save me about two days of work and that would be very helpful." Then the hiker said to the snake, "I'm afraid you will bite me. I like to help and would like to help, but you are a snake and snakes bite." The snake laughed and said, "Yessss, I know what you mean, but you will be doing me such a great favor, I will be indebted to you, and therefore could never bite you." The hiker feeling obligated to help, but still unsure, decided to help the snake. Everything went well. The hiker carried the snake down the mountain and they got to know each other better. The hiker began feeling connected to the snake and realized how small the snake was and felt compassion toward the snake. The hiker thought about how merciful he was to be of such great help to weaker being. They get down to the bottom of the mountain and they had to say goodbye to each other. The hiker was even sad to say goodbye. Then the snake bit the hiker. The hiker was shocked, felt betrayed, and became very angry at the snake. The hiker said to the snake, "how could you, we were getting along so well, how could you do this to me?" The snake replied, "Yesss, but I am a snake."

I believe this is a great story about real life situations. Helping other people who struggle with corrupt character can be dangerous. We need discernment and reason. Getting angry at other people who have corrupt character because they respond with corrupt character, just isn't very well thought out.

Liars, exploiters, trolls, and predators exist all throughout the world in government, churches, and groups. Getting angry, complaining, and blaming will do no good. Instead, we can expose such people by discussing the facts of what we hear and see. Although this can create conflict, being hush about it can often be even more destructive.

Any confrontation ought to be done with gentleness, patience, and compassion. It can be best to go to God first and discuss it with someone else, and even go with someone else who understands.

As we give God full control over results, we can more easily stop complaining, because complaining to God about God's design can seem

pretty ridiculous. Are we going to walk around telling God how to do better?

Yet we can identify snakes. We can identify lies, pride, exploitation, false-flattery, selfish-ambition, envy, greed, and the love of money. We can identify this character when we recognize it. Ignoring it or condoning it could be ungodly behavior. Fear of what people may think about our identifying may come up, but if we are controlled by such fear, then we are not responding with God.

At 21 years of age my experience with resentment involved a constant participation of it within my thoughts and feelings. I woke up with it, meditated upon it, spoke it, displayed it in my demeanor, and helped others experience it. It was a way of life for me. Resentments were very much a part of my identity. I couldn't understand life without them.

Transformation involved creating within me new experiences which shaped my identity. The person who I was slowly began to change. I became someone new and different because I continued to obey new principles on how to act, think, and speak. I had to let go of who I was in order to become someone new.

Becoming this new man involved new ways of speaking, thinking, associating, and living. The old me still exists underneath tempting me toward old behavior. But the less I practice the old ways and the more I obey God's ways, the temptations decrease more and more.

Once I changed and experienced spiritual principles, I then began to see and understand how resentments were damaging. I had to learn to experience Godly good; what it felt like, to better understand evil and how it was worse.

To know something is better is to witness it. I had to go and see. I believe this is why Jesus gives instructions that require action. I don't believe we are to obey God and Jesus for legalistic purposes. I believe the goal is for us to inwardly be changed by the good we can experience through them.

Psalm 34:8 Oh, **taste and see** that the Lord *is* good; Blessed *is* the man *who* trusts in Him!

Imagine being given another chance to restart your life journey. God gives you two doors to choose from describing character traits you will live by. Door One: Sarcasm, competition, defensiveness, passive aggressive, love of money, stress, anxiety, resentment, faultfinding, arguing, selfish-ambition, impatience, and manipulation.

Door Two: Peace, love, mercy, generosity, truth, sincerity, fairness, compassion, patience, perseverance, endurance, strength, and forgiveness,

I used to only know Door One and believe Door Two to be a fantasy. Because I gave myself over to search for God's good I learned it was not a fantasy. Each day we face these two doors. We choose to seek the development of our character. The character we live out in our thoughts, words, and actions exists because we choose to do it. And whichever one we enter, we develop more into our souls.

My mind tells me Door Two is a crazy choice, that God's character won't work with how I understand the world. I don't know how to be like that. But as I get strength, I simply give myself over to do it not knowing what will happen. I give up doing the same ol' same ol' for the chance of God's righteousness to bring spiritual good. And each day I open it, I see the good in it.

When my mind is participating in resentful and faultfinding ways, I must first become aware of it. The daily practice of meditation and self-evaluation of my thoughts has helped a great deal for me to see more the inner workings of my spiritual condition.

