

Designed to Flourish

Bible Study with Bishop Will Thornton (August 6 & 13)

The Heart Is the Soil

- **The heart is the soil** where God's Word is planted.
- Ask: **What is my heart full of?**
- **Weeds** are things growing in us that we did not intentionally plant.
- Before we can grow, we must identify and remove spiritual weeds that drain our peace, strength, and focus.
- Spiritual maturity means learning to pray even for those who oppose us.
- **Faith doesn't make it easy; faith makes it possible.**
- We need **power, not a pity party.**

Scriptures: 1 Peter 2:1–2; Ephesians 6:10–17

Be Strong in the Lord

- Put on the **whole armor of God.**
- The battle often begins in the **mind.**
- **Stand:** Don't give up. Use what God has given you, then stand again.
- Become strong by reading and meditating on God's Word.
- The enemy uses **wiles**—tricks, schemes, and deception.
- The **shield of faith** protects us.
- The **helmet of salvation** guards our minds.
- Fasting realigns us with God's will and increases spiritual sensitivity.
- Anyone who can consistently move you has influence over you.

Prayer Is the Foundation

- What God begins in prayer is maintained in prayer.
- **Pray about everything, and God will be in everything.**
- A “yes” to God will cost you something, but obedience produces growth.
- Protect your peace and think on the things described in **Philippians 4:8.**

Spiritual Growth Requires a Process

Growth begins at salvation but continues through:

1. **Obedience** — Follow God's Word.
 2. **Perseverance** — Keep going when it gets difficult.
 3. **Gratitude** — Give thanks in all things.
 4. **Faithfulness** — Use the gifts God has given you.
- Lay aside every sin and weight.

- Run with patience.
 - The hardest part of the race may be near the end.
 - **You win if you don't quit.**
 - Organize your life around godly principles.
 - Take personal responsibility.
 - Put God first through worship, giving, and obedience.
 - **Quitting is not an option. Be planted!**
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10 Principles for Flourishing

1. Stay Connected to Jesus

John 15:5

- Abide in Christ.
- Stay connected to the Vine.
- Develop a daily Word and prayer routine.
- Prepare for the storm before it comes.
- Don't let your flesh rule you.
- Develop the attitude: **"I don't want to offend God."**
- Sin often looks attractive but carries consequences.

2. Crave God's Word Like Food

1 Peter 2:2

- Don't lose your spiritual hunger.
- Have personal devotion **every day**.
- Read, study, meditate on, and apply God's Word.
- Your spirit needs regular nourishment.

3. Don't Go Alone

Hebrews 10:24–25

- Stay connected to the church and godly people.
- Practice unconditional love.
- Forgive quickly and deal with issues.
- Encourage others toward love and good works.
- **Messias Temple is a House of Love.**
- Healthy relationships provide accountability and encouragement.

4. Stay Planted Where God Can Grow You

Psalms 92:12–15

- The righteous flourish like the palm tree.
- Stay planted in God's house.
- Be accountable.
- If you're not growing, **check the soil and check for weeds.**
- Receive correction.
- Tell the truth in love.
- **Gossip stops in the ears of the wise.**
- God's pruning may be uncomfortable, but it prepares us for new fruit.

5. Live Out the Grace That Saved You

Ephesians 2:8

- Grace is God's gift; it cannot be earned.
- Be intentional about change.
- Let your actions match your words.
- