

Orientation

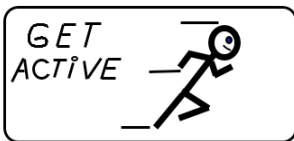
Welcome to the orientation podcast. This podcast episode is one that ought to be revisited to help us maintain a conscious orientation to what is spiritual. We are to love God with our whole being.

We will discuss briefly some ways we can prepare our hearts and minds for spiritual growth and understanding. To gain a new understanding requires the willingness to let our beliefs be transformed and to participate in a new way of thinking. Please listen to several podcast episodes to get a sense of this concept.

God is invisible and intangible. We cannot show or display God like we can physical material that we can see and touch. God is not something we sense using our physical senses. We must think in ways beyond merely using our physical senses. Merely analyzing physical information through sermons, books, movies, and music will not suffice to produce Godly experiences. This is slowly described more throughout the podcast.

God is described in the Bible repeatedly as experiences. Love, mercy, forgiveness, compassion, peace, truth, and justice are experiences. Jesus directs us into such experiences. We can experience God if we grow such experiences increasingly with God's collective character traits also growing together with our souls. This seems to be the Biblical path of salvation.

There is a difference between thinking and feeling. It can be easy to apply one without the other. Both are needed.



Think about or share which best describes your personality, thinking or feeling? Are you analytical or expressive? Do you connect with others easily with compassion and empathy or are you guarded and discerning? Both have equal value.

We will need to develop a unifying of the heart and mind applied to Godly experiences. This means guiding our being more into spiritual senses.

To sense what cannot be seen, we will need to seek with our spiritual senses. Spiritual senses are developed with spiritual participation in Godly experiences. We can learn spiritual good through the experience of confession, repentance, restitution, giving, mercy, forgiveness, truth, and compassion. To let others get to know our hearts, minds, and souls can produce spiritual results. Giving and receiving in these areas with much collaboration can improve our understanding. Sincerity, humility, and honesty are needed.

We will need to guide ourselves into prayer with humility and patience. We will need to slow ourselves and reconstruct our agenda to better incorporate Godly experiences into our daily lives. We will need to become more with God's goodness with who we are in our identity to grow with God.

Thinking differently means change and change can be uncomfortable. But we cannot improve without change. So I plead with you to endure discomfort for the sake of growth. Continued growth will be dependent upon our self-discipline, perseverance, endurance, and corrective action.

There is a difference between continued goodness and a moment of goodness. Having a spiritual experience is one thing, but growing spiritually is another. Continuing to grow spiritually will require continued action with change.

Salvation

Growth mindset & humility
Define Salvation
Ongoing Choice
Repeated verses

Welcome to an Inward Authority discussion on Salvation. I may be helpful to listen to the four minute 'Orientation' episode. In this discussion we will focus on what the Bible says about salvation and personal experience.

Salvation involves choices. God will not make the choice for me. I have to make it. It's my responsibility to seek, choose, and follow God. God will not make me move into God's salvation. I have free will and I need to own my choices.

I have to become convinced inwardly to follow new spiritual principles that can rescue me from destruction. For now, let's focus on how receptive we are to new information that may not agree with our understanding. God teaches us to be better in Godly ways. God seeks to correct us into love and peace. Many of us do not want correction. Jesus provided much corrective instruction and few give themselves over to it as the disciples did.

Acts 11:26 And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.

The disciples were called Christians. They were training to be more like Jesus. That's what Christians used to be. I found myself lacking in such development and began convincing myself to train more. I practiced convincing myself through looking at the instructions and demonstrations longer. I looked longer to let it settle inwardly with my mind and heart.

Whatever you believe, you're right. Let's discern carefully for ourselves the difference between closed and open mindedness. Are we willing to evaluate ourselves to see if we have a growth mindset or a fixed mindset? Are we humble enough to be corrected by God, the Spirit, and what the Bible says?



Discuss with your group or answer for yourself whether you are a growth or fixed minded person. Then share an example of why you think that. What do others think about your mindset?

Many will not be able to accept truth when it is hard to hear, especially truth which goes against common belief. Doing things differently can feel awkward. Try doing something where everyone will see your choice as awkward, see how it feels for you and others, and then keep doing it. We can learn a lot about our inward struggles as we do something like this.

One time while I was facilitating a program with kids. There was a kid who would frequently test limits. The behavior system was not working to help. After suspensions, talks with parents, and many other things, I sought to apply compassion and giving. That didn't help either, but it did help with the other kids who watched my responses. There was shock in their faces. I had switched from the guy who would provide negative consequences to someone sincerely caring and trying to help. Although it did not help with the student's behavior problems, it did help with other students perception about me. The person they saw as the bad guy who brought consequences had now changed to demonstrate concern with compassion and empathy. Their attitude toward me changed. And that helped me better understand the power of God's spiritual goodness.

This kind of reminds me of two styles of teaching about God. There is the 'turn or burn' kind of preaching where Bible teachers will speak about going to hell. Then there is the God loves you as you are kind of teaching. I believe they are both right. God is love, so of course God loves. God commands us to love. If we choose to hate and resent, God may not withhold the consequences that come from it. Being in wrath, burning with anger, dead in misery, empty and alone may be hell. And we can choose this process of development.

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.

Let's agree this is a process that develops over time. And we can reverse this development over time by turning it around in pursuit of God's goodness.

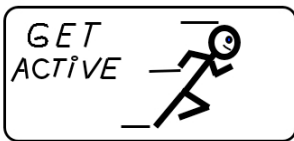
We can Psalm 34:8 "taste and see that the lord is good." This can entice desire to do Godly good. After some repetition and practice of Godly good it can give birth to saving Grace. And when that grace is full-grown it can bring forth salvation.

Matthew 11:29 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.

Let's think about the descriptive words of Jesus. Gentle, lowly in heart, and rest. Do these words describe the manner and character we seek? Do we pray for the development of such things?

Proverbs 25:15 By long forbearance a ruler is persuaded, And a gentle tongue breaks a bone.

“A gentle tongue breaks a bone.” There is spiritual power in being gentle.



Think about this. Explain how a gentle tongue can break a bone. How can forgiveness and mercy be powerful? How can patience and kindness be powerful? How is being humble a good idea? Please share experiences whenever possible.

To walk with God and with our guiding and teaching Holy Spirit from God, we will need to listen. If we go throughout our day not listening for spiritual guidance, how can we be following Jesus or God's ways? To follow, we need to look at the demonstration and do likewise. Ever play the game follow the leader? To follow the leader is to do what the leader does. Read John 15 and learn from Jesus what to do. We will need to have a flexible mind to follow and go as the instructions and demonstrations teach us. We need to commit to look, learn, and do likewise.

If we hold too tightly to our current belief that may be inaccurate, we will be unable to accept new truth that is more correct. To grow inwardly with God means we need to accept ideas that guide us to transform.

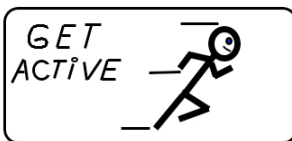
When the world was reported to be round, people would not believe it. When men learned to fly, people would not trust it until they could see it. The information did not fit with their beliefs. They had to be convinced. They had to experience it themselves.

So too, as we learn God is right here, right now, offering salvation, we may be slow to accept it. Seeing is believing. Seeing is one way to gain experience. Let us see slowly and repeatedly scripture teaching us about salvation and make sense of what it says. Let us participate through practice the instructions and give attention to our senses to experience the spiritual results.

Repetition is a necessary process to be convinced of new ideas. The more we hold onto something the more evidence we need to be convinced differently.

When I was facilitating groups with substance abusers, the denial was a wall which interfered with opportunity to recover. Such people needed to look closer at how their way of life was destructive. This denial exists within all of us around our sin. Rarely are people humble enough to honestly and thoroughly see all their faults or even many of them. For now, just bookmark this idea, that some our thinking may try to convince us away from Godly correction.

Read 1 John 1:5-10



Do we have room to grow with God? Can we apply ourselves to improve in Christ-likeness? Write down one way you can grow, and share it with someone.

Hebrews 2:3 how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him,

Let's make this a personal journey. Let's view the Bible as our life manual. Perhaps God breathed information into the writers of the Bible for all of us to trust, and trust through action. Perhaps we are to follow Jesus as Jesus demonstrated with the same diligence, focus, and examples as the Apostles. Perhaps there is absolutely nothing wrong with the instructions, but everything wrong with how we are learning them. Perhaps a new way of learning could be better.

It takes an objective thinker to see the objective truth. It takes a humble person to see their faults. It takes a willing and dedicated student to learn. And it takes a patient listener that is digging in as an investigative reporter to really understand.

Experience teaches better. Imagine describing church to someone who has never been. How well can we really understand the feel and sense of a church experience in a two minute description. But if we go and

experience it, even see a few photos of it, then we can get a much better understanding. Jesus teaches us to experience God.

Salvation comes through seeking, learning, following, correcting, trusting, and obeying. We can accept God's ways, a renewing of our minds, cleansing of our conscience, purifying our hearts, and transformation of our souls. As we read the instructions we can make it a goal to do what they say. Through trial and error, through conversation, and through much learning we can practice and train ourselves to better understand peace, love, truth, sincerity, gentleness, and being humble.

Matthew 18:15 Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.

As we read scripture on salvation, let's try to apply it inwardly with our own experience. Let's personally relate to it. Let's think how we can personally put it into practice.

Psalm 149:4 For the Lord takes pleasure in His people; He will beautify the humble with salvation.

"Beautify the humble with salvation." Pause here and pray for a humble mind and heart. Here are some questions to think about and discuss.



Describe being humble? How can we humble ourselves? How can we tell when others are humble? How is being humble helpful?

I recommend doing a concordance study on "Stiff-necked" and "hard-hearted." Other related Biblical words are supplication and contrition.

We can learn what God is trying to teach us about being humble through experience. We can go there into a humble state and really get to know it. Read Matthew 5, beatitudes with this in mind. We can begin each day with humbling ourselves if we choose to do it. This can be a spiritually powerful exercise if repeated daily over time with sincerity. We can imperfectly progress with God.

Salvation has a definition

At biblehub.com the Hebrew word of salvation is defined as “deliverance, rescue, salvation, safety, welfare”

<https://biblehub.com/hebrew/3468.htm>

Greek: “deliverance, salvation”

“i.e. God's rescue which delivers believers out of destruction and into His safety.”

<https://biblehub.com/greek/4991.htm>

The word deliver is used 554 times in NKJV.

Salvation is an ongoing choice

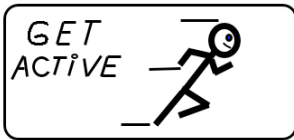
We can be delivered from destruction.

Matthew 6:13 And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Jesus teaches this prayer, to be delivered, and to pray for it privately each day. “deliver us from the evil one.” Salvation is a process where we choose good over evil, believe in it, and act accordingly. Our pursuit of loving God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength seems to be the path of salvation.

NKJV Romans 12:9 - 21 is entitled “Behave like a Christian” and begins with verse 9 “*Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good.*”

These are instructions for Christian Behavior. Let's think or share about this. I recommend reflecting upon and sharing about this repeatedly over time evaluating our own character.



How would someone need to think if they were to fulfill this instruction? What would we focus upon in order to “Cling to what is good.” And how diligently would we focus in order to “Cling.”

Read Acts 7 for a recap on who God delivered from destruction.

We choose where to go, what to learn, who to spend time with, and essentially everything. We choose for various reasons to convince ourselves what we do. We decide for ourselves what is important or worth our time and effort. We can live by faith and have success if we apply ourselves as the figures in the Bible applied their faith.

I grew up in a world where money was king. Perhaps many of you know relate to this. When I was instructed God needed to be my new king, I struggled. I was told good things would happen if I just gave myself over to this simple process of cleaning up my wrongs and character defects while doing God's will. I had to see if it worked, so I did it, and it worked.

I know I cannot cling to money or material things and cling to God's goodness. I have to choose one or the other. I cannot cling to a person and God's principles because people sin. God and God's goodness must always be what I love the most in order for this salvation experience to continue. I need to set my mind and heart to love God and God's ways continually.

I did not grow up with much money. I had more than some and less than many. I adapted to not having fancy toys, trendy clothes, and popularity. When I began my journey with God I was 21 years old, broke, jobless, unemployable, no bank account, no car, no driver's license, and about to be homeless. But I had found God and was content with that. (This story is described in another episode.)

I have chosen continually to simplify my life for spiritual reasons and as a result have received many spiritual blessings. I believe I am financially secure because I live humbly, I buy what's on sale, and I invest wisely.

I worked graveyard shift at a convenience store making minimum wage to help me get through college without a loan. I stayed the course. After getting my Bachelors degree in Psychology I became promoted to store manager.

I meditated and reflected upon God and gave attention to spiritual good. I questioned, was this the path God wanted me to take? Was I to stay in retail because I could make more money there? I believed I was to work in social services. My heart was more in that direction. I chose to follow my spiritual senses. I quit and within a week or two I accepted a graveyard shift helping seriously mentally ill adults for much less money.

I gave myself over to the process of becoming a counselor. I began working two jobs while going to school for my Master's degree. I obtained my Master's degree, then another short extended degree in core counseling classes, passed a National Counselors Exam, and became Licensed in Arizona.

I doubted my ability and believed I wouldn't be able to do it. But I learned that trusting God instead of my own thinking worked better. I could not have been successful without faith. I had to deny my understanding and trust in doing good. I learned not to trust in material, but what is spiritual.

I denied my learned disbelief and followed what I believed was the right thing to do. The right thing is righteousness.

I worked as a Therapist for a couple of years and then started a business. My wife and I got an opportunity to move to California. I prayed and meditated a lot about this move and we both agreed it felt right. A lot of talking went into this.

We moved to California and my credentials didn't transfer. I kept going to God for direction. I was very confused and felt lost. I was at a crossroads and didn't know it. I waited for guidance. Through a series of events I felt lead to begin a new journey. I felt lead to teach about God and the Bible.

I took a couple of classes in seminary to become a youth pastor. I was unemployed and seeking something part time to work with kids. During a class another student shared with me how his work had openings. There was a position available at a public school system to help with students that was 30 hours a week. Perfect. Some people refer to this kind of thing as a spiritual experience. It felt right.

I got this new job. This new job was very different than my old profession. It was highly disorganized and my position carried with it the pay grade of a custodian. Only to the schools it felt like I was less important. It was very humbling. I learned a lot about myself with this job.

I went through a couple of years lost and confused, praying and searching for direction. I waited impatiently and resentfully.

I had experienced a way to grow with God, but had no idea how to describe it. The more I tried to talk with pastors, the more I got the same results. I believe it had to do with experience. If I say Disney Land, people who have been there do not need a description. If I talk about confession, repentance, and restitution with people who have not done it, they cannot understand. I felt stuck.

I didn't want to create something new. I didn't want to lead anything. I'm an introvert. But all the information seemed to guide me to take the lead on what appeared to be a new method of Christian Transformation.

I humbly and remorsefully accepted the call to try to create this new transformation process. I let my credentials expire. I began researching the Bible and other things. I began to apply myself to new Biblical instructions to understand them better. And it helped.

I since about 2007 I have been studying and writing daily how to create this process. It's been a process of trial and error. I share more about this story in other podcast episodes.

There is one requirement for this to work and that is a willing participant to practice it each day. That sums it up. When accountability comes, don't run away. We just need to regularly practice simple spiritual corrections within our thoughts, words, choices, and actions. It's not rocket science.

Anyone can do this. Salvation can come through receiving God's grace into our being.

We can confess our fears, worry, resentments, complaining, blaming, impatience, intolerance, vanity, envy, idolatry, and whatever else that blocks us from God's love and peace. Confession with the willingness to accept renewal and trust in God's ways has been part of the process.

We can repent from such things through setting our hearts and minds upon forgiveness, mercy, compassion, humility, truth, and other Godly ways.

We can gradually improve in being more right with God. This has very little to do with intelligence. It has to do with experience and faith. If we choose to accept God's righteousness into our hearts and minds then we will live more by that righteousness and experience spiritual results. I have found this to be the path to salvation Biblically and experientially. And I have listened to hundreds of testimonies validating that belief.

Please do a Biblical concordance search on the words "Those who" and recognize the patterns. You might find that certain actions can bring about certain results.

The path to salvation seems to involve learning and experience. In this series we will be looking at verses describing salvation.

2 Corinthians 6:2 For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

May God bless you with humility, strength, and courage to accept new spiritual experiences.

Salvation Part 2

Saved from destruction
Repent or perish
Desire to change

Welcome to part two of the series on Salvation. Our focus will be on what the Bible says and practical experience.

We each perceive information differently. We most likely understand salvation differently.

To improve in Biblical accuracy means to learn more precisely what the Bible says through increased objectivity and collaboration with others who do the same.

If we draw conclusions about information based upon our upbringing, traditions, customs, habits, and hobbies we may miss the mark.

Think of the word 'Apple' and what it means to you. Some people may smile while others may feel uncomfortable. Some may recall enjoying an apple while others remember disappointment. Computer professionals may instantly think about the Apple computer and its components. A grocer may think of the produce section. A farmer may think of various trees. A nutritionist may think of fiber and how eaten apples are healthy. A physicist may think of its parts broken down into atoms. Each person from their different way of living will perceive "apple" with their own understanding. And to see it differently may be difficult, although entirely possible, if only they let themselves pursue that insight. (Learn about the "Mary's Room" knowledge argument. Try to imagine this argument with a person who never has any practical experience with love.)

God calls us to one mindset, a mindset with experience in God's righteousness which can lead us into salvation. To right our thinking with the Bible we will need to think about it long enough for it to be stored into our long term memory and understand the information with experience.

I have found Biblical concordance studies to be helpful to learn Biblical truth. Also, collaboration with others helps correct my misunderstanding. (Learn about the Blind men and the elephant.)

Now what if the farmer, physicist, computer professional, and grocer agreed to trust a dictionary to define 'apple.' Now they each can think about 'apple' in agreement. We can do this with the Bible. We can agree to hold each other accountable to speaking truthfully regarding the Bible to help eliminate incorrect ideas about God and salvation. We CAN do this.

Because the Bible was written by scribes, in a different time, with different customs and trends, and then translated from one language to another, I find it beneficial to use a repeated neutral defining platform for words like salvation. I use biblehub.com.

If you see a word and wonder what the original meaning of it meant, you can search online for help. If it is an old testament type into the online search bar the words “Hebrew” and “define” then add the word you want to learn about. If it is New Testament, use the word Greek because the New Testament was written in Greek. I have found this to help with accuracy. I highly recommend doing this with smart devices during Bible studies.

biblehub.com defines salvation with both Hebrew and Greek as “being delivered out of destruction.” So when we use the word salvation let’s try to think of it as being delivered out of destruction.

Have you ever experienced being delivered out of destruction?

I have found that our souls, hearts, and minds can be delivered out of destruction as we increasingly grow them in loving God through participation in God’s righteousness. God’s good can save us, if we seek it out, and participate in it with increasing measure. (If you get confused, listen to more podcast episodes, they work together to build understanding. They may bring up some questions, but each episode can help provide more clarity.)

In my other podcast episodes I share how I have been delivered out of destruction and continue to be delivered out of destruction. The Bible describes destruction in different ways. There are physical forms of destruction like plagues, starvation, and physical death. Then there are spiritual forms of destruction like envy, lies, lust, selfish ambitions, wrath, and greed. Inward Authority focuses upon the spiritual affects of the heart, mind, strength, and soul.

I worked in the behavioral health field for several years. I witnessed the effects of destruction with minds and hearts at serious levels. Some of my friends also pursued such destruction through choices. I learned a lot about own inward destruction and a path to healing. I learned it through my own participation in growing with God’s righteousness. I learned it through witnessing others I mentored do likewise. I was taught how by others. After all this, I read the Bible which confirmed it.

We must identify or recognize our inward spiritual destruction or we might not seek to be delivered from it. We will not make corrections until we believe we need to make corrections. We must see and become convicted we are in error. Then we must find corrective action with God's righteousness and walk with it. (Do a concordance search with the word walk)

2 Corinthians 4:16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.

We will need to apply ourselves with inward corrective action.

Repent or Perish

Luke 13:3 & 5 I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish.

Jesus said this, I'm just a messenger. I choose to trust more in what Jesus says than the apostles. If what the apostles say contradicts what Jesus is saying, I need to understand it before drawing a conclusion to trust a contradiction with Jesus.

Jesus said, "unless you repent you will all likewise perish." And there are teachers actively instructing Christians that their salvation is not in any way dependent upon what they do. Something is amiss. Yet so many Christians cling to this teaching.

The word perish is defined at biblehub.com as "to be destroyed." Think about this and let this understanding settle in. Salvation is to be delivered from destruction. Perish is to be destroyed. Jesus says two times, "unless you repent you will all likewise perish." Jesus seems to be saying unless you repent you will be destroyed. But what is repent?

biblehub.com defines repent as "to change one's mind or purpose." It also provides an example which says, "I repent, change my mind, change the inner man (particularly with reference to acceptance of the will of God), repent."

Salvation can come as we change our inward mind to grow in alignment with God's righteousness. As we grow our thinking more with love, peace, mercy, truth, compassion, forgiveness, and justice we can become increasingly delivered from destruction.

When I first made restitution for harm done I was introduced to a whole new inward reality. The battle I experienced within my thoughts of submitting my pride for humility was overwhelming. It's kind of like betting a lot of money on the toss of a coin. Part of me says don't do it while another part of me believes good can come from it.

Righteousness involves deeper sincerity, truth, love, and compassion. When I made restitution to others for harm I had done I was to help them find closure, to be at peace, and try to fix what I may have broken. I needed to have compassion while making things right. If I was careless and unthinking, little spiritual good could come.

Ephesians 5:6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.

Think about the meaning of "empty words." Do we do what we say? Do we practice what we preach? Are we sincere when we speak? Are we thinking, speaking, and acting increasingly with God's righteousness?

Psalms 71:15 My mouth shall tell of Your **righteousness** And Your **salvation** all the day, For I do not know *their* limits.

"For I do not know *their* limits" it says. One of the reasons I press more toward obedience with Biblical instructions is because I want to see just how good my life can be if I continue. A concordance study on the word continue can reveal some understanding that what we pursue affects spiritual results.

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."

As I shared in other episodes, at one time I did not know God's righteousness, nor anything about God. Suffering was normal to me and

there was no good in the world. I was unaware of how to search or find love. I believed in a saying me and my friends would use, "Life sucks and then you die."

Like being in a house that is burning, if we do not know we can leave, we will be burned in it.

Jesus is telling us how to exit spiritual suffering. Are we going to accept the instructions as a way of life to be delivered from destruction?

I recall a time when I was going to have company come over and I evaluated my home to see if it was ready. As I began to clean I became overwhelmed with how dirty it was. Because I was cleaning I was looking for dust and smudges. And because I was looking for imperfections is if I was a guest I all of a sudden could see many imperfections I was used to ignoring. Through my careful evaluation of imperfections I realized truth I couldn't see before. I mean, it was there, but it just didn't come to my attention.

I couldn't get it clean the way I wanted it to and felt embarrassed. I decided it my be easier if they just didn't come over. My mind has a tendency to avoid letting others into my life for many ungodly reasons. Fear is perhaps the leader.

Luke 10:40-42 But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me."⁴¹ And ¶Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. ⁴² But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."

After 16 years of sobriety I evaluated myself for God's righteousness and I became overwhelmed. It seems as though love did not exist in me. I had was strong in truth, justice, faith, and forgiveness, but empty with love. I read 1 Corinthians 13:3 which ends with "... but have not love, it profits me nothing"

There are so many verses that present like ultimatums. I think we all understand that faith is a requirement for salvation. But are we aware that

faith without love leads to nothing? Can nothing deliver us from destruction?

I read 1 Corinthians 13:2 "...though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing"

Around 2007 I saw the light, but it was convicting. The word in the Bible convicted me of how I was missing the mark. The way I was living life was so wrong. The answer was with love, but not love as demonstrated by media, but love as the Bible teaches it. I needed to know this type of love, but know it through experience. That meant I needed to seek it out through my thoughts, attitude, words, and actions. I knew that the only way to know anything well is to do it well. And that means a lot of practice. I had to begin practicing love. Like anyone taking their first steps, I made mistakes. My first steps were learning how respect differences and tend to them with love and tolerance.

Through my participation in repentance I have experienced being delivered out of destruction. And I did not really see how my way of doing things was destructive until I experienced more of God's righteousness. But I had to change my being of thoughts, attitudes, words, and actions in order to walk more in alignment with God's righteousness to see, witness, and learn how good it is.

The personal ongoing journey of repentance is not attractive as I do it. And those I know who do it also find it to be a struggle.

Matthew 10:38 - 39 And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.

It's been my experience that suffering with self-denial for growing with God to be delivered from destruction is the process. I have heard hundreds of testimonies validating this process. I have also experienced even more false testimonies that we do not have to suffer. But what does the Bible say?

1 Peter 3:14 But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. "And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled."

If there is any inclination within you that suffering is not involved in our walk to grow in God's righteousness, I plead with you to do a concordance study with the word suffer in the Bible. We absolutely must accept suffering as part of the journey. We can learn it is a part of healing and entry into salvation.

I believe the suffering we experience as we grow in God's righteousness ought to be normalized. It ought to be as normal as breathing. Yet also the joy we experience afterwards ought to be normalized. Very good things develop within us as we grow in God's righteousness. We gradually become better spiritual beings that can encourage and bring hope to others. We can become better partners, spouses, family members, and employees.

My wife loves the changes in me, but does not enjoy my calling to her to do likewise. She also struggles with this inward truth. She loves my new attitude, patience, and kindness. But she does not enjoy the conviction of her own soul to reciprocate. Speaking the truth with love can fill souls and convict them. The demonstration speaks so much louder than words. Yet conversations are needed. Conversations help us sort through the confusion. Conversations help encourage and guide. Each of us must face choices to either continue what we do or grow with God's righteousness.

Increase the desire to change in our awareness

Many of us can be completely unaware of our destructive ways because it can be normalized. If our goal is to be like others around us then we will miss the mark. The mark is God, if we are Christian. Read John 15. If we are Christian and want to grow as the Bible says Christians are to grow, then we will be pursuing certain character traits. We will be practicing and improving in that character, God's righteousness. And we will evaluate and compare ourselves to that character.

If we are seeking to fit in with others and meet the standards of those around us, we may become very confused as to why we are feeling out of place. Our lives may look right because we compare ourselves with the world, yet inwardly we can feel not right, because inwardly we are not fitting in with God's righteousness.

We can live in dysfunctional relationship systems and believe they are normal. I did it and my friends did it. Few change and leave the dysfunction behind for God's righteousness.

Like someone who dies from addiction or never leaves an abusive relationship, we too, if we do not act upon certain spiritual solutions, we will suffer from our choices to stay in the dysfunction which leads us into destruction. We all sin, but not all of us are improving in God's righteousness for improved salvation.

When I first began this inward evaluation it was heavy on conviction with practically no salvation or feeling of being delivered from destruction. It took time with baby steps into god's righteousness, which involved suffering, before I realized I was experiencing salvation. I had to act according to God's righteous ways long enough for it to grow within me before I could sense the good in it. As I confessed, repented, restored, studied, and collaborated about God's goodness I slowly began to witness spiritually wonderful and amazing experiences.

We all can improve in God's righteousness. We can grow such character in our thoughts, attitudes, and deeds. If we can agree with this point, then we have a chance to open our minds and humble our pride enough to take more action into such alignment. We will need to look closely at our inward behavior for ways we can improve. But first we must want righteousness. If we do not want it, how can we really take it into our hearts and minds for it to become part of who we are and protect us.

I recall a time mentoring a man who was suffering in addiction. I remember mentioning peace as a goal, but more importantly, I remember his reaction. He burst into laughter as if peace was a stupid idea. His faith was in experiencing extreme euphoric sensations. Peace was a threat to what he followed. Much destruction followed the man after that. His mind could not open up to comprehend the good in God's righteousness because it was clinging so tightly to evil which brought such seemingly good feeling experiences.

My experience has taught me that the world values a sense of humility in other people, but rarely sees the value in humbling themselves.

I used to think lowly of peace, meekness, kindness, and patience. I thought that way because I didn't really understand it.

How do we react when we are invited to grow in God's righteousness? Are we willing to practice ego deflation and humbling ourselves for the improved practice of God's character and righteousness?

To even desire God's righteousness we will need to open up our minds to learn something we do not understand.

Isaiah 42:16 I will bring the blind by a way they did not know; I will lead them in paths they have not known. I will make darkness light before them, And crooked places straight. These things I will do for them, And not forsake them.

It says, "bring the blind by a way they did not know." I thought of peace and compassion to be the way of fools because of all the liars, cheaters, and exploiters in the world. I was afraid to care. My heart was broken in my teenager years and I decided not to open it again. Later after finding God I learned I did not love, I had infatuation. I worshiped another person. That was my mistake. My heart was crushed by a person, because I misplaced my worship. I suffered from idolatry. I idolized a person. I learned an idea that my dream girl was going to rescue me. This fantasy crushed me.

In relearning to trust spiritual principles and character, character that went contrary to my own understanding, habits, and experience, I had to practice surrendering my own ideas. I had to trust in ways my understanding believed were wrong. It felt awkward. I felt out of place. Really, I felt like an idiot because I was acting in ways I believed to be stupid.

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

Someone once said, "We change when the path of where we are going becomes more painful than the path toward change."

This was my experience. My life was spiraling downward into the pit of despair. I was miserable and had enough foresight to see the misery was only beginning.

We will need to have enough desire, want, and interest to get us into new action. There is an old saying, “out of sight, out of mind.” We can build desire through building an understanding of how God’s righteousness can bring good things into our lives. But in order to do so we will need to continually bring into our awareness everyday God’s righteousness to grow and understanding of what it entails.

We will need to understand some simple steps to think it, speak it, pray for it, and act upon it.

Salvation Part 3

God is not partial

To grow in God’s righteousness we must cling more tightly to God’s righteousness. We must learn to gradually release our grip more and more upon ungodliness as we grasp more and more God’s righteousness.

Jesus says in Matthew 5:6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.

Jesus says in Matthew 5:10 Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus says in Matthew 5:20 For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

God’s righteousness involves God’s truth, mercy, peace, forgiveness, compassion, justice, and love.

One description the Bible makes consistently about God is that God is not partial to people. God loves us, but does not approve of ways outside of

God's righteousness. Anything we choose to think and do outside of growing in God's righteousness may affect our salvation.

It is God that offers us a choice into salvation or destruction. It is our choice. We have free will. But first we will need to undergo learning and training to know and better understand God's righteousness. It is our responsibility to exercise our thinking upon God's righteousness to grow in it. It is our responsibility to schedule time and apply ourselves. God will not do this for us. The walking in our faith is our responsibility. If we choose to ignore this crucial part of our salvation, then how can we be saved?

One description the Bible says over and over about God is that God is just. Since God is just and our salvation is impacted by our serving God, let's get to know a little bit better what the Bible means about God being just. God is just and fair.

Colossians 4:1 Masters, give your bondservants what is **just** and **fair**, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

It can be easier to serve God if God is our Master. Do we think of God as being our Master. And if God is our Master, whom we serve, then we are to grow in being more just and fair. That involves patient discernment.

Deuteronomy 16:19 You shall not pervert justice; you shall not show partiality, nor take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous.

Our inward actions have inward consequences. Bribes for example, come in many forms. Some forms of bribes are simple favors. Basically, if I do a wrong, and I justify it because someone is going to help me in some way, whether it is money or something else, then I am accepting a bribe. The world is full of ways to influence people or win people over and we ought to be careful with this. Who wants to be blind and twisted? And if we have participated in such behavior, then we may require some straightening out from our twistedness.

Bribe is defined as "money or favor given or promised in order to influence the judgment or conduct of a person in a position of trust"

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/bribe>

God loves everyone the same, but God's grace can grow in those who respond with God's righteousness in their heart, soul, strength, diligence, and spirit. (Listen to the series on Spiritual Growth Formula)

Remember, each podcast episode can add a little bit more of understanding.

If I have five dollars to give and two different people come to me who need five dollars, I will need to discern who to give it to. Let's say one person is a family member who I love, but this family member practices dishonesty and is not responsible with money. The other person is someone at my work who is responsible with money and reliable, but our personalities clash and I just don't like them. The real question I need to answer is, what does God want me to do? If Jesus was next to me whispering in my ear, how would I be guided?

Believe or not we learn a lot about how to behave by watching what other people do and doing likewise. This helps us work together to do many things. But in some cases, it can be destructive. If we choose to do something simply because it's what we do, we may be missing the mark.

There is a cognitive bias known as bandwagon effect. This is one of over a hundred forms of cognitive bias which can be found online with Wikipedia. Just search for list of cognitive bias online and wiki.

Wikipedia defines Bandwagon Effect as:

“tendency of an individual to acquire a particular style, behaviour or attitude because everyone else is doing it”

To follow God without partiality to people is to stay with God's interests when others are not. We can consider the crowd and their interests as part of our discernment, but ultimately, we are to seek out what God wants us to do and then do it. We can ask the question, what will help me align myself more with God's righteousness. Consultation with others who are not partial with the crowd is recommended.

If the crowd is following God and we follow God it can look like we are following each other, but we are not. If God is just and true and we follow

falsehood, then we are not following God. If truth is North and the crowd shifts to False-flattery or North-East, we must still go north.

It has never been comforting to choose something against popular belief. I try to use thorough analysis of facts to help discern truth. And I have found that popular belief sometimes will be ridiculously outside of that truth. In these occasions, it's easier to make such choices.

Sometimes I can be socially awkward seeking to be just and fair.

There was a time when I was helping with a youth group. I had some projects around the house and invited a high schooler to come help. I said I would pay him. He asked me if his cousin could come along. Now, I was acquainted with his cousin and assumed his cousin would get distracted and not really work. I told them both I would pay them according to how well they worked. This is a true story.

It went as I predicted. And they were paid differently according to their work. I knew I was acting right by God and staying true to my word. And I also knew I was being socially awkward and may be perceived as mean. Yet we were all in agreement. I was fair, just, and without partiality. And that was grace.

With all that said, I believe through practice we can grow to understand what how to be more fair and not partial to people. I believe being a Christian involves social awkwardness through righteousness.

Practice with making difficult choices and staying true to our word is needed to grow in our discernment. This does not mean we cannot change our minds. We will make mistakes and we can own them. We can apologize and seek to right our wrongs. When others repent with remorse I believe it is good to show mercy. If that kid would have asked for another chance, I would have given him that chance.

We can practice asking ourselves what is important to God and then exercise due diligence to learn the answers. We can practice seeking righteous actions throughout each day. We can discuss Biblical examples with standing firm with God's righteousness.

My strength is in truth and fairness. But I am weak in compassion, love, meekness, and mercy. Through the practice of patience and humility I am able to grow.

I hope to connect with others who seek to learn and grow in God's righteousness.

Jesus says in Mark 3:35 For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother."

This involves some people who go to church and some who don't. It involves some who read the Bible and some who don't. It involves some who are extreme sinners and some who are more pure in their hearts and minds. It's not about how corrupt we are inside or how well we abide by the law. It's not about fitting in with a crowd. It's about growing in God's righteousness.

Following God is seeing what God is about and applying ourselves to do likewise with increasing measure. We can do this.

We can learn to detect whether someone is choosing God's righteousness in their thoughts and actions.

I need to meet with others a few times to get a gist of where they are at. To witness progress I need to plot points. Meeting with someone one time provides one impression. It takes a few meetings to measure the impressions with each other to detect stagnation or improvement.

The Bible instructs us to be active according to God's righteousness.

I'm going to read Ephesians 6:13-20 and emphasize the stated action points. I'm going to emphasize them because I believe they are very important.

The actions I am going to read are skills we can grow through practice. Just as the disciples learned we too, can learn.

Ephesians 6:13-20 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints— and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

This verse declares responsibility, our responsibility. I must choose to accept responsibility to take up God's righteousness into my thoughts, prayers, words, and actions. Either I choose to make God's righteousness part of my days inward activity, or I choose not to.

I have heard some Christians say, "God loves you, just the way you are." I believe this message is true, but that does not mean God loves our choices. And it does not mean that God will rescue us if we choose to neglect our responsibility to grow with God. What kind of faith ignores God's righteousness and instructions on how to live?

God loving us does not bring salvation. God loves Judas just as much as any other Apostle. God is love. God is good. God is always good to us and offering good.

Yet many of us will not follow the instructions of Jesus to be salvation. Many of us will choose against God's righteousness that can deliver us out of destruction.

I'm going to say something here that can be uncomfortable. But I believe it very important. Let's discern carefully for truth whether comfortable or uncomfortable.

Judas was loved and taught by Jesus face to face. And it wasn't enough to deliver Judas from destruction.

Matthew 27:5 Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself.

It was the choice Judas made that lead to destruction.

I think this is an important point to meditate on for a while. Jesus loved Judas. Judas was close to Jesus. Judas believed Jesus and probably witnessed many amazing things. And yet, Judas was not delivered from destruction. Why wasn't Judas saved, because of his choices. I believe Judas experienced great remorse for his choices and actions. The inward brokenness destroyed him and he chose hanging as an escape from such inward suffering. I relate to this feeling. I have spoken to many others who have experienced similar suffering. My inward suffering resulted from choices that missed the mark.

God love us. God loves the world. God offers good and right guidance in thought and actions. Yet to grow good within us, we need to act upon it. God's love will not erase consequences from our choices. Jesus does not erase consequences from choices.

Please keep listening to more podcast episodes to understand what I mean. Our response impacts our inward condition.

Let's work through our intolerance over differences. Let's work to reduce our partiality to certain interests that can create conflict. Let's own our pride, vanity, greed, lust, fear, and idolatry. Let's grow God's righteousness in our thoughts, attitudes, words, demonstrations. Let's be more diligent to truth and fairness without partiality to people.

God is not partial and we are instructed not to show or have partiality to people.

Deuteronomy 10:17 For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe.

Deuteronomy 10:20-21 You shall fear the Lord your God; you shall serve Him, and to Him you shall hold fast, and take oaths in His name. He *is* your praise, and He *is* your God, who has done for you these great and awesome things which your eyes have seen.

God does not become attached to a person to give them favor. We are to favor God, not people. We love people, because we love God. We love,

because love is good. God will favor us as long as we are choosing to be in God's favor. God favors or prefers fairness and truth with love. If we choose to sabotage God's righteousness, then we will choose to out of God's favor.

Each of us will need to sort out this confusion with much reflection and conversation. Confusion is part of the journey, but we must travel in confusion toward resolve. Review the words perseverance and endurance.

Growing understanding may require testing, examining, and experience. We will need discernment and sound doctrine. We will need discussion with a growth mindset. We may need to hear the same thing many times before we finally get it and that's okay.

Here are some more verses about God not being partial. Let's listen to it, open our Bible and read it, and also discuss it with others to help this understanding become stronger within us. Let's view God this way each day and see how we can grow in such righteousness. Let's not fear nor avoid learning that is uncomfortable, especially learning how to grow in God's righteousness.

Romans 2:11 For there is no **partiality** with God.

Colossians 3:25 But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no **partiality**.

Galatians 2:6 But from those who seemed to be something—whatever they were, it makes no difference to me; God shows personal **favoritism** to no man—for those who seemed *to be something* added nothing to me.

1 Timothy 5:21 I charge *you* before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that you observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing with **partiality**.

1 Peter 1:17 And if you call on the Father, who without **partiality** judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay *here* in fear;

James 2:1 - 4 My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord* of glory, with partiality. For if there should come into your

assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, "You sit here in a good place," and say to the poor man, "You stand there," or, "Sit here at my footstool," have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?

Exodus 23:3 You shall not show partiality to a poor man in his dispute.

Leviticus 19:15 'You shall do no injustice in judgment. You shall not be partial to the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty. In righteousness you shall judge your neighbor.

To grow with impartiality I must fix my mind to see how I am abiding in God and Jesus as described in

John 15:5-8 I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw *them* into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you^[b] will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

Jesus was only partial to God. Jesus teaches us to only be partial to God. Jesus lays out consequences from our choices.

For me to choose God each day I need to get God into my consciousness. I need to think about God. I need to consider God's interests. And I need to see how I can respond accordingly.

Let's not be afraid of mistakes, but know that growth with God's righteousness will be good. Let's renew our minds toward God's righteousness. Let's think, speak, and act more with it and experience the results it can bring.

Thank you for listening and God bless.

Partiality in teaching

Everyone sins including me. Any imperfect teacher, teaches imperfectly. I will make mistakes. I repent often. I believe in double checking teaching for accuracy. I welcome corrective feedback and encouragement. Let's avoid complaining about mistakes and instead, seek solutions.

Jesus warns us about mainstream teaching.

Matthew 16:5-6 Now when His disciples had come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread. Then Jesus said to them, "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees."

Mark 8:14 Now the disciples had forgotten to take bread, and they did not have more than one loaf with them in the boat. **15** Then He charged them, saying, "Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod."

Mislearning is happening in churches. Kids have been misinformed by parents and have grown up resenting and fearing the Bible and church. It's a hard fact to accept, but it's very real.

There are people who really need a recovery from this mislearning. Are we having empathy for them? I believe Jesus was all about helping such people. I believe Jesus became angry at the current teachers of the time because of such things.

I hope I can pause with compassion when confronted by someone who is angry at the Bible and Christian education. I hope I can bring love, patience, and mercy in those situations.

I want to discuss very briefly a 12 step program that has helped millions of people. It is a program called Alanon. It is for those who are in relationships with Alcoholics. I want to focus upon one aspect of the problem in addiction relationships. There is role the Alanon plays in the relationship. They are the rescuer. They protect the Alcoholic from negative consequences their addiction creates. They love the Alcoholic and want to protect them from getting hurt. They lie and cover up problems. They rescue in many different ways. This type of behavior can make it possible

for addicts to continue in their behavior more and more due to the absence of pain and suffering.

The Addict needs to hit a bottom otherwise known as the pit of despair. They can experience what is referred to in the book Alcoholics Anonymous as “incomprehensible demoralization.”

I believe we all need negative consequences. We need to look at them and reflect upon them. We need remorse and contrition. We need shame, but as the Bible describes shame which is not self-condemnation.

To teach the Bible truthfully and without being partial, we need to say it as the Bible says it. We need to teach about suffering for good and to understand suffering from evil. We need to teach about joy, but a joy with tears, because we have been relieved from our suffering.

I believe mislearning is developed through poor teaching practices. Efficient learning will involve checking for understanding. Every school I have attended had tests. Every school. And that includes seminary school. They check for understanding. It's not to penalize or make things hard. It's to make sure people are getting it right.

Sermons without checking for understanding is a breeding ground for mislearning. We have a habit of jumping to conclusions that are erroneous. Think about how often others misunderstand what you are saying or misunderstand your meaning and intentions. Communication specialists and therapist use a technique called clarifying. To ensure understanding we must check for it. We must clarify.

Jesus taught students face to face through conversations together. The students asked questions. When Jesus was a child, Jesus asked questions.

Luke 2:46 Now so it was that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions.

Jesus would clarify with students. Jesus explained parables with students. Jesus had a small group. Jesus demonstrated what say and how to act. Jesus was thorough and available all day. Jesus did not follow a schedule

by a clock. Of course we cannot be perfectly like Jesus, but we can at least try to grow increasing toward that perfection.

Matthew 5:48 Therefore you shall be **perfect**, just as your Father in heaven is **perfect**.

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

John 17:23 I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made **perfect** in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

To see the truth, understand the truth, and grow my mind and heart into the truth, I need to evaluate myself to see how I can grow in that direction.

Are we applying ourselves to “be made perfect?” Or are we settling?

God loves us without partiality

I believe God does love you just the way you are, but no different than God loves people who do great evil. God loves all people equally. God is love. But I have found through experience, in order to experience God’s love, I need to seek it out and received it. I need to lower my defenses against it and let it in. I need to end the anger in me and forgive. I can refuse love.

I believe our teachers ought to share from their own experience and through demonstration as Jesus, the Apostles, and all the disciples in the Bible have done.

Mark 9:42 But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea.

Please, email me questions. Or at least, find someone to talk with to work out confusion. Let’s begin having conversations after sermons. We can have post-sermon groups to discuss and learn it better together. Find people who have experience and listen carefully. Walk with them and learn.

I went up to a pastor after a sermon once and suggested a post-sermon group. He said, “we tried that.” I have heard this growth killing phrase before. This is another way of saying, “we give up trying that.”

I played baseball for nine years. I struck out a lot, but that doesn't mean I didn't try again and eventually hit the ball. You see, I had faith that it could work.

Not everyone followed Jesus. Does that mean Jesus gave up. Some people refused to follow Jesus. Jesus sets the bar really high for students. I believe there is a good reason for setting the bar high.

To perfect ourselves in God's salvation we will need to decrease our relying upon worldly things and ideas while trusting more with being fair and impartial.

It may be true that the more I press toward perfection the fewer people will want to hear and follow the message. Yet the one person out there that I can reach to grow more towards what is perfect may be worth all that I do.

There is a popular inspirational story about a starfish. It goes something like this; A man was taking a nice walk upon a beach. The beach was flooded with thousands of starfish. As he walked he saw another man in the distance throwing things toward the ocean. As he got closer he noticed the man was picking up the starfish and throwing them back. When he got to the man he said jokingly, “do you really think you can save all these starfish?” What difference can you really make with all these?” The man picked up a starfish and said, “I'm making a difference to this one.”

Salvation Part 4 Righteousness

When Jesus provides directions, I try to think how I can follow them. And when Jesus repeats directions, I believe they are repeated for good reason. Perhaps because Jesus knows, we need it.

Matthew 10:22 And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved.

Matthew 24:13 But he who endures to the end shall be saved.

Jesus says we need to endure to be saved. We need to endure doing right by God. Jesus makes this clear in John 15. I believe Jesus in John 15 is trying to describe not only how to fulfill the first and great command of God, but also the consequences from doing it or not.

Essentially, Jesus teaches how to be right with God. Walking in God's righteousness is to sense Godly good and increase in it. As we reshape our thoughts, words, attitudes, and actions to be more like God, we can grow in God's righteousness.

And to reshape anything means to endure change.

Righteousness is defined at biblehub.com

Hebrew - just, righteous

Greek - righteousness, justice

It also describes righteousness as "the approval of God."

In other words, to grow in righteousness is to be making choices and acting in ways that grow in the approval of God.

This one character trait of God, to be fair, right, just, and not partial to people is a character trait of which we all have room to improve. We each participate in what is called selective attention. We see what we are looking at and we think about what we see. We need to keep God's good character within our thoughts. Seeking, following, loving, and desiring God is to look for how we can participate in God's good ways and character.

There is a cliché that is used in 12 step meetings, "First Things First." It basically means, seek God and do God's will.

Jesus gives a very clear first and right step for us to take every day and throughout the day. Jesus says in Matthew 6:33 "But **seek first** the

kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”

In order to get all these things, Godly good things, we must take some new and improved mental action with God’s character.

We must seek God’s righteousness. And we must make God’s righteousness the first thing we seek. Anything we set in our minds to be more important than God’s righteousness may fall into idolatry.

Yet I do not believe this is all or nothing. It is not black and white. It is not either or. We can bring with us degrees of God’s righteousness into all of our activities and degrees of evil or ungodliness.

There is a bit of evil in the best of us and a bit of good in the worst of us.

We are called to train, grow, and increase in Godly good works. We are instructed to improve and teach by demonstration. We are instructed to persevere, endure, and struggle through the development of righteousness.

Sometimes it can be a struggle to resist our own distracting contrary thinking.

I believe Jesus wants me to set my own heart and mind toward God’s purposes all day long. I know this. I know this very well. I know it works, because I have done it many times over many years and I’ve witnessed the good results over and over again. Humbling myself and submitting myself to God’s ways is necessary.

Yet there are many influences that seek to convince me away from taking such action. I discuss this more in other podcasts. Please listen to all the podcasts to grow a better understanding of what I’m teaching.

2 Samuel 23:5 If my house were not right with God, surely he would not have made with me an everlasting covenant, arranged and secured in every part; surely he would not bring to fruition my salvation and grant me my every desire.

This verse explains a requirement for an everlasting covenant. I must be “right with God” and “arranged and secured in every part.”

In the beginning of my journey I was told to trust God, clean house, and work with others. First I needed to clean house. I needed to examine my character for defects. And I needed to humbly pray to God to have such defective character removed.

Getting right with God is to grow in God’s righteousness. And to grow in God’s righteousness is to increasingly grow our thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, demeanor, words, goals, and desires toward such righteous character.

When I began this journey, my whole being was a defect of character when compared to God’s good. I really believed there was no good in me. I did not love and I had much hate. I was angry and did not trust anyone. I believed showing sincerity was a to put my heart on the table for someone else to crush.

My mentors taught me to make a list of my resentments and describe the situations. I needed to confess my anger and begin to see how my self-centered desires contributed to hurting others. And I needed to learn how hurting others often provoked retaliation in them to hurt me. This cycle was essential for me to see and learn how my choices impacted responses from others. And as I slowly began responding with mercy and forgiveness which are part of God’s righteousness, my relationships improved.

Matthew 7:5 Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.

The plank can be a thought or belief within me that can shape an attitude or behavior contrary to God’s approval. My thoughts and how I perceive information creates my faith. And the faith I act upon is what can deliver me out of destruction if it is right with God.

I was taught to keep a close watch upon inward thoughts of fear, resentment, faultfinding, blaming, dishonesty, and self-centeredness. These principles brought destruction. And they still bring destruction. I need the practice of humbling myself, confession, and repentance. Most

times the best response to anger and fear is to pray and get my inward being right with God.

God approves of us growing with diligence. God is a forgiving and merciful God. There is a big difference between struggling as we grow in God's good and barely even trying. I believe we could all benefit from trying one day to give our all to obey God's ways in everything that day. This could really enhance our self awareness. Consultation and discussions about who we are, what we think, how we feel, and what we choose to do can teach us valuable spiritual truth about ourselves. Yet we will need to give into the process, look at the speck in our own eye, and seek God for it to be removed.

When I began giving up defective ways of living, it was a struggle. It was like moving to a new place where I had to relearn the landscape. I had to think about where I was going, but where I was going in my head. Was I going to take the path of fear or faith, resentment or forgiveness, dishonesty or evaluate deeper for truth. Was I going to be willing to be renewed and change.

I was asked if I was willing to go to any length to grow spiritually. What kind of commitment was I willing to give to grow with God? I needed to choose to commit myself to do things that would be unfamiliar and uncomfortable.

Of course this training took time. But more importantly, it took self-discipline to stay the path, stand firm, and continue in it.

Anyone who is going to be trained in anything will need to show up consistently and give themselves over to the work. They will need to follow some new instructions and to the degree necessary to produce the desired change.

I began choosing relationships with others who had better character. I needed new associations that would encourage me in a more Godly way. I needed others who are also applying themselves to grow with God.

Growing with righteousness involved hard choices in associations and careers. Each of us will need to decide for ourselves our path while keeping God the goal of our lives. God gives us free will to choose.

Cleansing our conscience and purifying our hearts is a priority in the journey. Doing right is to do right and be right more and more with God. And as we live more rightly by spiritual principles we cleanse our conscience and purify our hearts. We find peace, love, and connection with others.

You may have heard Titus 3:5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,

Verses 3:1-4 set up understanding for 3:5.

Let's think carefully about the meaning in verses 1-4 and compare ourselves to them, our thoughts, words, attitudes, and actions.

“Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men. For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared,”

Verse 3:5 says “He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit”

“Through the washing of regeneration” means we are a new person that has been cleansed, and cleanse in a Godly way with removal of evil thinking and acting. Of course not completely, because we all sin.

Let's look at an example where many people give themselves over to new structure of behaving. When someone joins the military they are agreeing to give themselves completely to a new program of living. They go through a boot camp for a crash course of training.

Imagine if we dedicated ourselves to God and the instructions on how to behave in the Bible as someone who joins the military. Imagine how productive we could be. The reason I give this example is to show it is possible to take up a whole new structure of living. And just like the military, many sacrifices will need to be made.

However, with God, we do not have a drill sergeant. We are not surrounded by others showing us how to behave. We do not have a uniform. Our physical reality is not prompting us to action. We don't have someone waking us up prompting us to action every day. We do not have a paycheck from God with health care.

Instead, we are invited to choose to participate in training. We have prompts all around us to ignore the calling. We are prompted to be self-serving and have selfish ambition. We are prompted to use false flattery and people please. We are prompted to lie.

All that said, we will need to walk in resistance to what other people do, to be more honest and sincere than what is socially accepted, and to go against what the crowd desires. We will need the self-discipline to stand firm in what is right. We will need to think beyond fitting in with the crowd and convince ourselves toward God's righteousness.

Imagine what kind of military we would have if it was all voluntary. People could get up when they want, eat when they want, exercise or not, have private rooms, and dress how they want. Drill sergeants would invite instead of command. What do you think would happen?

Imagine if when we went to school there were no more tests or homework. Everyone just needed to show up once a week and try to stay awake. What kind of learning would take place?

The fact of the matter is, when it comes to growing with God and walking in God's righteousness, we will need to get ourselves moving in the right direction. We will need to get ourselves out of bed, read, contemplate, pray, ask questions, examine, and learn. We will need to be self-disciplined and hold ourselves accountable. We will need to be our own drill sergeant. We will need to tell ourselves, no when sinful prompts come and yes to new action with righteousness.

In order to learn, train, grow, improve, and increase we will need to convince ourselves to choose to get up each day and pursue God's ways inwardly. The development of God's love within us and given outwardly toward others with sincerity and truth can bring salvation.

Titus 3:8 “those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works.”

To be careful to maintain good works is to set our minds, words, goals, and actions to grow in God’s righteousness. This righteousness can bring salvation.

2 Timothy 4:7-8 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

We are in a fight. We need to put on Godly thoughts and attitude to fight against evil thoughts and perceptions.

Romans 13:12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the **armor** of light.

2 Corinthians 6:7 by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the **armor** of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,

Also read all of Ephesians 6 and 2 Corinthians 10

James 4:1 *Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.*

Love covers sins

I had a lot of misunderstanding within my being that kept me from love, a love which would cover sins.

1 Peter 4:8 And above all things have fervent love for one another, for “love will cover a multitude of sins.”

The verse does not say love can or might cover many sins, it says it will cover them.

Love will covers a multitude of sins, but it will need to be the kind of love that is right with God. Such love would be honest, sincere, humble, bold, and sacrificial love. Mainstream love that demonstrates people pleasing and false flattery probably won't do it.

Obey Righteousness

1 Peter 4:17 - 19 For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? Now "If the righteous one is scarcely saved, Where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?" Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.

There may be a link between with what Peter says, "righteous one is scarcely saved" and what Jesus says, in Matthew 5:20 For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

The teachers of the law seemed to focus on outward appearances or to give impressions of being righteous and Jesus teaches to be righteous inwardly. Jesus teaches us to love God with our whole inward being.

Choosing a new way of living

I needed to make a choice with commitment. When I first learned my inward way of responding to others needed to change I was in a mild state of shock. Was I going to accept this information and new direction or deny it? I had to choose. I chose to accept this information, even if just temporarily to see where this new path would lead me. I was on a journey with this new path and wanted to finish it out to see what would happen. I chose to grow my character toward mercy, forgiveness, and compassion because I wanted to understand what would happen. I just had to see. I chose to regularly pray for such character.

When I chose to accept the work, inwardly, I felt a change. I felt a change because my mission changed. My goals changed. My interests changed. Nothing happened yet, but everything within me was different.

When people get new jobs or win the lottery there can be a lot going on within them, although they have yet to start work or cash in the ticket. I believe that's what it is like when we honestly and sincerely commit ourselves to grow with God's righteousness. It might not be an exciting feeling, but certainly a switch happens where we feel different.

When I first made my decision, I felt fear. I was intimidated. I did not want to do the things that were asked of me. Yet I had to know. I accepted the responsibility, but was very nervous about it.

I chose to trust God, but it wasn't really until I began praying for that guidance and begin acting differently that I felt what it is like to accept a new identity.

I felt confused yet curious and hopeful. I knew this decision I was making was life-changing, but I did not know how. Over time, I experienced a sense of sadness because my old identity was dying. I was gradually burying some of who I was while building a new person following new principles.

2 Corinthians 5:20 Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore *you* on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.

We are to grow in the likeness of God. We are to increasingly align ourselves with God's righteous ways and as we do we are increasingly being delivered out of destruction.

Stand firm

Psalm 15:1-2 Lord, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill? He who walks uprightly, And works righteousness, And speaks the truth in his heart;

In order for me to grow in God's righteousness I needed to be convinced.

Romans 14:5 One person esteems *one* day above another; another esteems every day *alike*. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind.

I was convinced that I was doing well with the church and groups. I was contributing, serving, and fitting in. I was an active participant with what their purposes. Yet when I compared my life to the disciples and what the Bible said to do, I became convinced there was so much more room for improvement.

I believed I could be more patient and kind. I wanted to grow and I wanted to understand, but I did not want to dedicate to more learning and change. I needed to be more convinced, convinced enough to commit to new action.

I began with a simple step of each day praying for guidance and listening. I looked for convincing information and gathered it up slowly. It didn't take long and I began making changes in my thoughts, words, and actions to be more kind, patient, and caring. My heart changed afterwards.

I still need to examine myself for just how much effort, time, and energy I am applying to my spiritual productivity. Every time I sincerely and honestly look at this I can see how I have room to improve.

The benchmark of course is Jesus and the disciples, not people around us. Although others around us may be a good starting point with mentors and the like, we may out grow them in our development.

I was taught to pray when I wake up and pray before going to sleep every day. I was also taught to pray for guidance throughout the day and see how I can help others. I was taught to examine myself daily to see how well I am doing. This is a great process to begin to implement in reconciling with God. So the first step is getting honest about our effort and application in doing what the Bible says to do.

I really believe anyone who cannot see how to improve, isn't taking enough time and honest investigation to learn how to improve. It's not difficult to wait

Psalm 27:14 Wait on the Lord; Be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say, on the Lord!

To learn more about who God is, please visit
<https://inwardauthority.com/bible-describes-god>

We can wait with our minds seeking God's righteous ways.

Idolatry

Welcome back. Today we will review scripture on idolatry and discuss how it works with the salvation experience.

When I committed myself to seek God, I became a student of correcting my character and growing new character. My whole being and life became flexible to God.

I learned from the book Alcoholics Anonymous that God was to be everything or nothing, God was to be my new employer. That meant I was to wake up each day and punch in my time clock to go to work for God. And like a brand new employee, I needed training.

Over much time, I was slowly washed by God's good grace. But when I was washed, it was something like taking a sponge to car that had not been washed for a decade. Imagine that sponge filling up with dirt to the extent it needed to be rinsed in a bucket before it could collect any more dirt. Imagine that sponge needing to be rinsed over and over again. My character and beliefs took time to renew through learning and practice. It wasn't like an altar call where I go up, profess Christ as my savior, and am instantly sin free. My sins were forgiven, but my character and thinking were structured to continue sinning. I needed guidance and counsel to learn how to live right with God.

I needed to commit my life to walk in God's ways, but I needed to learn about God's ways before I could walk in them. I needed to commit myself to learning and training. What made this even more complicated was the lack of trainers available to me to show me how to walk more like Christ.

The best help I could find was simple instructions like pray, love, serve, meditate, read, and do the steps. People would suggest things I already heard. I had to have God's help. And the only way I could get God's help was to seek and wait for it. I had to seek God diligently and become a sponge for Godly experiences. I had to patiently persist in these

experiences to repeat them with truth and sincerity. Waiting for God was to wait with my full inward being attentive to spiritual things.

I found politics in church and the leaders to be distracted by many things. I heard a pastor teaching on the book of James say, "If I spoke like this you would fire me."

I just didn't find people to lead me very well by demonstration into deep spiritual experiences with God's righteousness. I wanted more. And the only way I could see to grow more like Jesus was to follow the Bible and go it alone.

I chose to use the Bible, real life experiences, research, studies, and my own personal experiences to find truth. I collaborated extensively my findings and still do to validate understanding.

In order for me to understand Idolatry, I needed to give myself completely to trusting and serving God and change drastically enough for others to notice. I mean, my mind can easily believe I am changing when I'm not. So I needed evidence beyond myself that I am growing.

Idolatry happens when my interests become out of line with God's interests; that is, when I seek thoughts, words, attitude, or actions that move me away from God's righteousness. This happens every day. I spend much of my day redirecting myself back to God. If I go a day without directing myself toward God, it can be an ungodly day. A day without salvation and perhaps growth with destruction. I might do or say things that hurt relationships, my heart, and my conscience.

In the beginning, I would pray in the morning for guidance to do God's will. I would guard against destructive thinking like fear, resentments, dishonesty, and self-centeredness. I would examine myself at night or throughout the day to see how well I was doing. This process is outlined in the book Alcoholics Anonymous. Try reading pages 85 - 88 each day with sincere desire and see what happens.

It took some time to learn how to adopt these basic beginning steps into my daily activities. Over time with practice they helped me change my character.

Deuteronomy 4:15 - 19 And *take heed*, lest you lift your eyes to heaven, and *when* you see the sun, the moon, and the stars, all the host of heaven, you feel driven to worship them and serve them, which the Lord your God has given to all the peoples under the whole heaven as a heritage.

When I began meditating I would look at the stars and be amazed. I still appreciate the beauty of sunsets. Yet I am to seek to walk with God in God's righteousness which requires me to trust in that way of being. Gazing at beauty helps me to experience goodness, but if it does not grow my thoughts, words, and actions to forgive and care for others. Experiences that only make myself feel good and not others may be more self-serving than God serving.

20 "to be His people"

To be a servant of God, I need to think and act upon God's character and righteousness. I need to think how to do such things and examine myself to see how well I am doing them.

24 "For the Lord your God *is* a consuming fire, a jealous God."

biblehub.com describes the word jealous as "demanding exclusive service."

29 But from there you will seek the Lord your God, and you will find *Him* if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul. **30** When you are in distress, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, when you turn to the Lord your God and obey His voice

Please think about the word 'if' in verse 29 where it says "you will find *Him* if." The word if is a conditional clause. The functionality of the word if means something is required on my part. It says "if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul."

Verse 30 says "when you turn to" which is to repent. A good concordance study is to search the word repent and learn what the Bible and Jesus says.

Verse 40 You shall therefore keep His statutes and His commandments which I command you today, that it may go well with you and with your

children after you, and that you may prolong *your* days in the land which the Lord your God is giving you for all time.”

Have you ever tried talking to kids to warn them about things to come? They can easily let that warning go right over their head because they don't understand it. But if we are honest and sincere with children with our struggles, thoughts, and feelings, they can grow more in God's righteousness. Training in God's righteousness through demonstration and honest conversation may be the best protection for them.

Kids need to sense with understanding God's righteousness. It will be difficult to raise kids right with God if we sidestep or sugar coat deeper spiritual truth about destruction and what the Bible says to do. If we want to save kids, we need to get real and authentic about our sinful ways and how we are growing in God's righteousness.

We need to speak boldly, gently, and sincerely, truth about God's righteous ways or kids will develop their own understanding about God that can be very far from the truth.

Kids and adults develop ideas about themselves and the world based upon what they see and hear.

If I come to a conclusion about my standing with God through comparing myself to people at my church, I may miss the mark.

If kids think to themselves that kids at church are the benchmark, they may come to believe that church is a failure. They see the church kids at school and know they sin.

The benchmark Christians ought to have is Christ. We ought to teach openly that church people sin, some more than others. We must make it clear that church and groups are not the goal. God and living by God's righteousness has always been God's goal. And we need to choose to make that goal known more and more.

Deuteronomy 5:7 'You shall have no other gods before Me.

9 “you shall not bow down to them nor serve them.”

10 “but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.”

Here again is another conditional phrase, “those who love Me and keep My commandments.” God shows mercy to those who love God and keep God’s commandments.

As I have shared in other episodes, at 21 years of age I made God my everything. I decided God was an intangible and invisible force available to me if I chose to trust and rely upon God’s ways. I chose to seek and trust God to help me in my suffering. And through the process over time I began to learn my trusting and serving God was good. It was good for me and good for others. It was good all around for me to walk in God’s ways. And I had yet to read the Bible or go to church.

After a while I began to pursue other things. I was told I needed a job. I went to school, and gradually, other things became more important than serving God. It only took about six months to get to a point where I would feel completely disconnected from God and alone. A year later I became a broken and desperate man, humbled and ready again to relearn how to connect with God. I asked for help and another man redirected me to set my heart and mind again toward God. I had to make many hard choices to make God more important than school and my career.

This key point about worshiping God exclusively remains today. Jesus emphasized this describing the first or great commandment of God in Mark 12:30 And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This is the first commandment.

Jesus emphasizes serving God and making God our one and only master.

Luke 16:13 “No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”

Mammon at biblehub.com is described as riches or wealth.

1 Timothy 6:10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

2 Timothy 3:2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

Placing anything in my mind to be more important than God is a threat to my salvation, love, peace, and sanity.

Covet

Deuteronomy 5:21 'You shall not covet your neighbor's wife; and you shall not desire your neighbor's house, his field, his male servant, his female servant, his ox, his donkey, or anything that *is* your neighbor's.'

Colossians 3 Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

The Bible says covetousness, which is idolatry.

When I became empty and broken and sought to grow with God again I examined myself for faults. I realized I was comparing myself to others around me. I was broke. I used a bicycle for transportation. I was attending a university while working graveyard shift at a convenience store. At the University I would compare myself to others. And as I did, I felt more and more of less value. I was basing my decision about myself upon what other people had and how they looked. I looked at their cars, clothes, and money.

As I was guided to focus more upon God, to trust God, and to serve God in my choices and character, I learned to not give so much attention to what other people had or how they looked. I had to restructure my perception about what was important. I had to convince myself to rely less upon financial success and more upon God's righteousness. My priorities became more about spiritual correct ways of living within myself. Instead of seeing how I was different than others, I focused more on seeing how I could become a better person with God.

I examined my thoughts and attitude to correct them toward truth and justice. I sought to fit in with God's character. I sought to redirect my thoughts and choices more and more to doing right by God. I chose to give less attention to worrying what others might think.

I wish I could say I grew perfectly with God, but I didn't. I would slip all the time. I would go back and forth redirecting myself again and again toward Godly good. I was like someone learning to ride a bike that would keep falling and getting hurt, but I would get back on the bike. I would keep at it because I learned being on the bike, even if just for a little while, created security within my mind and heart. I would always be improved inwardly when I prioritized God over time.

Stubbornness

1 Samuel 15:23 For rebellion *is* as the sin of witchcraft, And stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He also has rejected you from *being* king.”

Reject the word of the Lord it says. This ties into disobedience. Try doing a concordance search on the word obey and learn what the Bible says about that. Such a study can grow understanding about how serious it is to live by God's righteousness. This is a crucial understanding to maintain.

I rejected and resisted God. I still do it every day. I set for myself easy objectives. My goal is to improve toward God little by little over time. That means I can grow like the stock market grows. There can be set backs and dips in my spiritual productivity which I can learn from. I use feedback from others that can testify to my growth or slips.

Remember the metaphor I used earlier the car that hadn't been cleaned for a decade. Imagine that car being cleaned about half way and that's about where I am now 30 years later. But I've done this journey figuring things out thinking beyond groups, churches, and books.

I'm hoping to find or help create a system of living that can more easily promote authentic and real growth with God's righteousness. The quickest way to learn is with a group that is doing it right, Godly right.

Behavior patterns can be testimonies and teachings. What we do speaks so much louder than what we say.

Stubbornness or disobeying doing right with God can be developed through many forms of self-deception. Each of us will need to choose for ourselves whether to make God our employer or not.

Humility can be a good fix for stubbornness. Praying sincerely for humility helps me. But I need to desire it. If I do not desire it, then praying for help to desire it may be a good start.

Isaiah 46:12 “Listen to Me, you **stubborn**-hearted, Who *are* far from righteousness:

This battle to obey God’s good ways over my own self-gratifying desires can be like following a diet or exercise routine. It can be like convincing myself to go to school to get a degree. I need to commit and stay at it to achieve the goal.

The path to love and peace is to increase my whole being to think and act more with love and peace. Who I am inside affects who I am.

Created things & images

Isaiah 44:6 “Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel, And his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: ‘I *am* the First and I *am* the Last; Besides Me *there is* no God.

9 Those who make an image, all of them *are* useless, And their precious things shall not profit; They *are* their own witnesses; They neither see nor know, that they may be ashamed.

Ezekiel 14:3 “Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their hearts,”

4 “Everyone of the house of Israel who sets up his idols in his heart,”

7 “who separates himself from Me and sets up his idols in his heart”

Over and over the phrase “who sets up his idols in his heart” is used. We must examine ourselves to know what our desire is set upon and what we hope for to make us feel good. We must learn what Jesus meant by,

Matthew 19:17 “Why do you ask me about what is good?” Jesus replied. “There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, keep the commandments.”

Proverbs 11:23 The desire of the righteous ends only in good, but the hope of the wicked only in wrath.

We must learn about God’s good through experience to taste that good so we can desire it. Good experiences grow desire to repeat them. Love, mercy, and compassion done right in truth and sincerity are very desirable experiences.

I used to love sports. I had teams that I worshiped. I wore the teams hats and t-shirts. I would argue with others over how my team was better. I would poke and instigate with others. I eventually got to a point where I realized this behavior was not right with God and began to change. I stopped antagonizing others. When others would poke at me, I would just avoid them. I came to believe this back and forth with put downs, attacks, and jabs was spiritually destructive. I eventually put the t-shirts and hats away.

Although I have come a long way spiritually from where I was, I know I am only beginning to learn how to live with God one day at a time.

Hosea 4:11-12 Harlotry, wine, and new wine enslave the heart. My people ask counsel from their wooden *idols*, And their staff informs them. For the spirit of harlotry has caused *them* to stray, And they have played the harlot against their God.

This subject is one full of shame and embarrassment. The damage from it is emense and it is tied to greed, lust, and self-gratification. Whatever we decide in our minds to seek out to feel good that is not with God may be harmful.

1 Corinthians 10:7 “And do not become idolaters as *were* some of them. As it is written, “The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.”

Exodus 32:6 So the next day the people rose early and sacrificed burnt offerings and presented fellowship offerings. Afterward they sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry.

I suppose this could be similar for me to go to church or a group to be serious about God and then later to pursue my own desires.

Food, drugs, sex, money, vanity, and pride can hurt us if we set our hearts upon them. If we trust in them to bring comfort it can bring destruction. We will need to choose to either bring Godly good into our thoughts, words, attitudes, and actions . . . or not.

Destruction and Salvation

I thought it would be good to end this salvation series with some instructions about thoughts and behaviors we can choose to grow. We choose thoughts which can grow destruction or salvation.

The instructions are to “put to death” or “put off” ungodly thoughts and actions.

Colossians 3:5-11 Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.

But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new *man* who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave *nor* free, but Christ *is* all and in all.

Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; **13** bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. **14** But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. **15** And let the peace of God

rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. **16** Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. **17** And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

Galatians 5:19-21 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told *you* in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

22 - 26 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

Growing in this manner requires me to seek it everyday and keep my mind focused upon it. I must pray for humility and sincerely seek to serve God. I need to put on God's righteousness little by little in a progressive way while putting off things not of God more and more.

Gentleness & Compassion

What is gentleness? Sincerity

Obey Righteousness

In episode 2 we discussed the need for a pursuit of righteousness by our inward selves to lead us into Salvation.

My process spanning three decades involves a pattern I have witnessed in others. The first part is developing within us a sense of readiness to give our all to God, to be lead by Godly principles, and to be cleansed through confession and repentance.

Luke 1:77-79 To give knowledge of salvation to His people
By the remission of their sins, Through the tender mercy of our God,
With which the Dayspring from on high has visited us;
To give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, To
guide our feet into the way of peace.”

What I take away from this verse is that the remission of our sinful ways can develop knowledge of salvation. We can experience God's tender mercy. And this knowledge of salvation can guide our feet into the way of peace.

When I first confessed my sins, anger, fear, and self-centeredness, I did not sense anything spiritual. My attitude was like, “yeah, I have evil, just as the whole world is evil.” I had yet to encounter Godly good or someone with a pure heart.

Over time with perseverance and much endurance I continued to seek out God's will, to partake in it, follow it, and practice it. And after a few months of examining myself and making changes to let God's will guide my feet more along Godly good, then I began to witness changes in myself and how I sensed the world around me. I began to witness good in the world and myself.

Romans 10:10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

This verse has been presented like milk to newborns when it very well could be shared like solid food. I have listened to teachers simplify this message to highlight the confess with your mouth part as though a mere utterance will bring someone to salvation. The utterance is just and utterance until one can witness the persons follow up action.

Verse 16 says “But they have not all obeyed the gospel.”

Verse 21 says ““All day long I have stretched out My hands To a disobedient and contrary people.”

Titus 2:11-14 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.

Desire good works

I believe many of us want to feel free, relaxed, confident, and at peace. God offers these experience as a gift. We all can have them. But we will need to accept God's grace or righteousness in order to have them. We will need to choose a path which can guide us into growing more correctly with God's character.

Try doing a concordance search on "Good Works" in the Bible.

Ephesians 2:10 For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Try doing a concordance study on the word "Good" in the Bible. It is mentioned a lot and those who want to live according to the Bible would greatly benefit to know well what it means in the Bible.

We are created for many good things. Healthy things which can promote improvement include exercise, stretching, meditation, eating balanced foods, education, growth mindsets, sharing feelings, listening, compassion, truth, sincerity, creativity, working with our hands, helping and encouraging others, and we can easily do more or all of these things.

As we defined in the first part of this series, Salvation is to be delivered out of destruction. Living more aligned with what is good and right with our body and spirit can help deliver us out of destruction.

Matthew 5:16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

1 Timothy 5:25 Likewise, the good works of some are clearly evident, and those that are otherwise cannot be hidden.

Let's open up our minds for objectivity, accountability, and responsibility. Let's humble ourselves, our own understanding, and listen carefully as students of spiritual truth. Let's see the patterns and how information connects. Let's see God's truth. Let's make our inward thoughts to become clay for the potter. Let's give our thoughts and beliefs to better align with God's righteousness.

Psalm 1:6 For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked leads to destruction.

There is a way of righteousness and a way of wickedness. We choose to grow one or the other every day. Growth with righteousness can come through our developing it within our hearts and minds more diligently.

Whatever we have learned about righteousness and wickedness needs to be tested with the Bible. We can learn what the Bible teaches us about this path with righteousness and practice the instructions. What did Jesus teach us to do that we can do? Will we choose to do it?

The instructions are very easy to find. The following are some examples listed on my website at www.inwardauthority.com. Just click the heading God's Character and Us then "Christian Character."

"Behave like a Christian"
Romans 12:9-21 NKJV,

"Marks of a True Christian"
Romans 12:9-21 ESV

"Instructions for Christian Living"
Ephesians 4:17-32 NIV

"The Christian's walk"
Ephesians 4:17 - 32 NASB

"What the Christians are to do"

Philippians 4:1-9 NCV, NET
Colossians 4:2-6 NCV

"Christian Order"
1 Corinthians 11:1-22 NASB

"Christian Conduct"
1 Thessalonians 5:12 - 28 NASB

"Growth in Christian Virtue"
2 Peter 1:1-15 NASB

"Christian Liberty"
Galatian 5:1-6 NKJV

I have found spiritual salvation can be like food. It is good and healthy food that can restore me. Salvation is like fruit and vegetables. I need it, my physical body desires it. But I like eating larger helpings than is healthy for me. Sometimes I can be in a food coma, which means I ate too much, and then feel satisfied like I accomplished something of significance. I have worshipped the Chimichanga, banana cream pie, and pizza. I have worshiped coffee.

My wife who cannot stand spices made me a meal as newly weds and it was a bland version of bland. I mean it was wet cardboard. She was surprised when I made a mad dash to the cupboard for salt and pepper. I was empty of compassion at that time which led me into experiences of destruction.

What I pursue brings results. Please listen to more podcast episodes for examples of this. I provide many.

Do you know about the USRDA? This is an example of how to eat healthy. It's clear as to what and how much to eat. The instructions are not the problem.

The problem has never been the instructions. The problem has always been in teaching of using the instructions. Imagine if we church leaders

lived increasingly by the instructions. You see, we encourage others to do what we do. People follow the leader and the leader is the one highlighted on the stage for knowledge and direction. It's the teacher or pastor.

I heard a pastor say he wasn't the leader, God was the leader. But if that were a fact, people would spend more time doing what the Bible says and less time listening to the teacher. The fact of the matter is, people follow the head of the church.

I need to confess right here. I'm angry and hurt about the misrepresentation of so many things within the churches I have attended. I believe it is perfectly okay to get angry. In fact, those who never get angry may have even more issues. I believe so strongly in Biblical truth that agrees with practical experience. But I must continue to repent, humble myself, and seek forgiveness, mercy, peace, and love in regards to my own frustration. But I believe it's important for people to understand, I do get angry and hurt.

Similarly, Jesus teaches and illustrates a way of living that could improve our spiritual health. Read Mathew 5-7. Reading will not produce results any more than if I read how to be more physical healthy.

And if I eat well for month or year and then go back to my old ways, what happens to my body? It goes bad again. This too with spiritual practices. As I humble myself, turn from fear and build faith, turn from resentment and forgive, turn from hurry and have peace, turn from self-centeredness to compassion, pray, study, and meditate upon God for a while I experience spiritual improvement. But as soon as I go back to my old ways I experience spiritual suffering. My life goes to hell.

We will need to continue with God to be spiritually nourished. Since God is about love, mercy, truth, compassion, justice, forgiveness, we will need to continue thinking and practicing such things. As we tap into the vine which can nourish us we can experience God's righteousness in thoughts, feelings, words, actions, and soul. And Like we experience such things we will begin to gain knowledge of what that is really like. But this initial

experience will only be a beginning. It can grow more and more, as long as we continue in it.

Romans 11:22 Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off.

Salvation here seems to be contingent upon continuing in “his kindness,” meaning God’s kindness, meaning all of God’s character and righteousness.

We are to follow righteousness, God’s righteousness, not what mainstream teachers of the law do, but what spiritual followers of Godly character do.

Proverbs 1:32 - 33 For the waywardness of the simple will kill them, and the complacency of fools will destroy them; but whoever listens to me will live in safety and be at ease, without fear of harm.

“Whoever listens to me” means agree with and act upon what they hear because they trust and rely upon it. If you have any question about this and want to know the truth, please do a thorough concordance study on the words obey and obedient in the Bible.

Desire and Salvation

Desire influences our hearts and minds. It impacts our faith. And it effects our salvation. Some of our desires may not be in alignment with God’s righteousness. As we apply more of God’s righteousness and walk in it, that righteousness protects us from evil.

Luke 1:77-79 To give knowledge of salvation to His people
By the remission of their sins, Through the tender mercy of our God,
With which the Dayspring from on high has visited us; To give light to
those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, To guide our feet into
the way of peace.”

Two Wolves

There is a common story about the Two Wolves. Here is my off the cuff version. A disciple sits before a teacher. The teacher begins to share a story about Two Wolves. The teacher begins, “within each of us exists Two Wolves. The fight each other all the time. One wolf seeks to bring great worldly pleasures and the other spiritual fulfillment. Sometimes the fight is quick and other times it can go on for days. But in the end only one wolf will win.” The disciple asks, “well which one wins?” And the teacher says, “The one you feed.”

2 Corinthians 10:5 We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

For more on this, please listen to the podcast episode “Experience with Meditation.”

Desires gets mixed and conflicted.

Each day I choose my purpose. Do I live for worldly pleasures or to by Godly principles. Do I seek out and participate in God’s righteousness that can bring salvation or do I seek out and practice something else.

Most of my days involve both. I seek out things I believe God wants me to do and I seek out things I want to do. Sometimes they agree with each other, but sometimes they don’t.

I will never be God so I will always have sin. But will I feed my mind with spiritual good things or evil? I choose where to set my thoughts. If I neglect the choice of salvation

Hebrews 2:3 how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard *Him*

If I neglect feeding my mind with spiritual good I may be neglecting the word of God. My mind will be fed by others around me, everything I see and hear, and my automatic thought messages which can be based in fear, pride, hurt, anger, doubt, etc.

Mark 4:19 but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the **desires** for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful.

I have desires for other things. I desire money.

Romans 7:18 For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the **desire** to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.

When I was young we used to play all sorts of games that were competitive to see who was tougher. The games would be tests to see who could endure and inflict the most suffering. Each person would start out with a desire to be the victor. After a while one person would ultimately give up because their desire to win became less than their desire to stop the pain.

Sometimes I just realized the person I was up against just didn't care about the pain. They would endure it no matter what the cost. And I realized, for me, the win wasn't worth it.

This is true in addiction. People in addiction will endure great suffering. Yet some get to a point where they just don't care what happens to them. Some, even intend to continue to their death.

When I got sober at 21 years of age, there were times when such suffering would be so overwhelming, I wished for death. I even prayed for it. I was a lost soul with no understanding of the good that was waiting for me.

I had mixed desires. I had a desire to have a better life and I had a desire for my suffering to stop. There was guidance for me to walk out of my suffering in spiritual ways, but I needed to obey that guidance and take the steps. I needed to stop who I was, how I behaved, submit, surrender, say mercy, give up the fight, and accept the process of the spiritual principles. I needed to gradually develop this spiritual way of life within my thoughts, words, attitude, and actions.

Choose a desire to obey

Romans 6:12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil **desires**.

Repentance from evil desires is absolutely necessary to improve our walk with God's righteousness. How can we love if we harbor grudges? How can we walk in faith if we focus upon evil? We will discuss how desire affects our salvation with the Bible and practical experience.

Here are some other words for desire: Covet, lustful, longful, passionate, envy, love.

Proverbs 12:12 The wicked desire the stronghold of evildoers, but the root of the righteous endures.

1 Timothy 6:10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

What we love, seek, follow, obey, and hope for will impact our choices and actions.

Romans 6:12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires.

There is an emphasis on the word desire in the Bible. In fact, in the NKJV the word is used in 42 books of the Bible. Not only that, but desire is involved in everything spiritual. Love involves desire. Hate involves desire. Curiosity involves a desire for knowledge. It seems to be the root of everything good or evil. What we desire, love, crave, long for, hope for, strive for, seek, follow, and worship means everything to our spiritual salvation.

The Goals it desire God with all our heart, all our mind, all our strength, and all our soul. Are we continuing to set our desire toward God's righteousness?

Romans 8:5 Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.

The description here “Those who” and “have their minds set” are important to personalize. Are we those who are setting our minds upon God’s righteousness? Are we seeking ways to improve setting our minds upon God’s righteousness which can lead to salvation?

Jesus gave so much instruction about how to live. Will we listen and take in the instructions with a desire to do likewise? Will we desire to grow in Christ likeness in thoughts, words, attitude, and deeds?

James 1:13 - 15 When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

I believe death is a form of destruction. Who wouldn’t? But I believe there is a spiritual death. This spiritual death comes about when a person becomes filled within their minds on hurt, resentment, condemnation, complaining, blaming, faultfinding, loneliness, empty, and isolated. A person who is empty of God’s righteousness.

James 1:13-15 is full of information describing such a process toward destruction. Please think about the line “dragged away by their own evil desire.” Let me try to explain how this might work.

If you have not done so yet, please do a concordance search in the Bible on the words ‘destroy’ and ‘destruction.’ Then watch for patterns that occur.

In addiction there is a progressive obsession. The addict first experiments, enjoys it, repeats, falls in love with the activity, then progressively desires it. After that, it becomes a love-hate relationship. The addict has gained a belief and trust in the activity to fulfill them. Eventually, the activity becomes less fulfilling and the addict becomes stuck. The belief system of the addict revolves around the activity. Their identity becomes attached to it. They may not be able to see how they can live without it. It would feel like death to put an end to it.

There is an old saying regarding alcoholism, “First a man takes a drink, then the drink takes a drink, then the drink takes the man.” Our desires can lead us into destructive actions that can progress toward death.

Addiction can go to extremes. There are many more simple things we can form our identity with, that can hurt our spiritual growth. In sports we can ‘our team.’ In politics we can have ‘our party.’ Whenever our faith in a group, club, community, or even tradition becomes more desirable than doing God’s will and growing in God’s character, we sin. The more attached we are to anything, the less attached we can become to God. Will we make God’s righteousness our everything? Will we seek to increase our identity with God’s righteousness? God’s righteousness, our pursuit and growth in it, can save us.

An addict that has indeed experienced spiritual death, not just spiritual death, but social, mental, emotional, and financial death, can come to a place known as their bottom. At this bottom they are in a place that is called, “sick and tired of being sick and tired.” They become ready for a new way of life, because they are done with what they understand life to be.

This admission of complete surrender sets them up to put their full trust in something new. If the addict can continue to put their full trust in this new way of life, amazing new spiritual experiences can come.

The addict must give up the activity and group where they spend much of their time thinking and participating. Love for anything that is not increasingly developing the collective character of God would likely be sin. Sin means to miss the mark. Remember, stopping sin, is not hitting the mark. Ending a problem does not get us acting in the solution. Our solution is growing in God’s righteousness.

The addict’s next step is to begin shaping themselves spiritually through prayer, meditation, confession, repentance, service, resolution, etc. They are to learn about spiritual principles and make them their way of life. If the addict sets their desire for their group, they can become group dependent instead of God dependent. If going to the group is the goal and trusting in the group for development, they can miss the mark.

Since the development of God's righteousness is what can deliver us from destruction, we will need to individually learn and practice such righteousness. If our group is not growing in it and talking about how they are growing in it, how can we be growing in it if we rely upon our group?

When I got sober, I relied upon the group. I highly recommend joining, listening, participating, sharing, and serving a group. But we must set our reliance upon God. God is the goal, the ultimate goal. If our love is not for God above all else, we miss the mark. Groups are places to experience God and learn spiritual things like compassion, mercy, and forgiveness. But we must set and keep our thoughts upon God's ways, goodness, and righteousness to learn and grow in it.

Let's get back to James 1:13 - 15 "each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death."

Desire without taking the necessary steps to get what we desire may be an example of faith without works is dead. There is wanting salvation to be delivered from destruction and then there is the willingness to do what needs to be done to receive deliverance.

I used to smoke. My mother died of lung cancer. I knew continuing to smoke would be a path to destruction. God gave me free will to choose my path. But quitting smoking or any addiction has consequences. It involves much discomfort and struggle. It involves adaptation and a new identity. I desired to quit for health and financial reasons. I desired it strongly. But desire alone would not get the job done. I had to accept changes. I had to give up smoking and trust in the uncomfortable consequences of change. I had to accept a new identity as a nonsmoker while denying extreme temptation to smoke.

Desire and effort is the beginning, but nothing really happens until improved action over time with perseverance has been completed. I have not smoked in over 25 years now which has helped to deliver me from destruction.

Temptation still comes around. Yet through continued training of redirecting my thoughts away from such temptation has helped to keep me safe.

I've been sober since 1991. But I still get tempted. When I am around things like alcohol I am fully aware of how my thoughts can grow in a bad direction. How I inwardly respond to my thinking means everything for my soul and the kingdom of God.

Around 2003 I had an ACL replacement in my right knee. About six days later I was at grocery store waiting in line at the check out. It was Christmas time and everything was decorated. I was still taking some pain medication. My mind was not it's normal self. I found myself, my thoughts, drifting to a memory of when I used to drink and had a good time. I realized I should not be engaging in what is referred to as glorifying addiction. Recalling good feelings from destructive practices. I came back to reality, waking to where I was, and realized I was staring at bottle of whisky. I shook my head and sought to divert my eyes elsewhere and realized I was surrounded by a wall of booze in pretty holiday packages. I quickly went to a meeting.

Each of us can have a story like this with food, sex, worry, people pleasing, gambling, superstitions, or just about anything. Yet our mental processes will be very similar.

I had to make adjustments with my thoughts regarding anger. Around 1998 I found myself getting angry and had something to the effect of an out of body experience. I was observing myself losing control. My anger was taking over. I prayed, meditated, and reflected upon this experience. I began redirecting myself away from faultfinding. Seeing how other people were doing what I believed they were supposed to do was growing my anger. My anger was destroying me. Had it progressed any further I'm confident I would have lost my job. And losing a job just sets up many other personal struggles that could easily lead to more damage or relapse.

Spiritual destruction can be a progressive process away from God's righteousness.

In John 21:15-19 Jesus asks peter three times if he loved him and followed up with instructions. Jesus did this three times. If Jesus needs to

do this three times to make a point to a disciple, how many times do we need receive this message? “17 The third time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?” He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Feed my sheep.”

Jesus did this enough times to evoke discomfort with a disciple. Jesus sort of pounded this instruction. Perhaps Jesus believed Peter just wasn't taking it to heart enough. I believe sometimes we really need get serious for a moment and speak the truth as if someone might die if they miss it. Because people do spiritually die in many different terrible ways.

Mark 4:19 but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful.

Worries can bring fear which distracts from faith. Wealth and especially desiring wealth more than growing in God's righteousness can lead to spiritual destruction.

John 8:44 You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

Romans 6:12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires.

Mental discipline and improved self-awareness are skills that must be developed if we are to seek and grow with God away from destruction. One such discipline is to keep God as our highest priority. If stray from God as our priority, we will follow our own desires or someone else's. And following another persons desires can be just as destructive.

Acts 2:38 - 41 Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.” With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” Those who accepted his

message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

Let's think patiently and repeatedly about the verse "Save yourselves." Who do you think Peter is saying has some responsibility with such a statement? "Save yourselves." We have a role here with salvation. We must wake up to our responsibility before any saving is going happen.

In Matthew 23:23 there is a line that says, "But you have **neglected** the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness."

I am imperfect. I neglect doing greater good every day. I still do good, but I neglect being my best. I rest and take comfort in leisure activities that don't really help God. And I ignore speaking kind words, humbling myself, and sincerely loving other people. I grow and improve in the areas each year, but I do not give my all as the great commandment says to do.

Proverbs 10:17 Whoever heeds discipline shows the way to life, but whoever ignores correction leads others astray.

Hebrews 2:3 how shall we escape if we ignore so great a salvation?

Do we read the Bible as if it had instructs in it that could help us experience a better way of life? Do we read it and then do what it says? I do. I began this process around 2007 doing it in baby steps, but doing it. I understand the destruction that comes through neglect and ignoring God. I understand it more, because I have experienced the destruction and the salvation. Because of that experience I respect this cause and affect relationship.

John 5:39-40 You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.

John 5:44 How can you believe since you accept glory from one another but do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?

Jesus is comparing belief with action.

Matthew 15:8 These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.

Is God our desire. Do we desire things of God. Are our hearts loving God?

We must examine ourselves to see our destructive ways and make corrections. We must discuss such inward activity. The beginning instructions regarding our destructive ways is this:

2 Timothy 2:19 Nevertheless, God's solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness."

The beginning process with salvation for millions of people according to 12 step programs and the Bible involves prioritizing God, confessing wrongs, and growing with God's righteousness.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Purify us from all unrighteousness means we will be acting with God. We will get into discussing righteousness in another episode. For now please understand confession and repentance is needed to help us out of salvation.

Salvation and destruction are results of how we choose to live. Are we seeking righteousness or our own desires that can lead to destruction? It is a very good thing to set our minds upon these ideas each day.

Learning about ourselves and our thinking requires a focused effort with continuous practice. Repeating and improving our self evaluation is part of the process to learn how to better manage our thinking. If we are going to make improvements with loving God with all our minds then we are going give more attention to what and how we think.

2 Corinthians 10:5 We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

We can choose to set our thoughts to better understand God and God's will for us. We can choose think about God's character. We can choose to pray for humility, forgiveness, strength, and peace. We can choose God more and more. But it is up to us. Ultimately, God will not force us to be saved. And faith without deeds may indeed be dead and lead us toward destruction.

Luke 2:35 so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

The word of God is live and active, if, we bring it into our minds and live increasingly by what it says. If we ignore or neglect it, we may be missing out.

But this good news. This is empowering information saying we can choose God today. We can humble ourselves today. We can pray today. We look inwardly at our thoughts and feelings and recognize better our spiritual condition. We can meditate upon spiritual things. We can do so many good things. Let's not get lost inwardly thinking about mistakes, but instead gain hope thinking about corrections we can make to grow in God's righteousness.

Matthew 6:19-20 Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Think well about the closing of these verses, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." What we desire and chase after with hope and anticipation affects us spiritually.

Just before Corinthians 13's description about love, the following is mentioned.

1 Corinthians 12:31 Now eagerly **desire** the greater gifts. And yet I will show you the most excellent way.

And then right after the great description of love it says, "Follow the way of love and eagerly **desire** gifts of the Spirit."

Galatians 5:16 So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the **desires** of the flesh.

Ephesians 4:22 You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful **desires**;

Colossians 3:5 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil **desires** and greed, which is idolatry.

2 Timothy 2:22 Flee the evil **desires** of youth and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

1 John 2:17 NKJV The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.

Discern desires

Covet, lustful, longful, passionate, envy, love, worship, all involve desire.

Temptation can have no affect without desire. As we get tempted, if we are watchful and aware we will recognize we are tempted. Then we will be aware of a choice to repent, if we have a plan how to repent.

2 Samuel 22:3 my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation. He is my stronghold, my refuge and my savior— from violent people you save me.

In this verse I think about the description "take refuge" and I relate to it. I have taken refuge through faith, trust, and reliance. I relate to "God is my rock" because God's principles, character, goodness, or righteousness are

the truth, the way, and the goal. And I relate to “From violent people you save me” by setting my hope, faith, reliance, and trust to be upon God and not people. And through a faith with deeds and action in increased obedience to God’s righteousness I can remain in such a salvation.

This taking refuge in the rock of righteous goodness, to be saved from corruption, requires my inward discipline and responsiveness. I have a role and responsibility in this salvation. God gave me free will and choice. God will not make me choose righteousness. I have to do it. And a lot of times I don’t want to make that choice because of my corrupt mind.

I need to learn discernment. I need Godly good information each day to help guide me into corrective good thinking. I have behaviors and habits that tempt me to no good. I believe we all have behaviors and habits that lead to no good.

Once we learn a behavior and that behavior becomes a habit, it can be hard to change. I have made many difficult self-sacrificing choices to grow in righteousness. I listened to instruction and obeyed. Obedience to God’s righteousness was and is necessary. I need to grow Godly good inwardly in order to be rescued from my destructive ways.

But I’m not done. I don’t believe I will ever be done. I can continue to experience God’s righteousness, if I seek to participate in the principles and character of it. God’s ways, grace, goodness, and righteousness are all descriptions of spiritually saving principles. If I follow such principles through faith in them, I can be saved from much destruction.

Removing destructive behaviors can help stop new destruction from occurring. Being saved and healed can come from adding new Godly good character with my heart, mind, strength, and soul. If I choose to cooperate and participate in God’s righteousness of mercy, peace, forgiveness, truth, justice, love, and compassion, then I can receive the good from it. And I have found the rate of such improvement has to do with how much of myself I give to God. (For more about that please listen to series Spiritual Growth Formula.)

We need spiritual discernment. We need to improve our spiritual understanding with the Kingdom of God. We can increase our experience and practice with God’s righteousness, if we choose it.

Luke 6:37-38 “Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.”

What is our measure of God’s righteousness? A measure is an amount of something. Are we discerning and measuring how much of our thoughts, words, and actions are in alignment with God’s righteousness?

Jesus seems to be describing the amount of what we do in our hearts and minds will affect us spiritually. Are we keeping careful observation of how we judge, condemn, and forgive? I believe Jesus is saying we need to seek improvement here.

One thing I have learned through the practice of forgiveness and seeking peace is that the more I practice it, the better I feel inside. My relationships and my attitude improves. Of course this takes time and continued action, but it works. This experience helps me understand the Bible better. Just like playing baseball helps me understand baseball, playing a part in Biblical instructions helps me understand the Bible.

In the above verse it says, “Forgive, and you will be forgiven.” And it finishes with “For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.” In my experience, this is very true. I can even add, resent, and you will be resented or hate, and you will be hated. I could apply this with love, patience, generosity, and kindness too. But I did not know this principle, I mean really know it, until I began to practice it.

Some may say, “well, I tried being nice and it didn’t work.” I believe that. Being nice doesn’t always work, but sometimes it does. But being nice is not Biblical. Being positive is not Biblical. In order to grow in accuracy with the Bible, I believe we need to set aside non-biblical terms for biblical ones. Let’s seek more truth, sincerity, and compassion without false flattery or selfish ambition as the Bible instructs. We are not to comfort. God’s righteousness is to comfort. If we are in that righteousness, then we can bring such comfort.

I don't currently have a personality people find comforting. I try to bring truth. Sometimes, that means information people don't want to hear. Truth can be uncomfortable. But I need it, if I am to heal and grow more in God's saving righteousness.

I have habitualized so many destructive character traits that I felt like it was a lost cause to even try to grow with God. Everything I thought and did was sinful. It felt like my whole being was defective. But I had to try. I had to see what this process of transformation could bring. I was curious. And as I gave myself over to the process, I slowly began to experience a new life with God's righteousness. The way I perceived the world around me gradually began to change. For me, it began with a long hard look at my character, to see where I could begin to improve in God's righteousness and goodness.

Matthew 5:20 For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.

How well we understand righteousness, what it feels like and how it affects us, will impact how well we can understand the Bible. I can understand God's love to the degree that I practice and study it experientially. This is the same with all of God's righteousness. If I do not love, I am nothing. And how well can someone who is nothing understand anything?

The corruption within my mind does not want God's righteousness. It does not want salvation. I want excitement, gratification, and euphoria. The thought of sitting around seemingly doing nothing during prayer and meditation does not excite me. My mind misunderstands spiritual things.

Sometimes, what the Bible says, does not fit with our understanding. When we try to make the Bible fit our understanding, we could be making a spiritually dangerous mistake. Instead, we ought to see how to better grow our understanding to fit with the Bible. I believe we are to choose to be clay so that God the potter can form us.

I believe we will need thorough examination of the Bible and how it defines words like love, God, truth, salvation, and grace. There are instructions in the Bible suggesting we should confirm, discern, and even test all things.

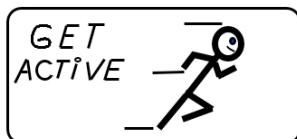
I do concordance searches. I have used biblegateway.com to perform hundreds if not thousands of searches. When I sift through 800 verses using words like love, I watch for patterns. Sometimes, verses are repeated. Things repeated are important. I probably repeat things and for good reason.

When I read I am reviewing my personal experiences. When the Bible uses words like forgive, I think about my experience with forgiveness. What does it feel like, look like, and how do others respond to it? How is it spiritually, emotionally, mentally, and socially good? I try to make it personal and relate to it.

If Jesus says repent 10 times and then says one time God loves you, are we going to remember that God love us and forget the instruction about repenting? Are we giving more attention to scripture we like while avoiding verses we don't like? In my experience, it is common. I want us all to put on our thinking caps for our salvation and investigate carefully for the truth. Because salvation is kind of a big deal.

As Matthew 5:20 states, our righteousness must surpass that of the Pharisees and teachers of the law. I believe Jesus is saying we must learn what righteousness is, compare it with our own righteousness, understand the righteousness of the Pharisees and teachers of the law, and then grow our righteousness more than them in order to enter the kingdom of heaven.

Let's answer some helpful questions.



How important is it for you to enter the kingdom of heaven? Is it important enough to do more of what the Bible says to do? How can we increase our righteousness to be more than the pharisees and teachers of the law?

Jesus is making a statement here. Those who follow Jesus will pay closer attention to what Jesus says to do. Some of us may be a bit shocked at this information. That's okay. It might not feel like it's okay, but it is okay. How do you think the pharisees and teachers of the law felt? Some were ready to throw rocks. The Apostles were abused and killed. This is serious

stuff. Are we ready to get serious about our salvation? The choice is ours and we can choose to ignore it.

If you are ready to get serious, then great joy can come. Love, peace, mercy, forgiveness, truth, justice, and compassion will be become a greater priority to learn and practice.

I recommend doing a concordance search using the words 'those' and 'who' and read it thoroughly. Matthew 5:20 uses the word 'unless.' You can put the words in the search menu, hit enter, and then read the verses. Humbly pray to God to open your mind to new learning. Try to become clay for the potter.

The words 'Those' and 'Who' are used together in over a 1000 verses in the NKJV. To get the point quickly look at the chapter Matthew 5. People who respond in a particular way get particular results. Are we believing that certain things we do can elicit certain spiritual results?

Let's read again Matthew 5:20. We read it again because it is that important to grow our understanding with it. It says, "For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven."

To grow into salvation seems to require us to actively grow in righteousness. The greatest commandment describes how to love God with our whole being. To love God is to love righteousness because all that is righteous is from God. Righteousness is grace. That means we will be growing God's righteousness within our heart, mind, strength, and soul.

Matthew 23:26 Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also.

Growing in God's righteousness is the goal. God is the goal. And God is love. And to perceive God more correctly will require us to understand how the Bible defines love. Precision matters here. We must improve our accuracy with love. For salvation sake.

Remember 1 John 3? It basically says if we are empty in love we are empty in God. Matching that with other scripture can easily be seen as

missing out on salvation. Plain and simple, empty in love will probably mean less righteousness than the Pharisees.

Merely trying to look like others is to miss the mark. This includes athletes, movie stars, singers, teachers, pastors, and parents. To grow in salvation means to seek first; love, truth, peace, patience, compassion, justice, mercy, and forgiveness. As I have grown in these, even subtle growth, my life gets better.

Matthew 6:33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

As we saw earlier, our growth in righteousness is the path to enter the kingdom of heaven. Now Jesus says “seek first” which means we must prioritize our pursuit of righteousness and place it at the top of what we do.

Matthew 7:5 You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.

Jesus gives instruction that we are to first correct ourselves. That means repent. We are to first examine ourselves and apply Godly corrective action. Until we are improving, we may want to avoid trying to correct others.

Blaming and faultfinding can distract us from seeing how we grow in righteousness.

I was taught I can only help others as far as I have gone. I would hear from people, “Carry the message, not the mess.” That means I need to make sure I am walking my talk and growing with God.

This process has always improved my relationships. My wife and I had some bad habits in communication. I realized I had to be the one to model corrective action. In setting boundaries, I first needed to correct myself and demonstrate improved behavior. As I stopped yelling, and would no longer participate in a conversation with yelling, the yelling stopped. It took time, perseverance, and endurance. But it worked. This too with condescension, interruptions, and passive aggressiveness. Of course we have slips now and then, but we make corrections and take responsibility

for our actions. This is a gradual process. A lot of humility and self-discipline is required. Prayer alone is insufficient. Prayer without the kind of faith that has action, didn't work. Faith without action was dead.

When I get ready for a job that I know how to do, all I need to do is show up and go through the motions. I know what I'm doing. But doing a job that is new and unfamiliar requires a lot more focus, awareness, investigation, learning, and correction. This is more mental work. It can be mentally draining. Growing in God's righteousness means I am adding weight to the bar and need to focus with more effort on my thoughts, words, and actions.

In my marriage someone needed to step up and journey closer to God's righteousness with thought and action. Someone needed to stand up for God's principles and character through modeling. And as I accepted the improved Godly behavior in my mind, heart, words, and attitude, our relationship was delivered from destruction. Remember from Salvation 1 episode, salvation is defined as deliverance from destruction. So my walking with God's goodness brought me and my marriage into salvation. Walking in new Godly good is to use more conscious effort where and how I step.

I never improved until I did something different. And the level of improvement has often been linked with the level of my inward change with God's righteousness. If I avoid growing with God's righteousness, I will suffer. I will grow toward destruction. I will step away from salvation.

See James 1 the path of destruction.

The phrase, "Do as I say, not as I do," doesn't work. I needed to practice what I preached.

The beginning of this process involves inward corrections. If I do not have love, I am nothing.

I need to measure my level of productivity with God's righteousness. I need to measure how much thought I put forward to grow in righteousness. I need to measure how much time I invest thinking as a student to learn, grow, and practice righteousness. I need to set goals to help shape my attitude more toward God's righteousness.

What do you think? Do you think more love, peace, truth, forgiveness, compassion, and mercy will hurt relationships, or help them? We can grow in these. And I believe receiving these into our hearts, minds, and souls is how we can receive grace, because such inward behavior is God's grace and righteousness. But don't just take my word for it, or anyone else's. Read the Bible, do it, and see for yourself. Do a thorough concordance search on the word righteous.

To seek improvement means I need to create achievable goals. If God wants me to practice peace, I need to create a measurable way I can begin thinking and acting with peace. Slowing down and avoiding hurry was a great way for me to start. I still pray often to God to help me slow down, receive peace, and relax.

1 John 3:10 In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother.

Think about this verse and righteousness. It basically says if we are not practicing righteousness, we are not of God.

I need to remind myself each day to slow down, be humble, and think about God's righteousness. I need daily reminders because distractions are everywhere. I put sticky notes inside my wallet and notes in my car. Anyone can create reminders like these, if they choose to do it.

Discernment and measuring means thinking and evaluating. Ask a child which way is north. Many will not know. Many adults won't know even though they know the sun sets in the west and can figure it out. It's not that they can't tell, but that they won't figure it out. This may be because they have learned to avoid such activity. But if you put money in front of them, they would probably exercise more effort.

Taking a long hard look at our own choices, character defects, attitudes, resentments, fear, worry, anxiety, and selfish-ambition can be unsettling. But knowing ourselves, our inward activity, where it misses in righteousness, and how it affects others, can help motivate us to change.

This activity requires calculating, sorting, organizing, and problem solving. Many people just don't want to go there. Too much information. Many people just don't want to think.

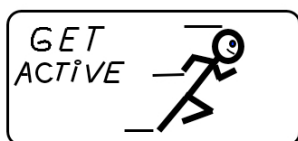
But we are made to search, explore, and create. We learn through tasting, touching, questioning, analyzing, and testing. We learn through trial and error. We learn through cause and effect relationships. And God has demonstrated cause and effect relationships regarding salvation throughout the Bible.

But many of us may not want to see it. Many of us might not want a faith that involves work, effort, and struggle. And there have been many teachings created to support faith without works or effort.

2 Timothy 4:3-5 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

Are we enduring sound doctrine through reading it ourselves. Do we avoid spiritual development because it is uncomfortable or inconvenient? Do we think more about our desires than God's righteousness? Do we take more action to fulfill our own desires than God's righteousness? Can we change? Can we pray for change?

I pray more of us will accept the journey of investigation with endurance. I pray more of us will practice reading what Jesus says to do, investigating how to do it, and learn more through experience.



Does the process of thinking deeper about these things provoke fear or hope, discouragement or encouragement, disinterest or curiosity? Do we want to know salvation? Do we want to know through experience and change? Are we willing to be Godly different?

Listening, learning, growing, trusting, obeying, following, testing, correcting, and practicing Godly good are Biblical actions we can do, if we

believe, trust, rely, and obey. But there are many beliefs, experiences, and misunderstandings that can interfere and even block faith which can lead us into grace and salvation. Pride, greed, vanity, lust, and the trust in such things can block us from trusting God. A way out of such interferences can come by the way of self-denial. We will discuss self-denial, confession, and repentance in the next episode.

Deny yourselves

When I first reached out for help, to be delivered from destruction, I learned a lot about myself I did not want to know. I had to take a long evaluated look at my character and confess my wrongs. I did not want to be part of this process, but I did it because I needed help.

No one has to be broken and lost like I was to be ready for Godly change. We just need some convincing. Pain and suffering was how I became convinced. Another way I have learned to convince myself to keep growing is to simply choose to spend more time thinking about Godly good. I developed a routine in the morning to spend time learning how righteousness is good. Self-discipline is absolutely necessary to keep up the routine. I need to keep convincing information ready in my consciousness to help me stay disciplined. I need to remember the evil that can bring me back down to where I once was. I need to be reminded how I need God.

Luke 3:9 And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

The way I see this verse through my experience is that my life was a tree. Soul means life, so my soul is like the tree. Earlier in my life, I did not bear or grow God's righteousness, which is good fruit. I did not train nor seek out help to grow such things. I was not interested. And I became dead inside, surrounding myself with others who were also dead inside. The emptiness I felt seemed to be normal. My fruitless life was like dead wood made to be burned.

I have only begun to experience good fruit. And I know I must continually give myself over to participate and practice God's righteousness to produce spiritually good fruit.

John 15:6-8 If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw *them* into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

I want to emphatically say, our pursuit with God is designed to be with joy and glory, not fear and shame. It is about faith and enjoying the good we do. We are to seek God's good in our thinking. We can correct our anger with mercy and forgiveness and see the good in it. We can correct our fear with faith. We can replace anxiety with patience and peace and see the spiritual good in it. We can make these corrections through thinking about our thinking, adding new Godly messages inwardly, and speaking those messages outwardly. We can recall good experiences into our minds and hearts, if we give ourselves over to have such experiences. If we can grow God's righteousness as a branch grows from a vine.

The way out for me was to boldly accept the call to evaluate myself, measure my productivity in God's righteousness, set new goals to grow in it, and take the action. I needed to stop avoiding the truth about where I had fear and hurt. I needed to take steps to increase sincerity with humility. And I felt vulnerable doing it. But this is where God and love exists. Truth and sincerity are needed. I needed to walk in faith into God's good. Salvation comes through my practice of God's righteousness and the kind of practice that helps me correct, improve, and grow in that righteousness. A productive branch will be one that grows.

The fact of the matter is that we can all improve through continued practice of God's righteousness. And if we make what is great to Jesus great to us we will prioritize such things and grow in them with our thoughts and actions.



Let's think for a moment about love. Which feels more right? Someone who says they love us, but they do not act like it, or someone who says they love us, and act like they love us. Is there a

difference? If we acted more with love, would we feel different? Would we or others feel better?

Let's look at some words in the Bible that involve discernment and measurement. (Near, far, great, more, less, slow, fast, quick, better, worse, good, evil, long, short, much, little, empty, full, good fruit, good works, destructive, grow, train, first, last, least, and most) To best understand these words mean, we need to think like the one who says them. We will need to think outside of ourselves, see with their eyes, and understand the context better.

Complicated? Does this sound like too much work? Well, it did for me, but I knew it was right, and I needed more right things in my life. We all can do this, if we give ourselves over to the process. We can grow with God's righteousness if we make it our highest priority. If we love God with our all, we will learn God's righteousness, endure producing that righteousness, and grow it in our thoughts, words, and actions.

1 Thessalonians 3:10 Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith.

We lack faith and that is okay. Realizing we lack faith is to help us understand we must grow it. Like having a tire that leaks air we need to keep going to place that can fill it. God is our supply. If we are not getting filled through tapping into God's righteousness and being in that righteousness, we can feel like we are empty or withering.

Luke 12:28 If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you—you of little faith!

Over the past 30 years I have gone through times where I am diligently seeking growth and productivity with God's righteousness and times where I am not thinking about God at all. The results are predictable. The further away from God I was in my interest, thoughts, trust, reliance, obedience, effort, and action, the worse my life became.

Finances and work status do not indicate how well I am spiritually. I can be very productive like the Pharisees and teachers of the law while empty, alone, and dry inwardly.

Matthew 23:27 “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and everything unclean.

How great is our love for those around us, those closest to us, those we see the most? Would they describe us as someone who is seeking to grow compassion, truth, justice, mercy, forgiveness, peace, and love with humility and sincerity? Would they describe us as diligent in such things practicing them with endurance?

We all can grow and have room for improvement. We can raise the bar as we go. We can get more spiritual grace through clinging to Godly good as it says in Romans 12:9.

And if you are like I was, detached and unplugged, disconnected and lost, you can grow in faith. You can reconnect. You can find God through experience in God’s righteousness. For me, it began with accepting a resetting of my priorities. I had to make God’s righteousness my ultimate authority in my decisions. One decision at a time processing my imperfections with what is perfect.

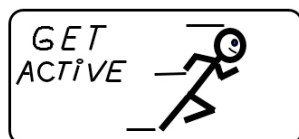
Romans 11:23 And if they do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again.

Today is the day. Learn God’s righteousness. Pray for it. Except it into you heart, mind, and soul. Think it, speak it, and act with it. We will discuss this further in my next podcast episode.

Thank you again for listening.

Measurement 2

Jesus says, “you of little faith!” An exclamation point is used here. How much faith is little faith? Ever measure your faith? Ever think about measuring it? Or do you think it’s more black and white like you either have it or you don’t?



Take moment to examine this within yourself. Share with others how you see faith. What is a little faith
What is a lot of faith? What are some examples of faith in the Bible and in your own life?

One teaching I've heard is about the faith of a mustard seed. It says this amount of faith can move mountains. Have you seen anyone moving mountains? I haven't. Faith the size of a mustard seed can bring about a response like moving mountains. Perhaps this is a great way to measure our faith. What response in our lives is our faith providing? I suppose mine is smaller than a mustard seed because I don't seem to be moving mountains. Or maybe these materials I'm making is like moving a mountain, but with a shovel.

One popular tool people use to measure and evaluate things is a continuum. We can use a scale of 1 to 10 where one side will be the highest possible level and the other side the lowest. We can use a continuum for all these biblical terms of measurement. Greatest to least, nearest to furthest, strongest to weakest, and so on. I have some examples of these on my website at www.inwardauthority.com

In John 15 Jesus seems to be saying we ought to abide in Jesus as Jesus is abiding in God. The way Jesus abides in God is an example for us.

The Bible describes God with attributes of mercy, love, peace, truth, justice, compassion, forgiveness, and patience. Isn't this what Jesus abided in? I believe we are to abide in these attributes and can grow into them which can provide salvation or deliverance from destruction. As we grow into them with our hearts, minds, strength, and soul. Our abiding into them can bring safety from destruction. I know this, through experience. The process isn't easy because of sinful belief.

Mark 11:22 So Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God."

Quick point, many healings Jesus performed in the Bible is followed up with Jesus giving credit to the persons faith. Whether they were healed or not was credited to each person's faith.

Healings were largely a result of faith. Just do a concordance search with the word faith, read, see the pattern, and learn. Salvation involves faith.

I have witnessed so many people coming into twelve step programs who are told over and over how the steps must be done. Reading is insufficient to bring about results. Each person is to complete the steps as written.

Yet people, even in the face of divorce, losing a job, imprisonment, insanity, and death, still do not choose to give themselves over to the instructions. They do not abide in the spiritual principles they are told to practice in all their affairs. So many people go to meetings and talk the talk, but do not walk the walk. This has been my experience with churches too.

When I walk the walk, my whole life improves in ways I neither wanted nor believed was possible. Spiritual improvement is good and it is better, yet not the way I want. Because the way I see good and better is tainted by upbringing, culture, popular belief, friends, media, and tradition. Salvation is something that is not attractive to me. It involves accepting a way of life that is not popular. The word salvation as an idea is attractive, but when it comes down to walking in it, few people will give themselves over to the process.

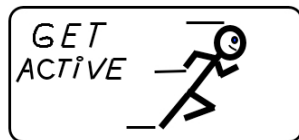
For example, I like food and I want to eat a lot of it. But such eating is not good for my body. I am to desire God's goodness more than food comfort. God's will for me involves endurance, perseverance, humility, obedient, and trust. I want to feel good right now, but God wants me to think and behave in ways that will increase the quality of my life which involves self-discipline and restraint. I don't want self-discipline, but I know it is good, so I do it. I do it imperfectly but progressively.

Romans 14:13 But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not eat from faith; for whatever is not from faith is sin.

Let's examine the use of faith in this verse. Do we consider growing our faith? Do we consider how well we are listening to and following God? Let's remember, we all sin. Having sin is normal. Do you think we can grow with God toward salvation away from sin? What you believe will affect what you choose to do.

There is believing with little action and there is believing with diligence. Another good concordance study is to use the words, 'believe' and 'God.'

We can learn more about our faith if we spend time thinking, examining, and discussing it with others. Who wouldn't want to understand their faith better? Understanding our faith better can involve some accountability which can bring discomfort. But to grow in it, we will need to learn more how to improve it.



Is there doubt in our faith? If so, how much? Is there love, if so, how much? Can we learn more? If so how much? Can we trust more? Can we listen better? Can we set goals to love more like Jesus? How would better love affect our relationships?

1 Corinthians 13:2 And though I have *the gift of* prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

This one verse emphasizes we must have love with our faith. All knowledge without love can lead to nothing. Being a biblical scholar without personal spiritual enrichment may be a path to nothing. Having a doctorate in theology without spiritual experiences may be missing the mark.

Faith and love both must be improved and working together. The process of developing this skill requires us to practice, study, pray, meditate, discuss, and teach it. We are to learn, correct, practice, and grow. We must inwardly witness more spiritual results from spiritual action.

In this episode we are going to focus upon Biblical instruction around measuring and seeing how such discernment relates to salvation. Measuring is one part of discerning. We must develop an improved sense of spiritual discernment. We need to practice thinking more objectively. To sharpen our discernment skills will require us to think differently, look more closely, and break meanings down more thoroughly. It will also involve conviction, responsibility, and accountability.

One way to gauge our faith can be done through a process called “compare and contrast.” We all compare and contrast each day. Envy exists because of comparing and contrasting. We might see who has more than us and want it, or who looks better and desire it. In our giving we might compare how much we give with how much others give or whether our cookies taste better. Are we a better greeter, singer, musician, or teacher?

Comparing and contrasting for reasons of vanity, pride, fear, or anger can be destructive. Instead we can compare how we think and what we do with Jesus. Yet we must avoid self condemnation in our thinking about where we are with mistakes. We can pray for humility to let go of such thinking. God’s will does not involve condemnation towards others or self. We are to instead respond with Godly good. Just being practicing Godly good and learn.

We ought to compare our thoughts, words, attitude, and actions with Jesus. Are we improving, growing, learning, and changing in a Christ-like manner? Are we comparing our love, peace, and truthfulness with Jesus and the Apostles? The Bible explains how this is the way Christians are to live. We can easily grow in this if we give ourselves over to the process.

Comparing and contrasting can be done out of conformity. See Asche Conformity experiment. Over 30% of people will lie in order to conform with others about facts they know are wrong. Our first major mistake will involve worrying what other people might think of our choices. We must make our choices out of our love for God instead of fearing what other people might think about us. This is what people of faith can do. Just read the Bible with the word faith and see what people did with it.

We can come to conclusions that are inaccurate about our faith. We can live by such inaccurate conclusions for many years and even our whole lives. We can change when we can accept the journey to change. That means we need to begin looking at Biblical truth while comparing it to ourselves. The longer we keep our sights upon it, the more we can grow our desire to journey into it. We tend to go where we are looking.

The factors that influence our decisions and assumptions can be numerous. Many of us are completely unaware of how we are influenced into habits, manners, thoughts, choices, and judgements. The series

“Brain Games” can be an entertaining training about these things. We are all victims of learning many things incorrectly. I heard a quote “We are all victims of victims.” Blaming will not help us act upon correction. We will need to see ourselves and how to improve with God. We will need to take action to learn such things. We can improve if we are humble and willing enough to diligently seek out the truth and correct our mistaken understandings.

Jesus says Love God with all your mind, but are we seeking how to do that? We will need to compare and contrast in discernment how much of our mind we give to love God and grow in it. The command is to Love God with our all. Are we measuring to see how much of our heart, mind, soul, and strength is applied to love God? Are we seeing how to improve in giving our all to God?

One of the first lessons I learned in recovery was to measure my character. I had to find my character defects. I had to see what habits and behavior I practiced that was harmful to others and myself. I had to investigate and learn.

I'll close with two verses about salvation. Psalm 40:16 and Psalm 70:4 These two verses are almost identical. That means repetition and when things are repeated in the Bible, I look closer and think longer about them.

Psalm 70:4 Let all those who seek You rejoice and be glad in You; And let those who love Your salvation say continually, “Let God be magnified!”

Let us seek the kingdom of God today and learn more how to love God's salvation.

Got questions? Questions are part of the journey, but we will need to ask them and investigate with an open mind to learn. You can email questions at John15@inwardauthority.com

Thank you for listening and God bless.

Salvation is a process

We are going to look at and discuss some scripture that can indicate salvation is fluid and flexible and not being in it or out of it. As in part one we read together scripture indicating it has occurred, is occurring today, and will occur.

Mark 4:24 Then He said to them, “Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given. (See also Mathew 7:2, Luke 6:38)

Let’s slowly reflect upon this one line in Mark 4:24 “to you who hear, more will be given.”

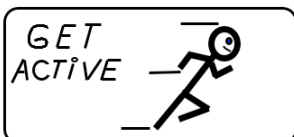
But, “more what?” Jesus is a teacher of building God’s kingdom. Jesus is concerned with one thing, being with God and doing precisely what God desires. Precision matters to Jesus. Read John 15. Jesus is about teaching and demonstrating how to live in God’s righteousness. So when Jesus is talking about receiving more of something, it’s probably something spiritual and everything to do with salvation.

Jesus says, “more will be given.” This seems to indicate we have some already. More means adding to what we have, right?

Jesus say “to you who hear” Perhaps our measure of listening to instructions and carrying them out will have an effect upon our deliverance to safety. Remember from Salvation part one, Salvation is defined as deliverance to safety or delivered out of destruction.

Read James 4:5-10 while remembering the line in verse 6 “But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: “God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.””

Think carefully about the words “more grace.” More grace can seem to indicate it is given in measures. Whenever the word more is used it usually means less is an option. If grace is given to the humble, what does that say about the proud?



Let’s pause here and reflect upon this. Try creating a continuum with extreme pride on one end and extreme humility on the other. You can use characters in the Bible as models. Then see where

you are at on the scale and what steps you can take to improve.

When it comes to instructions, every word is important. Every word has purpose that affects the whole sentence. So to understand more clearly and truthfully we must avoid excluding any words from the instructions. If we come to word we do not understand, that's okay. Just hold off coming to any conclusions about what it is saying until meaning can be found.

Confusion and mysteries can distract us from experiencing instructions that are easy to understand. It's easy to find one thing to do to put off doing another thing. Studying can be a distraction from taking action to transform.

Once I began my journey of applying new action, I wanted others to join me. But no one did. I tried to use reason. I asked the group what good it was to read one book, then go to another book without putting into action what the book says to do? They just kind of looked at each other and then moved on to another book. But you see, I saw something going on in this group invisible to the untrained eye. Group Think, Herd Mentality, Learned Helplessness, Tradition, and more existed within the group influencing them to continue doing what they were used to doing.

There is so much in the Bible we can understand that is clear enough for a child to figure out. But a child has not developed a sense of what Christianity is that can distort Biblical truth. When we develop conclusions about Christianity and what the church is supposed to look like, that belief can interfere with teaching

If we come to a conclusion we are going to hell we can gain a perspective about the Bible that evokes fear.

Sometimes it's better to simplify things to understand. Sometimes we can overcomplicate things and get caught up in dogma. know how to define that word impacts production and results. Every word has an impact like ingredients to recipes. I've recently got into cooking. I decided to try to make fudge. My first batch was more like sludge than fudge. I did not have a candy thermometer so I could not tell when it was 234 degrees F. My second batch got a little burnt because part of the recipe I used said to cook on low heat until it gets to 234 F.. Well, the word low on my dial on my stove would only get it to 225, so it cooked on 225

for too long and got a little burnt. I had to finally raise the temperature above low.

I don't want my salvation to be like sludge or burnt. I have witnessed my spiritual life being greatly influenced by how effectively I am applying my heart, mind, strength, and soul to abiding in God. I can choose to think more about God. I can choose to clarify more God's character and practice it. I can reflect upon it and talk about it. I can pray about it. I can, if I choose to do it and take the action.

This grace that can save and yes I am using the word 'can' which does not mean it will. Let's pay closer attention to words like can, may, and might. The word may is used over 1300 times in the NKJV. If I say, "give me a hundred dollars and I might give you a thousand," would you give me a hundred dollars? I hope not. That would be gambling.

Ephesians 2:8 seems to be a good example of something misused and misunderstood. Let' try to break this down

"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,"

I have heard pastors and others teach this line in ways that seem to ignore grammar. Let me first say, I'm an idiot with grammar. I need grammar support with software and help from others. I make a lot of mistakes. But I make corrections and learn so I am improving. I am a work in process.

Look at the phrase "saved through faith." Teachers emphasize grace, seemingly overlooking, devaluing, or minimizing the faith part. I have heard teachers emphasize grace and barely mention faith. They raise the gift and lower the effort. They teach more about what we can get and less about how to get it.

Faith is an absolutely necessary component of this formula and that has everything do with us. Faith is belief. Faith involves a lot of conscious effort. It is the working of our thinking. Faith is measurable.

If we are saved by grace through faith. Then faith is needed to get grace. If lacking in faith or having little faith can be problematic, then why wouldn't we want to pursue more faith? If we want to be saved by grace, then we

ought to look much closer at our faith that can bring us grace which can save us.

For more on faith you can listen to growth formula 8 or experience with faith.

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

Let’s say this to our teachers “Increase our faith.” Let’s seek out more demonstrators who walk the talk. Demonstrators who first take the plank out of their own eye before helping others. Let’s request teaching that can increase our faith into a good measure of grace, while keeping in mind the faith of Abraham. But most importantly, let’s seek to first improve ourselves with God and make God more important to us than teachers, mentors, or prophets.

On my Youtube channel you can find more about grace and this process. Just search for Inward Authority. And please understand my budget constraints while viewing the rather low grade production. Much needed editing will be coming about with all my material when I can afford help.

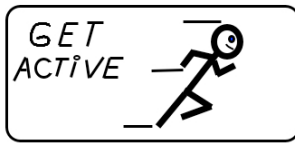
Salvation comes through our walking in the faith. As we learn to walk in it, we may begin by crawling like infants. But through practice, we can learn to walk in it better and better.

Hebrews 5:13 - 14 NKJV For everyone who partakes *only* of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, *that is*, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

NIV 5:13 - 14 NIV Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

The NKJV has the phrase “unskilled in the word of righteousness” and the NIV says “not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness.” Take a

moment and assess yourself or share aloud with your group where you are with being skilled about righteousness.



On a scale of one to 10 where 1 is unskilled and ten is have trained through constant use, where do you see your self and where would you say those who know you best would see you?

If I go to the doctor and the doctor tells me to reduce stress, eat healthier and exercise. I can understand that how well I abide to these instructions will have an effect upon my physical condition. Even if I just do one of those things I can see improvement.

Now when Jesus provides us instructions to humble ourselves, Love God with all our mind, heart, strength and soul, and to love and help others. I believe based upon my experience, listening to hundreds of testimonies, my education, and biblical research that how well I follow instructions like John 15 and abide in God will impact the quantity and power of grace, goodness, righteousness, and salvation with God.

1 Peter 1:9 for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

2 Timothy 2:10 Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

We can learn and teach self-examination

2 Corinthians 13:5 Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? —unless indeed you are disqualified.

Galatians 6:4 But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.

The instructions clearly involve examining ourselves. We can learn how to do this the same way we learn how to ride a bike. We practice it. We can

practice trying to live more as Jesus did and learn through the process. Learning where we fail or finding our weakness can help us set new goals for improvement.

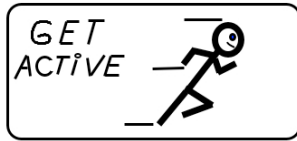
Let's look at examples in the prayer of St. Frances, the following was taken from wikipedia english translation. Let's evaluate this prayer seeing how it is prompting us to examine ourselves for error and move into Godly corrective action.

Where there is hatred, let me bring love.
Where there is offense, let me bring pardon.
Where there is discord, let me bring union.
Where there is error, let me bring truth.
Where there is doubt, let me bring faith.
Where there is despair, let me bring hope.
Where there is darkness, let me bring your light.
Where there is sadness, let me bring joy.
O Master, let me not seek as much
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love,
for it is in giving that one receives,
it is in self-forgetting that one finds,
it is in pardoning that one is pardoned,
it is in dying that one is raised to eternal life.

James 1:25 But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues *in it*, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

Measuring means accountability. I have witnessed many times Christians run from accountability. We can avoid accountability through postponement or changing the subject. Avoiding looking at ourselves for improvement will not bring improvement. If becoming more like Jesus is our goal, really our goal, then we will do it. We will face correction with action upon it.

Try to imagine Jesus with you right now asking the question, "how have you loved me?"



Let's do this right now. Pause here and share with someone how your actions in the past year have demonstrated your love for Jesus. Are we aiming to grow as Jesus teaches us to grow? Are we applying ourselves to improve in the teaching through action? If yes, how so? If no, why not?

I actually believe Jesus is asking each one of us this question every day. I believe the first humble step is to review our conduct to see if it matches our beliefs. In what ways do our thoughts, words, and actions love God as Jesus says to love God?

Many teachers are faced with the truth that how they teach can impact the size of their crowd.

2 Timothy 4:3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers;

If I teach with a goal to increase listeners, I can become swayed to say things people want to hear. This is a slippery slope and one where I need accountability.

One common phrase I would hear in my transformation is, "check your motivations." I need to evaluate myself inwardly to see from what spirit my words and actions are coming from. Are they coming from fear or faith, resentment or forgiveness, selfish ambition or mercy, pride or humility, hurry or patience, deception or truth, partiality or justice.

I need to increase awareness of such spiritual things within me in order to improve producing spiritual fruit.

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.

People rarely desire accountability. Most people in my experience will avoid accountability. But Jesus teaches us to practice being spiritually

accountable. Jesus teaches us how to act and can be quite specific about new actions. We are taught to examine ourselves for such things.

Have you ever thought about measuring faith, grace, or salvation? It can be tricky to measure something we cannot see or touch. God is love. We cannot see love, but yet we discern for ourselves who loves us or doesn't love us. We discern who is kind and their degree of kindness. We discern who is rude, mean, impatient, and angry. We discern spiritual things all the time in measure. We decide who is more generous and who is more honest. But are we discerning ourselves as much and often as we do others?

One of the principles I learned was that I needed to keep my character evaluation to always be more focused upon myself and how I can improve than anyone else.

John 8:7 So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first."

Jesus is instructing people to evaluate themselves first before punishing someone else. We are to focus more upon our own attitude and character to improve our ability to grow and respond more with Godly character. Then, when we grow into love, mercy, forgiveness, peace, truth, justice, and compassion we will become more productive in helping others with Godly good. We can have an improved inward condition to better bring good or grace to someone else. We then can better understand the meanings of:

Romans 12:21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. Also see, Matthew 7:11, Matthew 12:34-35, 1 Thessalonians 5:15, 1 Peter 3:8-17

But to understand these points we must rid ourselves of personal bias and partiality. We must repent from Group Think, Heard Mentality, people pleasing, and conformity. We must make God's good our highest priority. Traditions of any kind ought to be tested and evaluated for God's character and how to improve upon it. Costs, convenience, and other worldly comforts can sabotage the quality of the experience. Again, this is

a slippery slope that needs careful consideration by those who really have ears to hear.

Many spiritual leaders in my experience lack much growth in applying Biblical instructions to improve in Godly good. With examination we can compare and contrast what we do with what we could do. We can gauge our productivity in our faith with our potential. And if we are honest, patient, and sincere with our evaluation, I believe we can learn how we are falling way short of our potential.

Let's practice this thought each day, "am I giving my all to grow with God today?" Then just take one simple step to improve in it.

We can become professionals at evaluating other people while being blind to our own productivity.

John 15:13 Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.

I have learned to stop when I recognize words like "greater." If I believe the scribes of the Bible chose their words carefully, the word "greater" is used for a purpose. It implies there is lesser. So what would lesser love be? There is greater love and there is lesser love. There are righteous ways of living, evil ways of living, and living that may be somewhere shifting back and forth mixing between them both.

Have you ever evaluated your self in obeying the greatest commandment of God? I mean really evaluate yourself to see how much time, effort, and interest you have been devoting to seek out and do God's will? Well, I did. And that opened up a pandoras box of conviction to my soul. But I needed to feel convicted before I could change. Conviction and remorse was necessary for me to become convinced to respond differently.

You see, as I began to seek God I was taught to be inwardly examining my thoughts and character. But the mind can only think how it is trained to think. That means, I can only examine myself with the knowledge I have and if my knowledge says I have no character defects, that could be a problem. I needed new knowledge and training. I needed something to help me understand my wrongs. I needed conversation about such things with other people who have different insights.

If I do not know that speaking harsh truth is harmful, I will not see it as harmful. If I believe conflict is wrong, I will avoid speaking conflicting truth. If I believe dishonesty is okay when it makes people feel good I might have trouble understanding the sin in false flattery. If I am a people pleaser and surround myself around other people pleasers who think the same way, they will tell me I'm doing a great job. We need people who think differently and are free to share their differing insights to see what we cannot see.

One time when I was about 14 years old, the police brought me home. The officer told my mom her car smelled like a brewery. My mom asked to smell my breath. She said she didn't smell anything. That's because I was drinking the same thing she was drinking. We won't get the truth from people who sin the same way we do.

I want to mention my mom's courage to get sober and stay sober through our family struggles helped me get sober and find God. Her humility and willingness to reach out for help, serve, and find God may have saved my life.

Here is another illustration. I was sober and at a bar watching a live band. A woman next to me at the bar was asking why I didn't drink. I told her how I drank. Then she decided I didn't have a problem because she drank like that. If she agreed I had a problem she would need to confess she had a problem. Who knows, maybe I helped her get sober.

Proverbs 18:17 The first one to plead his cause seems right, Until his neighbor comes and examines him.

If you want to learn your sin, go spend time with people are not like you and freely be yourself. Hold nothing back. Let who your differences come to light and see what happens. See how you feel. Learn your thoughts in the experience.

Think about John 3: "For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."

To see spiritual truth we must increase being true. We must increase looking into spiritual realities. We must honestly be our real selves with God and someone else. Jesus was open, honest, and speaking truth. Being fake is a way to hide our sin out of fear and control. In order to grow spiritually we must take at least gradual steps into sharing who we really are and what we really think. Confession can begin this process.

Let's each day seek first the kingdom of God. Let's increase our awareness of how well we are loving God with all our hearts and all our minds. Let's evaluate how much of our strength is loving God. Let's see how much of our soul can be invested to love God. We can do it right now. Right now is always the time to pray, to grow, and to act. Let's do this. We can do this. If we choose to do it.

Salvation, Righteousness, & Grace

We all grow up with, learn, and adopt sinful ways of responding to life. Too slow, too fast, people pleasing, idolatry, pride, vanity, and so much more variants of sin live in us and affect the spiritual kingdom. They affect spiritual suffering. Partaking in the free gift of salvation is to accept God's righteousness inwardly and act upon it outwardly.

We all have sinful habits. If we didn't we would be exactly like God. To sin is to miss the mark. If we didn't sin our every thought, feeling, and action would be with God's goodness.

We can progress into salvation more and more. The progression seems to me to involve sinning less which means we hit the mark more often. To hit the mark more often we need to see it within our consciousness more often. That means we are thinking about the solution. This is one reason beginning each day with a prayer that guides us toward serving God can be so helpful.

Let's continue to accept the attitude of a student who is looking for corrective information about serving God and growing spiritually. Let's

open our minds up to where we can grow and where we can experience such correction.

We need to learn how to improve examination of our spiritual selves. We all sin, but are we aware of our sin? Are we aware of our sin in a way where we are seeking to make corrections. When we are resentful, are we praying for help to forgive? Do we know how to forgive? Correction involves three parts. We recognize error, finding a solution, practicing the solution with improvement.

To position ourselves in the protection of God's goodness requires a response of faith, like the faith of Abraham. This faith or belief involves a response of trust. It involves obeying what is right even when it seems awkward, different, and sometimes wrong. Many characters with faith in the Bible responded in extreme ways and against what others thought to be right.

James 1 shares about testing faith and uses the word "lack" or "lacking." NIV uses the word mature. We can improve. Salvation is a journey just as spiritual destruction is a journey. It's easier to see spiritual destruction than it is to see spiritual salvation because destruction is more common. This is a sad fact. And I know that path too well.

Ephesians 3:19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

We are to "know the love of Christ." We cannot know something unless we study and learn. We cannot be good at something without practice and training.

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

To be trained we need to apply ourselves to the training.

My first year was all about corrections with my thoughts, words, and actions. I made right wrongs I did in the past. Prayer, meditation, serving others, and learning to read were all part of my journey. Heavy training with intense emotional struggle happened. Tears, anger, doubt, fear, and the loss of my identity were part of my process.

My transformation involved a lot more than an alter call. It wasn't easy and it involved resisting evil while submitting to good. I know Romans 12:9 says to cling to what is good, but it's hard to cling to something you don't really desire. And for me, I didn't desire good, I just feared the consequences from evil. Overtime, I developed a desire for good and learned to see its benefits.

From time to time I meet people who have never viewed God and the Bible in the way I am presenting it. And it can feel awkward. I have been taught not to engage in blaming and faultfinding which is one teaching that is very difficult to accomplish. I struggle with it all the time.

It will serve no good purpose to blame anyone for poor teaching. Only correction into righteousness will be good.

Matthew 19:17 "Why do you ask me about what is good?" Jesus replied. "There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, keep the commandments."

Do you want to enter life? Are you loving God with all your heart, all your mind, all your strength, and all your soul?

We can grow in that life each day, progressing our imperfections toward perfect righteousness. A righteousness that is grace which can save.

There is so much we can learn with discerning truth and most of my misunderstandings have come about through my own lack of investigation to discern better. I can search more and explore other ideas to learn new things. And you can too, if you are humble and willing enough make it a priority and take the action.

When God became my salvation, God was my ultimate authority. God became my guide that I would trust more than anyone else. In other podcast episodes I describe how I developed a relationship in trusting and

relying upon God and then became disconnected through setting my mind and heart upon other things. And then reconnected again through prioritizing God in my heart, mind, soul, and strength.

As I seek, trust, rely, and follow God increasingly, my life improves and I feel blessed. But when my inward being chooses other things, my life suffers. These are the facts of a 30 year journey listening to hundreds of testimonies validating my experience. I have also helped others through this same process. It works for those who are willing to make God's goodness their inward authority.

Let us step into a renewal of our minds and accept what the Bible's instructions. Let us let go of any false beliefs within ourselves that go against what is repeated in the Bible. Let us daily agree with and begin to practice increasingly God's good character.

Salvation is being safe. Salvation is becoming more right with God. To grow salvation is to continually practice more love, mercy, forgiveness, patience, truth, justice/impartiality, compassion, and peace.

Psalm 50:23 Whoever offers praise glorifies Me; And to him who orders his conduct aright I will show the salvation of God."

God is our salvation. God is a way, a process, full of statutes, principles, goodness, righteousness, and grace which we are to learn, accept, adopt, practice, walk, demonstrate, and teach. If our salvation is with God, then it ought to be proven in our character. This will not be scene at first glance, because to witness progressive character or growth takes time. We cannot easily witness improvement or good character through one visit. Our character can be revealed over time.

Will we choose God each day over selfish ambition in a way where our thoughts, words, and actions improve in God's character traits? Will we trust in Biblical instructions in way where we are changed by them? Are we ready for God's character to help us? Will we choose to love God with our whole inward being. Will we grow God's ways inwardly each day?

Salvation is here. Let's close with a verse that has been repeated.

Psalm 40:16 Let all those who seek You rejoice and be glad in You; Let such as love Your salvation say continually, “The Lord be magnified!”

Psalm 70:4 Let all those who seek You rejoice and be glad in You; And let those who love Your salvation say continually, “Let God be magnified!”

Thank you for listening and my you choose and trust increasingly God’s salvation more and more.

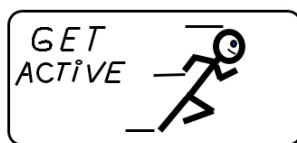
Rejoicing in Salvation

Salvation can be uncomfortable

Recap from episode one: Salvation is defined as being delivered from destruction.

What does being delivered from destruction feel like?

Salvation is defined as being delivered from destruction. It’s a rescue to safety. It’s a removal of and protection from evil. This is good, of course. But what does that feel like. God is invisible and intangible so we will need to perceive God using our inward senses of spirit and feeling. God is all about love, compassion, forgiveness, mercy, and peace. We will need to grow our experiences of these to better understand God and God’s salvation.



How can these traits help deliver us from harm? How would it feel to lose the option of telling a lie or speaking deceptively? What if you could never again use or condone false flattery? Did Jesus lie or teach us to deceive? Was Jesus insincere?

One time when I was about five years old before seat belts were really used, I was saved. I was in an old truck that had a bench seat. My dad made a turn and my door opened up. I guess I did not close it enough. My dad reached past me and shut the door to keep me from falling out. That’s a good thing right? Although it is a very good thing, my foot was in the door. I was hurt when I was saved and I was not happy. In fact, I was mad at my dad.



How does it feel being corrected? How would it feel if you were told Jesus was coming today to be with you, that you were to quit your job, leave your family, become His disciple, and go teach the kingdom of God for the salvation of souls?

I just want to say real quick that I have grown with God in simple, gradual, baby steps. Where my family, job, and friends do not want God's ways, I needed to make a choice. In some situations, I left the relationship and job. In other situations, I just simply opted out of participating in whatever it was that I found to be uncharacteristic of God's values. Please keep in mind that I have too have many ways uncharacteristic of God's values where others may of decided not to be around me.

There was another time when I went skiing with friend. Afterwards, we were exhausted and got to sleep around ten o'clock. At midnight I heard a knock on the door. I didn't want to get up. We were in a cabin in a small town, who would be knocking. I got up and answered the door while my friend was sleeping. The stranger let me know the cabin next door was on fire. And it was. I was not happy. I had great fear of the danger there. I felt good later after the fire was under control and we could go back in our cabin and sleep.

I did not want to get out of bed. I was actually dreaming and the knocking noise was incorporated into my dream at first. I was in a deep sleep and my body was hurting from skiing all day. My friend did not hear the knocking. The fire was very close and if there was a wind our cabin would have burned. If I did not seek to see who was at the door and there was a wind, things could have been much different. I needed to give attention to the knock. I needed to investigate what was there. I needed to listen to the instructions that the cabin next door was on fire. And then, most importantly, I needed to look and see.

This looking, experiencing, and seeing all working together is important. When I was told that the cabin next door was on fire. It reacted like someone saying, "please pass the salt." I mean, I was half asleep and didn't really respond inwardly. But when I looked and saw the flames like 20 yards from my position, my body reacted and I was instantly awake.

The verbal information did nothing to my soul, but seeing was believing, and that saved me.

Anxiety struck me. I was fired up. No pun intended. And then when I woke up my friend, he was mad. He too was in a deep sleep. I told him the cabin next door was on fire and we needed to get out. He thought I was lying and playing a joke. When he saw the fire, guess what, he too got an adrenalin rush of fear and panic. He hurried to get his vehicle out of the way and like the movies, he had trouble starting the truck. He had a kill switch installed so key needed to be gradually turned, but he wanted to get out fast because he could hear the windows blow out from the house on fire. The difference being told about God's ways and experiencing them means everything.

I have been in recovery from addiction for 30 years. I learned sinful thinking and behavior. I practiced those behaviors for a number of years. Anger, fear, worry, and self-pity wreaked havoc upon my soul. They became a way of life for me and controlled it. I relied on these feelings. They lived in my thoughts and words. They were my identity. I've had so many situations with people and places that were dangerous and destructive. I'm like a man who is scarred up from tragedy and feels lucky. I'm lucky because things could have been so much worse.

I really feel saved from death. I feel saved from physical, emotional, and spiritual death. I feel saved from an inward hell. Salvation for me is not a theory, it is a reality. And my salvation is contingent upon my faith with God, like the faith of Abraham. (Read Hebrews 11)

To accept God's help and choose it I had to be willing to let go of my old ways. This is a hard choice to make. And I need to keep making it. I cannot grow attached to customs and traditions. I must stay attached to the Holy Spirit. Again, this takes much discipline, humility, and flexibility.

Spiritual salvation is an ongoing journey for me which I get to experience as I turn my thoughts more to align with God's righteousness. With that, let's begin digging into the Bible.

Exodus 14:13 Stand still, and see the **salvation** of the Lord, which He will accomplish for you today.

In this verse Moses is speaking to people who are afraid to watch, act, and learn. That day Moses crossed the sea with the freed slaves. And many of them were not happy. The slaves that were freed had many complaints and were not happy. Life was very different and challenging.

Growing with God's grace is the adjustment to pursue God's goodness and spiritual comforts instead of material comforts. Instead of being comforted through food, money, sex, drugs, status, revenge, and many other sinful adventures, we can learn to find comfort in love, peace, forgiveness, mercy, compassion, truth, and justice.

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

Stand still and see. This is similar to what I do in meditation. I usually sit though, but sometimes I stand. I see or imagine what the goodness of God has done for my life. I recall my experiences in truth, love, forgiveness, mercy, and compassion and see how my adjusting with it has saved my marriage and my soul. I see how I have been blessed with close relationships over the years. These good experiences fill and feed my soul.

We need some experience with God's goodness. And to get that experience may require some uncomfortable adjustments that are inconvenient. Seeking humility is often the first step, but not the only step. We will need some courage to do things new and different. God's grace is right here, but we need to choose to accept it.

Patterns

We will be focusing upon patterns because I believe when verses are quoted and repeated it raises its significance. When Jesus highlights the command of God to love God with our all, that makes it more important. And when Jesus says seek first, that involves priority.

I believe it's best to take what the Bible says and what it seems to mean over anyone, and yes, that includes Inward Authority. Some people may get the idea that what I am saying has significance. Nothing about me or what I say has any significance. I am just someone guiding people how to find spiritual food. I don't provide it. I can only show one way to get fed.

The Bible has many stories where we can find patterns hidden in them. There are patterns about God's character. There are patterns about what is good and what is evil. We will discuss patterns about salvation.

Psalm 68:19 Blessed *be* the Lord, *Who* daily loads us *with benefits*, The God of our **salvation!** *Selah*

Exodus 14:13 "He will accomplish for you today." and "daily loads us with benefits" show a pattern of people able to receive God's help daily or in the present.

Daily loads us with benefits Are you noticing a pattern? These two verses describe salvation as a daily encounter.

Patterns are important. In my experiences, teachers that repeat things often do so because they are more important than things not repeated and likely to be on the test.

One pattern we will discuss involves how we can know God's righteousness and salvation, that we are also to proclaim, teach, or show others how to be in it.

Salvation Study Part 1

We will review verses in the NKJV. Let us pay particular attention to the components of the first and great commandment of God. Love, God, Heart, Mind, Soul, and Strength. Let's watch closely for how these are applied with salvation.

Luke 19:8-9 Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold."

The acts described here fall into the categories of mercy, forgiveness, and restitution. Zacchaeus gives to the poor and restores wrongs.

And Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

Jesus said, “Today salvation has come” which means salvation is available right now and today. Then Jesus use the word “because” which means salvation that is here today is a result of something. It is the result of Zacchaeus being “a son of Abraham.” I’ll just say that any of us can be children of Abraham by having the faith of Abraham. This seems to be the case in Zacchaeus.

Now let’s review Psalm 118:14-24. Please pause right here and read it to better understand what I’m going to describe.

“The Lord is my strength and song,
And He has become my salvation.
The voice of rejoicing and salvation
Is in the tents of the righteous;”

Notice the line “has become my salvation” and “The Lord is my strength.” This mean God is there protecting in the present.

The next part describes those who rejoice with salvation are righteous. Simply put, doing righteous is to do right by God’s ways.

I shall not die, but live,
And declare the works of the Lord.

The best way to declare the works of the lord is to know what they are and how to do them. This person does the works of the lord and rejoices in them.

The Lord has chastened me severely,
But He has not given me over to death.
Open to me the gates of righteousness;
I will go through them,
And I will praise the Lord.

This person has accepted Godly correction. Note he has been chastened severely and is ready to respond more in God’s righteousness. One other

point to see here is that this is an ongoing situation. Being in the salvation has to do with staying righteous and maintaining the faith of Abraham. This will become more evident as we go.

This is the gate of the Lord,
Through which the righteous shall enter.
I will praise You,
For You have answered me,
And have become my salvation.

“have become my salvation” means he already is in it.

Think of it this way. God is love. Love can come and go. Our beliefs in love affect our experience of love and vice versa. We can reject or neglect love from others and God. We can turn away from God’s salvation or turn toward it.

Hebrews 2:1 Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.

3 how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him,

Salvation is here, right now

1 Samuel 11:13 But Saul said, “Not a man shall be put to death this day, for today the Lord has accomplished **salvation** in Israel.”

Exodus 15:2 The Lord *is* my strength and song, And He has become my **salvation**; He *is* my God, and I will praise Him; My father’s God, and I will exalt Him.

Psalm 35:3 Also draw out the spear, And stop those who pursue me. Say to my soul, “I am your salvation.”

Psalm 68:20 Our God is the God of salvation; And to God the Lord belong escapes from death.

Psalm 74:12 For God is my King from of old, Working salvation in the midst of the earth.

Psalm 106:4 Remember me, O Lord, with the favor You have toward Your people. Oh, visit me with Your salvation,

Psalm 144:10 The One who gives salvation to kings, Who delivers David His servant From the deadly sword.

2 Corinthians 6:2 For He says: “In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you.” Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

Know and speak God's ways & salvation

Psalm 67:2 That Your way may be known on earth, Your salvation among all nations.

Psalm 71:15 My mouth shall tell of Your righteousness And Your salvation all the day, For I do not know their limits.

Psalm 96:2 Sing to the Lord, bless His name; Proclaim the good news of His salvation from day to day.

Psalm 98:2-3 The Lord has made known His salvation;
His righteousness He has revealed in the sight of the nations.
He has remembered His mercy and His faithfulness to the house of Israel; All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

Isaiah 49:8 Thus says the Lord: “In an acceptable time I have heard You, And in the day of salvation I have helped You; I will preserve You and give You As a covenant to the people, To restore the earth, To cause them to inherit the desolate heritages;

Isaiah 60:18 Violence shall no longer be heard in your land, Neither wasting nor destruction within your borders; But you shall call your walls Salvation, And your gates Praise.

Luke 2: 29-32 “Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word; For my eyes have seen Your salvation Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel.”

Luke 3:6 “Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word; For my eyes have seen Your salvation Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel.”

Acts 13:47 For so the Lord has commanded us: ‘I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, That you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.’ ”

Acts 16:17 This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, “These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation.”

Acts 28:28 “Therefore let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it!”

Ephesians 1:13 In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,

Ephesians 6:13-20 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints— and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

Wait

Psalm 25:5 Lead me in Your truth and teach me, For You are the God of my salvation; On You I wait all the day.

Psalm 62:1-2, 7 Truly my soul silently waits for God; From Him comes my salvation. He only is my rock and my salvation; He is my defense; I shall not be greatly moved. In God is my salvation and my glory; The rock of my strength, And my refuge, is in God.

Isaiah 33:2 O Lord, be gracious to us; We have waited for You. Be their arm every morning, Our salvation also in the time of trouble.

Rejoice

Psalm 51:14 Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, The God of my salvation, And my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness.

1 Samuel 2:1 And Hannah prayed and said: “My heart rejoices in the Lord; My horn is exalted in the Lord. I smile at my enemies, Because I rejoice in Your **salvation**.

Pslam 9:14 That I may tell of all Your praise In the gates of the daughter of Zion. I will rejoice in Your **salvation**.

Psalm 13:5 But I have trusted in Your mercy; My heart shall rejoice in Your salvation.

Psalm 20:5 We will rejoice in your salvation, And in the name of our God we will set up our banners! May the Lord fulfill all your petitions.

Shield & Strength

Psalm 132:16 I will also clothe her priests with salvation, And her saints shall shout aloud for joy.

Psalm 18:35 You have also given me the shield of Your salvation; Your right hand has held me up, Your gentleness has made me great.

Psalm 27:1 The Lord is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid?

Psalm 37:39 But the salvation of the righteous is from the Lord; He is their strength in the time of trouble.

2 Samuel 22:3 The God of my strength, in whom I will trust; My shield and the horn of my **salvation**, My stronghold and my refuge; My Savior, You save me from violence.

Psalm 140:7 O God the Lord, the strength of my salvation, You have covered my head in the day of battle.

Isaiah 33:5-6 The Lord is exalted, for He dwells on high; He has filled Zion with justice and righteousness.
Wisdom and knowledge will be the stability of your times,
And the strength of salvation; The fear of the Lord is His treasure.

Those who, (literal and implied)

Psalm 50:23 Whoever offers praise glorifies Me; And to him who orders his conduct aright I will show the salvation of God.”

Psalm 78:22 Because they did not believe in God, And did not trust in His salvation.

Psalm 40:16 Let all those who seek You rejoice and be glad in You; Let such as love Your salvation say continually, “The Lord be magnified!”

Psalm 70:4 Let all those who seek You rejoice and be glad in You; And let those who love Your salvation say continually, “Let God be magnified!”

Psalm 149:4

For the Lord takes pleasure in His people; He will beautify the humble with salvation.

Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

1 Thessalonians 5:4-10 But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation. For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.

Hebrews 2:1 Do Not Neglect Salvation

1 Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.

3 how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him,

Hebrews 5:9 And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him,

Hebrews 9:28 so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.

Our own Salvation

Psalms 79:9 Help us, O God of our salvation, For the glory of Your name; And deliver us, and provide atonement for our sins, For Your name's sake!

All of Psalms 85:4 Restore us, O God of our salvation, And cause Your anger toward us to cease.

Psalms 116:13 I will take up the cup of salvation, And call upon the name of the Lord.

Psalm 119:123 My eyes fail from seeking Your salvation And Your righteous word.

Psalm 119:155 Salvation is far from the wicked, For they do not seek Your statutes.

Isaiah 17:10 Because you have forgotten the God of your salvation, And have not been mindful of the Rock of your stronghold, Therefore you will plant pleasant plants And set out foreign seedlings;

Isaiah 63:5 I looked, but there was no one to help, And I wondered That there was no one to uphold; Therefore My own arm brought salvation for Me; And My own fury, it sustained Me.

Philippians 2:12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;

Romans 13:11 And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.

Trust

Isaiah 12:2-3

Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; 'For Yah, the Lord, is my strength and song; He also has become my salvation.' ”
Therefore with joy you will draw water From the wells of salvation.

Righteousness & Salvation Connected

Pslam 40:10

I have not hidden Your righteousness within my heart; I have declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation; I have not concealed Your lovingkindness and Your truth From the great assembly.

Isaiah 45:8 “Rain down, you heavens, from above, And let the skies pour down righteousness; Let the earth open, let them bring forth salvation, And let righteousness spring up together. I, the Lord, have created it.

Isaiah 46:13

I bring My righteousness near, it shall not be far off; My salvation shall not linger. And I will place salvation in Zion, For Israel My glory.

Isaiah 51: 5-6 My righteousness is near,
My salvation has gone forth,
And My arms will judge the peoples;
The coastlands will wait upon Me,
And on My arm they will trust.
Lift up your eyes to the heavens,
And look on the earth beneath.
For the heavens will vanish away like smoke,
The earth will grow old like a garment,
And those who dwell in it will die in like manner;
But My salvation will be forever,
And My righteousness will not be abolished.

Isaiah 51:8 For the moth will eat them up like a garment, And the worm will eat them like wool; But My righteousness will be forever, And My salvation from generation to generation.”

Isaiah 56:1 Thus says the Lord: “Keep justice, and do righteousness, For My salvation is about to come, And My righteousness to be revealed.”

Isaiah 61:10 I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, My soul shall be joyful in my God; For He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, As a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, And as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

Isaiah 62:1 For Zion’s sake I will not hold My peace, And for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest, Until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, And her salvation as a lamp that burns.

Luke 1:77-79 To give knowledge of salvation to His people
By the remission of their sins, Through the tender mercy of our God,
With which the Dayspring from on high has visited us;

To give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, To guide our feet into the way of peace.”

Romans 10:10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Titus 2:11-14 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.

Everlasting

Isaiah 45:17 But Israel shall be saved by the Lord With an everlasting salvation; You shall not be ashamed or disgraced Forever and ever.

Isaiah 49:6 Indeed He says, ‘It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob, And to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.’ ”

No Salvation

Isaiah 59 Therefore justice is far from us,
Nor does righteousness overtake us;
We look for light, but there is darkness!
For brightness, but we walk in blackness!
We grope for the wall like the blind,
And we grope as if we had no eyes;
We stumble at noonday as at twilight;
We are as dead men in desolate places.
We all growl like bears,
And moan sadly like doves;
We look for justice, but there is none;
For salvation, but it is far from us.

For our transgressions are multiplied before You,
And our sins testify against us;
For our transgressions are with us,
And as for our iniquities, we know them:
In transgressing and lying against the Lord,
And departing from our God,
Speaking oppression and revolt,
Conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood.
Justice is turned back,
And righteousness stands afar off;
For truth is fallen in the street,
And equity cannot enter.
So truth fails,
And he who departs from evil makes himself a prey.
The Redeemer of Zion
Then the Lord saw it, and it displeased Him
That there was no justice.
He saw that there was no man,
And wondered that there was no intercessor;
Therefore His own arm brought salvation for Him;
And His own righteousness, it sustained Him.
For He put on righteousness as a breastplate,
And a helmet of salvation on His head;
He put on the garments of vengeance for clothing,
And was clad with zeal as a cloak.
According to their deeds, accordingly He will repay,
Fury to His adversaries,
Recompense to His enemies;
The coastlands He will fully repay.

Vain Salvation

Jeremiah 3:23 Truly, in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, And from the multitude of mountains; Truly, in the Lord our God Is the salvation of Israel.

John 4:21-24 Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the

Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

Suffering

2 Corinthians 1:6 Now if we are afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effective for enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer. Or if we are comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation.

2 Corinthians 7:10 For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.

Hebrews 2:10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

2 Peter 3:15 and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation— as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you,

Obtain

2 Timothy 2:10 Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

Salvation & Faith

1 Peter 1:9 for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Misc.

Romans 11:11 I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles.

Philippians 1:28 and not in any way terrified by your adversaries, which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that from God.

2 Thessalonians 2:13-15 But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle.

2 Timothy 3:15 and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Jude 1:3 Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.

Read all of 1 Peter 1

When practices become habits

Our old understanding can conflict with us accepting new understanding. If we see information that is repeated and yet we question it, that might have something to do with us holding on to our old ideas. This is a natural and normal thing our minds do. This is why we ought to sit with the new information longer and question any resisting prompts to accept what the Bible says in application to our lives.

Our old ideas which we may have practiced for many years will not simply follow corrective teaching. The way we respond to many things in life can become ingrained within us and difficult to change. However, we can change it with persistent continuance with the new desired behavior. We must apply new thought and action. We will need reminders.

My wife and I bought a house that had a stove and microwave combo. The microwave was right about the stove, but they were both one unit. Well, the microwave stopped working. We had another microwave in storage, so I brought it out and put it on the counter. We used that microwave on the counter for a few years until it stopped working. Then we finally decided to replace our oven microwave combo unit.

So, we got the new microwave oven combo unit installed and still had the old microwave on the countertop that no longer worked. I believe most of us will identify with what happened. Both my wife and I would physically move to use the old microwave that no longer worked. We both felt stupid for it because our bodies were still guiding us to do something that couldn't be done.

I believe we need to think carefully about what we do because much of what we do may be done without knowing why we are doing it. I don't believe God wants us to do things simply because we have always done thing in a certain way.

I have found myself unconsciously going through the motions with prayer and church service. I believe this is missing the mark. I believe I am to be an active participant setting my mind and heart to be with God and God's ways.

The scribes try to explain past scribes to current confusion

Read Ezekiel 18 and ponder the question, "Why does this need to be clarified?" Another good question is, "Why did Jesus and the Apostles need to guide people?"

We want an easy way of doing things. We want an easy message. Jesus and Apostles were killed for what they said. They were killed because people did not want it. They were killed because the truth was being revealed in a way that challenged contemporary thought of that time. They spoke the truth that helped people see which raised doubt and questions in the religious system. I hope to speak such truth about salvation.

I don't want conflict or problems, I just want more righteousness, truth, and sincere love to flourish.