Resentful thinking has a way of using blaming, faultfinding, and arguing to attack. We can attack others or ourselves. Either way, this state of existence is spiritually destructive. It is spiritually destructive because it robs the spiritual from love, compassion, sincerity, and all that is pure.

Resentment is poison

There is a wise statement defining resentment, “To have a resentment against someone is like swallowing poison and waiting for the other person to die.”

To feed a resentment is to think about how wrong someone or something is and to experience disappointment about it. We can end up fueling anger within us by the way we think about it. Blame can come about which can grow desire toward hurt. These responses have nothing to do with God’s righteousness.

Acts 8:23 For I see that you are poisoned by **bitterness** and bound by iniquity.”

biblehub.com defines the usage of the word bitter as, "bitterness, harshness, hence met: an embittered (resentful) spirit.

Anger, defensiveness, worry, and stress all can be very damaging over a period of time to our hearts, minds, bodies, relationships, and souls. We will suffer through prolonged participation with angry and resentful thoughts.

I use to live by resentment or bitterness. I chose relationships with others who were frequently applying sarcasm, put downs, and passive aggressiveness. I grew up with it. As a kid we sought how to push other people’s buttons. In recovery I realized these thoughts and actions sabotaged grace and righteousness within me, I had to make new choices to grow spiritually.

When I present this choice to others I frequently hear, “we can’t be perfect.” People just shake their heads no, and choose not change. I now believe people will not change because they don’t understand the good that is available. They are unwilling to live differently. They are accustomed to their life style. And they do not want to put forth effort for something they have yet to understand.

Imagine a stranger coming to you inviting you to give up a large sum of money for a mystery gift. Would you do it? In this crazy world with scams

everyday it is risky to trust anyone. But I'm telling you, put in the time and effort, make some simple adjustments to make God's righteousness more a part of your thoughts, words, and actions and then see for yourself what happens.

When people accept the beautiful journey of reconciliation, they can struggle within themselves with humility. Once committed, they can make restitution. They can confess, repent, and serve others. They can live very different lives. They can sacrifice relationships, jobs, and even careers. And those who gain a spiritual experience as a result of this journey do not report that it was a dumb idea. They do not regret their actions. In fact, they celebrate it and then go out and try to help others experience it. Discovering this spiritual mystery is an amazing experience words cannot reveal. Understanding can grow through doing.

This journey of spiritual living involves identifying our resentments, owning our part in them, and then making changes within our own selves toward peace. We will need to let go of any blaming for our anger and hurt.

I had to change the direction of my thinking. My understanding about my life was not good. A lot of people around me were spiritually bankrupt. My experiences and beliefs just didn't have good things. How can someone think good things if they do not know good things? I had to begin doing good things to gain experiences with good things.

Recognize and own my feelings

The first thing I had to learn to do was look in the mirror and see myself, my attitude, my anger, and how it was destructive. I had to stop blaming others for my attitude. I had to own my choices for how I respond to people and situations. This empowered me to creatively develop new ways to respond to things that would set me off.

When I realized being around certain people really irritated me, I chose to stop being around them. I chose to let some of them know how I felt. I chose to own the fact that I can be impatient and struggle with tolerance. This helped me see where I had room to grow with patience and tolerance. This process helped me identify many ways I could improve with God's righteousness.

Catharsis

Generally speaking, the world does not understand this process. Many people can view venting or catharsis as a way of handling resentment and anger. I believe catharsis is a way to dump pent up stress, but does not fix what is creating it. We can feel the anger inside and releasing it can feel good. This is a delusion. Feeling good from removing pain is really feeling less evil. It feels good get it out, because it is destructive to have it within us. The Good in this process can come through the compassion, mercy, forgiveness, love, truth, and peace in these situations. Yet there are other forms of catharsis that do not promote God's good.

I had a conversation recently with someone who shared with me their experience in a rage room. A rage room is a room designed to let people break things. People would go to these places and vent their anger by smashing printers, glass, and other things. I remember when I was 21 years old and beginning to face my anger. It was explosive at times. I learned venting anger through exercise or smashing things resulted in a temporary release of the stress developed within my body.

My responses were brought about by my faith. My faith is a result of so many things impacted from my choices.

Woes

Read Matthew 23 the seven woes.

