

Stride

noun:

1. the most effective natural pace
2. maximum competence or capability

CONTENTS

1. Introduction
2. Statement of Faith
3. Biblical Meta-Narrative
4. Intro: Word Study
5. Content
6. Thankful
7. Fear
8. Pain
9. Joy
10. Rest
11. Unsaid
12. Desperation
13. Hope
14. Scripture References
15. Intro: God-given Roles
16. Soldier
17. Athlete
18. Farmer
19. Builder
20. Investor
21. Scripture References

INTRODUCTION

This study sets out to guide small groups through a biblically based introspection in order to spur one another on towards hope in Christ and a life filled with love & stewardship.

It is our hope that through this study you will find your...Stride.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

1. Inerrant Word of God: The Bible is the true revelation of God, complete and accurate w/o error, both internally consistent and harmonious to external historical sources. It is the story of God's character and how he relates to his people; in this way it is neither a work of broad history nor a work of fiction in any respect. Miraculous stories w/in the Bible are represented w/o enhancement.
2. Trinity: God is, has always been and will always be three persons.
3. God: The Father, Creator & Lord, Provider, Holy & Just
4. Jesus: The Son, only worthy sacrifice for fallen man, died for the sins of all mankind that we may be permitted to reside in the presence of the Holy God for eternity
5. Holy Spirit: The Comforter, indwells those who believe in the sacrifice and restoration of Jesus, our Messiah. The Holy Spirit binds all believers to

each other and to God, w/o need for any intermediary.

6. Man: As a result of the fall recorded in Genesis, there is a separation between the Holy God and sinful man. We are totally depraved, w/o anything good that could be of value to God or utility to facilitate our own reconciliation with Him.
7. Unconditional election: It is God who decides who will believe in Him, who will serve him in this life, and who will spend eternity with Him; God has made this decision outside of time and irrespective of our actions.
8. Irresistible grace: God is sovereign, with the knowledge and power to bring those to Him he desires w/o resistance.
9. Perseverance of the saints: There is nothing temporal or eternal that can separate saved man from God once God has claimed us. To reiterate: God is sovereign, all-powerful w/o contention.

META-NARATIVE

God has always been. In His great love He created the world & man. Man rebelled & fell into sin causing separation from God. God is just and requires death as payment for sin. In His great mercy He provided hope in a sacrifice for man's sin which would restore man to holy God. Throughout the Old Testament God would guide and provide for His people, descendants of Noah, speaking through Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, then through Judges, then Kings, then Prophets, until ultimately God would speak through Himself in Jesus Christ, who was finally the most complete revelation of God Himself and the ultimate hoped-for sacrifice, being the only worthy man. He died for all and was resurrected to be with God in heaven, having made a way and a place for those who believe in His redemption.

INTRO: WORD STUDY

The ECG graph, typically used to provide information about the vitality of one's heart, can be a metaphor of the erratic nature of our mental & emotional state. Some of these emotions are symptoms of the fall and some are benefits of the connection with God through his Word & Holy Spirit.

Let's spend the next few weeks with some introspection through the lens of what the Bible says about these feelings.

CONTENT

*Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. -
Romans 12:12*

Are you content?

How would you define being Content?

Give some examples of when you have felt
Content?

Let's see some examples of Contentment in God's word.

Ecclesiastes 4:6, Galatians 5:26, 1 Timothy 6:6, Hebrews
13:5, Philippians 4:11, Psalm 46:10, 1 Peter 4:12, 2
Corinthians 6:9, Philippians 1:20

NOTES

God-given Roles:

Are you Content in each of the 5F areas of your life?

How is this Contentment displayed?

THANKFUL

My mouth will tell of your righteousness, of your salvation all day long, though I know not its measure. – Psalm 71:15

What are you thankful for?

How would you define being Thankful?

Give some examples of when you have felt Thankful?

Let's see some examples of Thankfulness in God's word.

James 5:13, Psalm 103:10, Ephesians 5:19, Colossians 3:15, Colossians 4:2, Psalm 118:1, Psalm 66:20, Psalm 68:19, Daniel 4:2, 1 Timothy 1:12

NOTES

God-given Roles:

Are you Thankful in each of the 5F areas of your life?

How is this Thankfulness displayed?

FEAR

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. – Philippians 4:6-7

What are things that scare you?

How would you define being Scared?

Give some examples of when you have felt Scared?

Let's see some examples of being Scared in God's word.

Matthew 6:25-34, 1 Peter 5:5-11, Luke 10:38-42, Psalm 37:1-7, Psalm 55:22, Hebrews 13:5 Matthew 13:22, Luke 21:34, Jeremiah 17:7

NOTES

God-given Roles:

Do you have fear in any of the 5F areas of your life?

How is this fear displayed?

PAIN

But he said to me, "My Grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. – 2nd Corinthians 12:9

Where does the pain in your life come from?

How would you define Pain?

Is contentment possible w/pain?

Give some examples of when you have felt Pain?

Let's see some examples of Pain experienced in God's word.

Psalm 51:12, Psalm 69:29, 2nd Corinthians 1:3-5, John 14:1, John 14:18, 1st Corinthians 10:13, James 5:13, Romans 15:4, Psalm 119:50, 81-83, Psalm 27:10, Psalm 41:9-12, John 15:18, Psalm 42, Psalm 94:19, John 14:27, James 1:12, Jeremiah 31:18, 1 Peter 4:12, 1 Peter 4:19, 2 Timothy 2:3, Job 1:13-22, Romans 5:3

NOTES

God-given Roles:

Are you experiencing Pain in any of the 5F areas of your life?

How is this Pain displayed?

JOY

I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. – John 15:11

Where do you find Joy in your life?

How would you define Joy?

Give some examples of when you have felt Joy?

Let's see some examples of Joy in God's word.

Psalms 13:5, 16:11, 19:8, 30:11-12, 33:21, Romans 5:11, 12:12, 14:17, 15:13, Isaiah 29:19, Luke 15:10, James 1:2

NOTES

God-given Roles:

Are you experiencing Joy in each of the 5F areas of your life?

How is this Joy displayed?

REST

*And the peace of God which transcends all understanding,
will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. –
Philippians 4:7*

What allows you to rest on a regular basis?

How would you define Rest?

Give some examples of when you have been
at Rest?

Let's see some examples of Rest in God's word.

Mark 6:31, Matthew 8:24, 11:29

NOTES

God-given Roles:

Are you experiencing Rest in each of the 5F areas of your life?

How is this Rest displayed?

UNSAID

Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift. – Matthew 5:23-24

What has been left unsaid in your relationships?

What does Unsaid mean to you in regard to relationships?

Give some examples of when you have let relationships exist with things Unsaid?

Let's see some examples of "Unsaid" Situations in God's word.

Luke 6:37, 17:3, Ephesians 4:32, Colossians 3:13, 6:12, 14, 18:21-35, Mark 11:25, Romans 12:19, 1 Corinthians 4:12, Romans 12:1, Psalm 51:16, Hosea 6:6, Matthew 7:12

NOTES

God-given Roles:

Do you have something left Unsaid in any of the 5F areas of your life?

What is this status of Unsaid doing to you?

DESPERATION

Will the Lord reject forever? Will He never show his favor again? – Psalm 77:7

When have you experienced
desperation/despondency?

How would you define Desperation?

Give some examples of when you have felt
Desperate?

Let's see some examples of Desperation in God's word.

James 5:13, 2 Samuel 24:14, Deuteronomy 28:65, Job 9:16-35, Job 17:7-16, Job 3:25-26, Proverbs 13:12

NOTES

God-given Roles:

Are you experiencing Desperation in any of the 5F areas of your life?

How is this Desperation displayed?

HOPE

My soul faints with longing for your salvation, but I have put my hope in your word. – Psalm 119:81

What has been your hope that has rescued you from the desperation?

How would you define Hope?

Give some examples of when you have experienced Hope?

Let's see some examples of Hope in God's word.

Proverbs 13:12, Micah 1:7, Lamentations 3:24, Ephesians 1:18, Titus 1:2, Romans 15:13, 1 Peter 3:15

NOTES

God-given Roles:

Are you experiencing Hope in each of the 5F areas of your life?

How is this Hope displayed?

ORIGIN & CULMINATION

Faith persists through all.

Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. - Romans 12:2

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. - Philippians 4:8

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

Let's see some examples of Contentment in God's word.

Better one handful with tranquility, than two handfuls with toil and chasing after the wind. - Ecclesiastes 4:6

Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other. - Galatians 5:26

But godliness with contentment is great gain. - 1 Timothy 6:6

Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." - Hebrews 13:5

I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. - Philippians 4:11

He says, "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." - Psalm 46:10

Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. - 1 Peter 4:12

*...known, yet regarded as unknown; dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed;
2 Corinthians 6:9*

I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ

*will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. -
Philippians 1:20*

Let's see some examples of Thankfulness in God's word.
*Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone
happy? Let them sing songs of praise. - James 5:13*

*...he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us
according to our iniquities. - Psalm 103:10*

*...speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs
from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the
Lord, ... - Ephesians 5:19*

*Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members
of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. -
Colossians 3:15*

*Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. -
Colossians 4:2*

*Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures
forever. - Psalm 118:1*

*Praise be to God, who has not rejected my prayer or withheld
his love from me! - Psalm 66:20*

*Praise be to the Lord, to God our Savior, who daily bears our
burdens. - Psalm 68:19*

*It is my pleasure to tell you about the miraculous signs and
wonders that the Most High God has performed for me. -
Daniel 4:2*

I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me trustworthy, appointing me to his service.
- 1 Timothy 1:12

Let's see some examples of being Scared in God's word.
Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. - Matthew 6:25-34

In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. Be alert and

of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings. And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen. - 1 Peter 5:5-11

As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her." - Luke 10:38-42

*Do not fret because of those who are evil
or be envious of those who do wrong;
for like the grass they will soon wither,
like green plants they will soon die away.
Trust in the LORD and do good;
dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.
Take delight in the LORD,
and he will give you the desires of your heart.
Commit your way to the LORD;
trust in him and he will do this:*

*He will make your righteous reward shine like the dawn,
your vindication like the noonday sun.*

Be still before the LORD

and wait patiently for him;

do not fret when people succeed in their ways,

when they carry out their wicked schemes. - Psalm 37:1-7

*Cast your cares on the LORD and he will sustain you; he will
never let the righteous be shaken. - Psalm 55:22*

*Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content
with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave
you; never will I forsake you." - Hebrews 13:5*

*The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who
hears the word, but the worries of this life and the
deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful.
- Matthew 13:22*

*Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with
carousing, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day
will close on you suddenly like a trap. - Luke 21:34*

*But blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD, whose
confidence is in him. - Jeremiah 17:7*

Let's see some examples of Pain experienced in God's word.
*Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing
spirit, to sustain me. - Psalm 51:12*

*But as for me, afflicted and in pain—may your salvation, God,
protect me. - Psalm 69:29*

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ. - 2 Corinthians 1:3-5

Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. - John 14:1

I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. - John 14:18

No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it. - 1 Corinthians 10:13

Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. - James 5:13

For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope. - Romans 15:4

My comfort in my suffering is this: Your promise preserves my life. - Psalm 119:50

*My soul faints with longing for your salvation,
but I have put my hope in your word.*

*My eyes fail, looking for your promise;
I say, "When will you comfort me?"
Though I am like a wineskin in the smoke,
I do not forget your decrees. - Psalm 119:81-83*

*Though my father and mother forsake me, the LORD will
receive me. - Psalm 27:10*

*Even my close friend,
someone I trusted,
one who shared my bread,
has turned against me.
But may you have mercy on me, LORD;
raise me up, that I may repay them.
I know that you are pleased with me,
for my enemy does not triumph over me.
Because of my integrity you uphold me
and set me in your presence forever. - Psalm 41:9-12*

*If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. -
John 15:18*

*As the deer pants for streams of water,
so my soul pants for you, my God.
My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.
When can I go and meet with God?
My tears have been my food
day and night,
while people say to me all day long,
"Where is your God?"
These things I remember
as I pour out my soul:
how I used to go to the house of God*

*under the protection of the Mighty One^[d]
with shouts of joy and praise
among the festive throng.
Why, my soul, are you downcast?
Why so disturbed within me?
Put your hope in God,
for I will yet praise him,
my Savior and my God.
My soul is downcast within me;
therefore I will remember you
from the land of the Jordan,
the heights of Hermon—from Mount Mizar.
Deep calls to deep
in the roar of your waterfalls;
all your waves and breakers
have swept over me.
By day the LORD directs his love,
at night his song is with me—
a prayer to the God of my life.
I say to God my Rock,
“Why have you forgotten me?
Why must I go about mourning,
oppressed by the enemy?”
My bones suffer mortal agony
as my foes taunt me,
saying to me all day long,
“Where is your God?”
Why, my soul, are you downcast?
Why so disturbed within me?
Put your hope in God,
for I will yet praise him,
my Savior and my God. - Psalm 42*

When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought me joy. - Psalm 94:19

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. - John 14:27

Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him. - James 1:12

I have surely heard Ephraim's moaning: 'You disciplined me like an unruly calf, and I have been disciplined. Restore me, and I will return, because you are the LORD my God. - Jeremiah 31:18

Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. - 1 Peter 4:12

So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good. - 1 Peter 4:19

Join with me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. - 2 Timothy 2:3

One day when Job's sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother's house, a messenger came to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys were grazing nearby, and the Sabeans attacked and made off with them. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"

While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, "The fire of God fell from the heavens and burned up the sheep and the servants, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"

While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, "The Chaldeans formed three raiding parties and swept down on your camels and made off with them. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"

While he was still speaking, yet another messenger came and said, "Your sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother's house,¹⁹ when suddenly a mighty wind swept in from the desert and struck the four corners of the house. It collapsed on them, and they are dead, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"

At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship and said:

*"Naked I came from my mother's womb,
and naked I will depart.*

*The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away;
may the name of the LORD be praised."*

*In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing.
- Job 1:13-22*

Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; - Romans 5:3

Let's see some examples of Joy in God's word.

But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. - Psalm 13:5

You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand. - Psalm 16:11

The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes. - Psalm 19:8

You turned my wailing into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, that my heart may sing your praises and not be silent. LORD my God, I will praise you forever. - Psalm 30:11-12

In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name. - Psalm 33:21

Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation. - Romans 5:11

Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. - Romans 12:12

For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, ... - Romans 14:17

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. - Romans 15:13

Once more the humble will rejoice in the LORD; the needy will rejoice in the Holy One of Israel. - Isaiah 29:19

In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents. - Luke 15:10

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ... - James 1:2

Let's see some examples of Rest in God's word.

Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest." - Mark 6:31

Suddenly a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. - Matthew 8:24

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. - Matthew 11:29

Let's see some examples of "Unsaid" Situations in God's word.

Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. - Luke 6:37

If your brother or sister sins against you, rebuke them; and if they repent, forgive them. - Luke 17:3

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. - Ephesians 4:32

Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. - Colossians 3:13

And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins. - Mark 11:25

Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. - Romans 12:19

We work hard with our own hands. When we are cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it; - 1 Corinthians 4:12

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. - Romans 12:1

You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. - Psalm 51:16

For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings. - Hosea 6:6

So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets. - Matthew 7:12

Let's see some examples of Desperation in God's word.

Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. - James 5:13

David said to Gad, "I am in deep distress. Let us fall into the hands of the LORD, for his mercy is great; but do not let me fall into human hands." - 2 Samuel 24:14

Among those nations you will find no repose, no resting place for the sole of your foot. There the LORD will give you an anxious mind, eyes weary with longing, and a despairing heart. - Deuteronomy 28:65

*Even if I summoned him and he responded,
I do not believe he would give me a hearing.
He would crush me with a storm
and multiply my wounds for no reason.
He would not let me catch my breath
but would overwhelm me with misery.
If it is a matter of strength, he is mighty!
And if it is a matter of justice, who can challenge him^[a]?
Even if I were innocent, my mouth would condemn me;
if I were blameless, it would pronounce me guilty.
"Although I am blameless,
I have no concern for myself;
I despise my own life.
It is all the same; that is why I say,
'He destroys both the blameless and the wicked.'
When a scourge brings sudden death,
he mocks the despair of the innocent.
When a land falls into the hands of the wicked,
he blindfolds its judges.
If it is not he, then who is it?*

*"My days are swifter than a runner;
they fly away without a glimpse of joy.
They skim past like boats of papyrus,
like eagles swooping down on their prey.
If I say, 'I will forget my complaint,
I will change my expression, and smile,'
I still dread all my sufferings,
for I know you will not hold me innocent.
Since I am already found guilty,
why should I struggle in vain?
Even if I washed myself with soap
and my hands with cleansing powder,
you would plunge me into a slime pit
so that even my clothes would detest me.
"He is not a mere mortal like me that I might answer him,
that we might confront each other in court.
If only there were someone to mediate between us,
someone to bring us together,
someone to remove God's rod from me,
so that his terror would frighten me no more.
Then I would speak up without fear of him,
but as it now stands with me, I cannot. - Job 9:16-35*

*My eyes have grown dim with grief;
my whole frame is but a shadow.
The upright are appalled at this;
the innocent are aroused against the ungodly.
Nevertheless, the righteous will hold to their ways,
and those with clean hands will grow stronger.
"But come on, all of you, try again!
I will not find a wise man among you.
My days have passed, my plans are shattered.
Yet the desires of my heart*

*turn night into day;
in the face of the darkness light is near.
If the only home I hope for is the grave,
if I spread out my bed in the realm of darkness,
if I say to corruption, 'You are my father,'
and to the worm, 'My mother' or 'My sister,'
where then is my hope—
who can see any hope for me?
Will it go down to the gates of death?
Will we descend together into the dust?" - Job 17:7-16*

What I feared has come upon me; what I dreaded has happened to me. I have no peace, no quietness; I have no rest, but only turmoil." - Job 3:25-26

Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life. - Proverbs 13:12

Let's see some examples of Hope in God's word.
Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life. - Proverbs 13:12

All her idols will be broken to pieces; all her temple gifts will be burned with fire; I will destroy all her images. Since she gathered her gifts from the wages of prostitutes, as the wages of prostitutes they will again be used." - Micah 1:7

I say to myself, "The LORD is my portion; therefore I will wait for him." - Lamentations 3:24

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the

*riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, -
Ephesians 1:18*

*in the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not
lie, promised before the beginning of time, ... - Titus 1:2*

*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you
trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the
power of the Holy Spirit. - Romans 15:13*

*But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared
to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the
reason for the hope that you have. But do this with
gentleness and respect, ... - 1 Peter 3:15*

INTRO: GOD-GIVEN ROLES

Throughout the New Testament, God identifies us with five roles, outside of the Bride of Christ.

1. Soldier
2. Athlete
3. Farmer
4. Builder
5. Investor

I propose that these roles can conveniently be alliterated into the 5F's of our life.

1. Family
2. Fitness
3. Friends
4. Faith
5. Finance

SOLDIER

Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs—he wants to please his commanding officer. - 2 Timothy 2:3

5F: Family

How do you think Soldier & Family correlate?

In what ways can your family love you?

In what ways can you love your family?

Let's see some examples of the Soldier metaphor used in God's word.

2 Timothy 2:3; Ephesians 6:10-18, 1st Thessalonians 5:8, Hebrews 4:12, Revelation 1:16)

ATHLETE

Similarly, if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not receive the victor's crown unless he competes according to the rules. - 2 Timothy 2:5

5F: Fitness

How important is fitness to you?

How important is nutrition to you?

Let's see some examples of the Athlete metaphor used in God's word.

1 Corinthians 9:24-27, Hebrews 12:1, 2 Timothy 4:7

FARMER

The hardworking farmer should be the first to receive a share of the crops. - 2 Timothy 2:6

5F: Friends

How do you think Farmer & Friends correlate?

In what ways can your friends satisfy you?

In what ways can you satisfy your friends?

Let's see some examples of Farmer metaphor used in God's word.

John 15:1, Matthew 13:3-23, 1 Corinthians 3:5-9

BUILDER

For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything. - Hebrews 3:4

5F: Faith

How do you think Builder & Faith correlate?

Is faith in God your foundation?

What are some habits you can form to take in God?

What are some habits that you can form to share what God has given you?

Let's see some examples of Builder metaphor used in God's word.

1st Corinthians 3:10-15, Hebrews 3:4, Luke 14:28-30

INVESTOR

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. - 1 Peter 4:10

5F: Finance

How do you think Investor & Finance correlate?

What habits can you form to review your finances on a regular basis?

What habits can you form to control your finances on a regular basis?

Let's see some examples of Investor metaphor used in God's word.

Luke 12:35-48, 16:1-15, 19:12-27, Matthew 25:14-30, 1 Corinthians 4:1-2, Titus 1:7-9, 1st Peter 4:10

EPILOGUE

Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this. - 2 Timothy 2:7

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

Soldier (Family)

Join with me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. - 2 Timothy 2:3

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore, put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. - Ephesians 6:10-18

But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. - 1 Thessalonians 5:8

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. - Hebrews 4:12

In his right hand he held seven stars, and coming out of his mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance. - Revelation 1:16

Athlete (Fitness)

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore, I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize. - 1 Corinthians 9:24-27

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, ... - Hebrews 12:1

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. - 2 Timothy 4:7

Farmer (Friends)

I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. - John 15:1

Then he told them many things in parables, saying: "A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed,

some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. Whoever has ears, let them hear.”

The disciples came to him and asked, “Why do you speak to the people in parables?”

He replied, “Because the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. Whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. This is why I speak to them in parables:

“Though seeing, they do not see;

though hearing, they do not hear or understand.

In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah:

“‘You will be ever hearing but never understanding;

you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.

For this people’s heart has become calloused;

they hardly hear with their ears,

and they have closed their eyes.

Otherwise they might see with their eyes,

hear with their ears,

understand with their hearts

and turn, and I would heal them.’

But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear.¹⁷ For truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.

"Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path. The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown." - Matthew 13:3-23

What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labor. For we are co-workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building.
- 1 Corinthians 3:5-9

Builder (Faith)

By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly

stones, wood, hay or straw, their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person's work. If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward. If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved—even though only as one escaping through the flames. - 1 Corinthians 3:10-15

For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything. - Hebrews 3:4

Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it? For if you lay the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule you, saying, 'This person began to build and wasn't able to finish.' - Luke 14:28-30

Investor (Finance)

Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, like servants waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him. It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. Truly I tell you, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them. It will be good for those servants whose master finds them ready, even if he comes in the middle of the night or toward daybreak. But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. You also must be ready, because

the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him."

Peter asked, "Lord, are you telling this parable to us, or to everyone?"

The Lord answered, "Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whom the master finds doing so when he returns. Truly I tell you, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. But suppose the servant says to himself, 'My master is taking a long time in coming,' and he then begins to beat the other servants, both men and women, and to eat and drink and get drunk. The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the unbelievers.

"The servant who knows the master's will and does not get ready or does not do what the master wants will be beaten with many blows. But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked. - Luke 12:35-48

Jesus told his disciples: "There was a rich man whose manager was accused of wasting his possessions. So he called him in and asked him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your management, because you cannot be manager any longer.'

"The manager said to himself, 'What shall I do now? My master is taking away my job. I'm not strong enough to dig, and I'm ashamed to beg— I know what I'll do so that, when I lose my job here, people will welcome me into their houses.'

"So he called in each one of his master's debtors. He asked the first, 'How much do you owe my master?'

"'Nine hundred gallons of olive oil,' he replied.

"The manager told him, 'Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it four hundred and fifty.'

"Then he asked the second, 'And how much do you owe?'

"'A thousand bushels of wheat,' he replied.

"He told him, 'Take your bill and make it eight hundred.

"The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly. For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light. I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings.

"Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own?

"No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."

The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus. He said to them, "You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of others, but God knows your hearts. What people value highly is detestable in God's sight.

- Luke 16:1-15

He said: "A man of noble birth went to a distant country to have himself appointed king and then to return. So he called ten of his servants and gave them ten minas. 'Put this money to work,' he said, 'until I come back.'

"But his subjects hated him and sent a delegation after him to say, 'We don't want this man to be our king.'

"He was made king, however, and returned home. Then he sent for the servants to whom he had given the money, in order to find out what they had gained with it.

"The first one came and said, 'Sir, your mina has earned ten more.'

"'Well done, my good servant!' his master replied. 'Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.'

"The second came and said, 'Sir, your mina has earned five more.'

"His master answered, 'You take charge of five cities.'

"Then another servant came and said, 'Sir, here is your mina; I have kept it laid away in a piece of cloth. I was afraid of you, because you are a hard man. You take out what you did not put in and reap what you did not sow.'

"His master replied, 'I will judge you by your own words, you wicked servant! You knew, did you, that I am a hard man, taking out what I did not put in, and reaping what I did not sow? Why then didn't you put my money on deposit, so that when I came back, I could have collected it with interest?'

"Then he said to those standing by, 'Take his mina away from him and give it to the one who has ten minas.'

"'Sir,' they said, 'he already has ten!'

"He replied, 'I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but as for the one who has nothing, even what they have will be taken away. But those enemies of mine who did not want me to be king over them—bring them here and kill them in front of me.'" - Luke 19:12-27

"Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. To one he

gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more. But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

"After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more.'

"His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

"The man with two bags of gold also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two bags of gold; see, I have gained two more.'

"His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

"Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.'

"His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.

“So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” - Matthew 25:14-30

This, then, is how you ought to regard us: as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the mysteries God has revealed. Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful. - 1 Corinthians 4:1-2

Since an overseer manages God’s household, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather, he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it. - Titus 1:7-9

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms. - 1 Peter 4:10