Jesus used the word woe many times. biblehub.com defines it as "an expression of grief or denunciation"

Denunciation is public condemnation. Jesus would repeatedly publicly condemn character and behavior. And yet, in my experience, leaders in church fear this behavior and avoid it like it's a disease. Let's give full attention to the Bible. Let's choose to follow the Bible more than groups or churches on how to behave. But let's be willing to recognize our own sinful ways first and foremost. Our impatient, anger, resentment, fear, and intolerance must not be utilized to try to create change in anything or

anyone. We simply speak the truth, Godly truth, and let this righteousness of God, truth with love, do the work.

I had to own my resentment against what I saw to be sin in the church. Any system run by people will have sin. Because we all sin, sin is unavoidable. I sin and will always have sin. I can only improve when I am moving in correction of my sin. And that is my responsibility. I need to hit the mark more. I need improve my obedience with God's righteousness. I need to keep my focus upon the mark to hit the mark.

I need to identify my resentments, fear, pride, ext. before I can correct them. It really does help to have people close to me who can help me see when I am impatient, hurried, irritable, or angry. These inward conditions fuel corruptive thoughts, words, and actions.

Before I ever address anyone on a fault I witness in them, I must first explore the idea that I might not be ready. I might not be in a place of love and patience to help someone else. And I need to be, for it to be done right, with God's righteousness.

Character & Conduct

Self examination

God's character will involve being fair, and just with truth, compassion, mercy, forgiveness, love, and peace.

Growing is correcting. We must see what to correct within ourselves and make the corrections.

We are in a battle. We are the battle. We all have ideas, habits, learning, training, and practices that are evil. We all sin. Yet who is ready to begin identifying their sin and share it with others? Probably none of us. But we must. We must make more clear the destructive truth in our behavior, thoughts, attitudes, words, and choices. We must identify this bitter fruit in our spiritual walk. We cannot change what we cannot see. What is out of

sight can be easily forgotten. We must see it. We will need to get it down on paper. And this will require much humility.

No one else needs to see the paper. But we are to use it through confession. This process is to see, know and understand, not to self condemn. This information is not to beat ourselves with because that would be evil. We are to learn our habits and thinking behavior to help us make corrections. This information is to guide us toward forgiveness and reconciliation. It is to identify patterns and learn triggering events. We must be as truthful and sincere as possible.

Doing this is repentance. We acknowledge our sin and see how we can turn to being thinking and acting upon God's righteousness.

To repent is to turn to God. If we practice deception, then repenting would be to recognize the error, stop participating in it, and then set our thoughts toward truth, and begin practicing truth more and more.

This corrective action always begins with humility. Taking pride within ourselves is rarely a behavior seeking to grow in God. In order for us to be proud about ourselves and be growing with God, we would need to be perfectly aligned with God. Jesus did not participate in selfish pride. It's just not the way. Pride is not to be embraced. We will need to guard against it and seek humility. We can correct ourselves daily with saying, "Thy will be done."

We will need relationships with others who are also on this journey to discuss the process and collaborate upon struggles and solutions. These discussions can help us learn things about ourselves we otherwise could not learn alone. We will need to humble ourselves to ask questions and reach out for help. We will need meet regularly, show up, and make it a priority. We will need to hold ourselves accountable for our productivity.

We can do a concordance study in the Bible on the words; contrite, humble, sorrow, and supplication. We can think how these attitudes can help us grow with God's righteousness.

Developing Christians are growing to be like Christ. Our goal is to improve our words, thoughts, attitudes, and actions with Christ. We will need to

think less of our own understanding and more of Jesus' teaching and demonstrations.

Matthew 26:42 and Luke 22:42 saying, "Father, if it is **Your will**, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My **will**, but **Yours, be done.**"

In Matthew 6:10 and Luke 11:2, Jesus teaches us to pray saying, "Your will be done."

Jesus served God said we are to do likewise. Let's start making corrections today. Thy will, not mine, be done.

Accommodating new principles

See Jean Piaget Accommodation vs. Assimilation

Basic practices

As I mentioned before, our growth with God can occur in spurts. And we can slip away from our development. There can be days when we are on fire and days when we feel out of touch. Some days we can be all in and others struggling to connect. This has been my experience. I've witnessed others gave up or decided God has left them somehow. When we get in this uncomfortable spiritual situations we can choose to evaluate our actions and see how we can make some righteous adjustments to improve.

Because many of us can find ourselves with good days and not so good days with growing in God's righteousness, we will need to create some tangible

Inward Developed Evil

Listing my Character defects. What are they and how do I learn them?

Discern Safety

The process involves confession of our hurt, anger, fear, pride, and many other inward personal thoughts. We can develop within us a way of hiding and protecting this information to keep it secret and in some cases for good reason. There is evil in the world and this information, if shared, could be used to hurt us. It is helpful to have some discernment of who to select and how to share the information.

I will share very briefly some guiding tips I have used.

Selecting someone to be my mentor I first analyze their words to see if they are honest and sincere. This cannot happen through seeing someone one time. I need to encounter them three or more times to get a gist of their character. I wanted someone who would speak the truth boldly. I listened for how they share. Do they talk about other people? Do they gossip? Do they say one thing one day and then another thing the next day or are they consistent?

I ask other people about them and watch how other people relate to them. Are they respected or avoided? When I ask others about them I pay attention to non-verbal responses. Does their face light up with confidence or do their eyes roll while letting out a sigh? When my potential candidate takes I can look around the room and watch for similar responses.

It's important to make a selection soon and get to work with our inward development. When we begin sharing it may be best to start with things like dishonesty, vanity, pride, fear, and resentments. We can share how we are self-centered. As we go we can continue to assess the person to see how they handle the sharing. Sharing about our own mistakes will be a priority.

I've noticed two different types of resentment thinking that are equally spiritually destructive. One focuses outwardly upon others and the world while the other focuses inwardly at themselves. Whether we condemn others or ourselves, it's still condemnation and unrighteous behavior.

Having listened to the Salvation Series and made a decision to commit to grow in God's righteousness, we can now become clay for the potter seeking inward transformation and renewal. We can practice each day identifying our sin or how we miss the mark and seek how to improve toward God's righteous character.

Our spiritual condition is largely a result of developed character lead by a complex system of experience, perception, understanding, and choices. Remember, our faith is a crucial component to our spiritual condition. This complex system affecting our faith can build upon itself with memory of experiences replayed within our minds over time. The messages we think to ourselves ought to be checked and sometimes corrected. We must evaluate what we think and see how to make gradual righteous improvements.

To grow in righteousness we need to pursue new Godly actions that go beyond our understanding and experience. We can create new experiences that can become new memories of God's goodness that can then be played over and over within us.

We will need to say yes to righteousness more and more.

Who wouldn't want good memories of love, belonging, compassion, and mercy. We can have such memories increase as we choose to begin obeying such character inwardly and begin to live by them.

We will need to say no to some our comfort seeking attitude that can prompt us with messages like, "I don't feel like it," "I don't want to," "why should I," or "no-one else is doing it." We will need to respond with God in such situations. I don't believe God would respond with, "you're right, sleep in," or "go ahead and follow the crowd away from righteous activity."

I'm going to say this very slowly and emphasize it to an extreme. We are not stupid people. We are spiritually trapped by a mindset of ungodliness and living by that thinking. Most of us discern our choices with our own developed beliefs, habits, and desires that are not with God.

One saying in twelve step meetings is, "you can't change stupid thinking, with stupid thinking." But we are not stupid. We are selfish and self-

centered. We make choices based upon our own ideas. Here are two Bible references about this.

Proverbs 12 in the NKJV is entitled “The House of the Righteous Shall Stand”

vs. 1: Whoever loves instruction loves knowledge, But he who hates correction is stupid.

Proverbs 3:5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding;

To grow in understanding beyond ourselves we must learn beyond our own understanding. We do this through honest and sincere sharing with others about our spiritual journey. We share our fears, resentments, and excuses. We share confusion, nervousness, and how we take action anyways because we have faith in God. We share about our perseverance, endurance, successes, and failures. We continue to act toward love and peace and talk about it. We find others willing to do this process and act more and more with God’s righteousness.

It’s best to focus our efforts upon what we can do in our present time and place. We can choose to control decisions we make in our current moment. We can choose to seek God right now. We can choose to humble ourselves, pray, and learn something new. Whether uncomfortable or comfortable, Godly good promotes growth toward love and peace.

And if we can continue choosing God’s righteousness over and over in our current moment, those experiences can build within us and around us a better tomorrow.

The instructions in the Bible around growing in righteousness involves choosing new thoughts and actions. Choosing new thoughts and actions can be uncomfortable. Sometimes, seriously uncomfortable. They may be something we hope to avoid, but we must choose to proceed whether comfortable or uncomfortable.

Romans 5:3 And not only *that*, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope.

Tribulation is defined at biblehub.com as persecution and affliction. These experiences are to be expected as we grow with God.

Matthew 13:21 yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles. Also see Matthew 5:10-12

For us, persecution will be ongoing as we grow because we will look different, talk different, think different, and act different. But we will need to choose different and act different to experience different.

We must practice standing firm when tribulation, discomfort, inconvenience, social awkwardness, or loss of income presents itself. We can imperfectly grow in perfecting ourselves in God's righteousness through continuous choices to improve in that righteousness, sometimes at the expense of vanity, money, pride, and other ungodly worldly attributes. At times, we will need to experience such discomfort to grow in righteousness.

I remind myself how Jesus and the Apostles gave up their lives and families to learn and grow in God's righteousness. They suffered through extreme discomfort. I examine myself for what I am doing and the excuses I am thinking to avoid my own growth in God's righteousness. My excuses for not growing tempt me away from participating in righteousness.

I remember a time I was driving home from work. I thought about buying my wife a card from the local store. I thought about her smile from receiving the card. That made me feel good. I liked that. Then I saw the traffic and thought about the inconvenience of parking and what not. I decided not to get the card. I felt good because it was a good idea, but I missed out on something even better, and so did my wife.

I would like to mention that I have done many Godly good works with my wife. Through my participation in growing and improving with God's righteousness, our marriage has flourished. It's not perfect, but it's good. Yet the condition of it is dependent upon how right both of us stay with God's righteousness. If we pursue deception and idolatry, we can choose principles which can sabotage our relationship.

If I pursue wonderful ideas within my mind, but do not act upon them, such good would merely be a creation within my own mind. At times we will need self-discipline and self-control at the cost of comfort to act in God's righteousness. We must remember there is great joy to come from it.

Acts 24:24-27 is a good read.

We need self-control. Let's look at some scripture using "self-control."

Galatians 5:23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

1 Timothy 2:15 Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control.

The word if is a conditional clause. Childbearing without continuing in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control might not bring salvation.

2 Timothy 3:3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good,

This description of character is about character that we ought to avoid. Being without self-control is not good.

10 But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance,

Our journey with choosing God's righteousness with increasing self-control will enable us to persevere in sound doctrine and Godly purpose.

2 Peter 1:6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness,

You ever gain knowledge, but then still lack self-control? This can be like going to book studies and not living out the instructions just learned. If we persevere with self-control directing ourselves to act more accordingly to God's instructions we can persevere with godliness.

Genesis 49:6 Let not my soul enter their council; Let not my honor be united to their assembly; For in their anger they slew a man, And in their self-will they hamstrung an ox.

Each day we can practice evaluating ourselves to see if we are following God or crowds. We can assess ourselves for the character and attitude we carry within our minds and hearts. We can learn how to add the righteousness of forgiveness, mercy, truth, and compassion to build and grow love and peace. Are we uniting with God's righteousness or groups of people? We can learn to improve our self-awareness and discernment.

Romans 2:8 but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath,

Self-control is about choosing to follow God. God gave us power over choice. God gave us free will to choose. Once we choose repeatedly over a long period of time certain behavior, that way of living can become ingrained into our beliefs, habits, and identity. Still, we can choose to obey new character that is different than what we know and understand. God gave us this power and control. We are responsible to choose what we follow and seek.

Please listen to more podcasts and begin experiencing taking action beyond what you are used to doing to learn through experience more of what I am talking about.

Here are some activities to begin to grow learning. Pray for guidance and courage to understand God's righteousness with a willing heart and mind. Confess resentments, fear, worry, and anything that may be hardening your heart with someone who understands God and has done likewise. Connect with others through emotional understanding.

Jesus and the Apostles are a pretty good Biblical benchmark to aim for in my own growth and development.

I press forward to a simple growth objective and trust in continuing in the growth of righteousness, even if the growth is small, it's still growth, and a lot of good has come to my life as a result of such progress.

Psalm 1:2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night.

We can choose to make God important enough to meditate upon God's righteousness each day and night.

Begin thinking about Character. God's righteousness is beyond character, but involves character. There are many verses that describe God in character traits of mercy, compassion, truth, love, forgiveness, peaceful, generous, and being just or not partial. We can grow these character traits within our thoughts, feelings, and experiences. And to do so, we will need to choose them.

Fear

Pride

Anger, resentment, revenge, grudges (toward self, others, God, world)

Agree to end blaming.

Faultfinding of others for the sake of shunning, hurting, or feeling superior is to increase pride and perhaps anger.

Return evil with Good

Building Skills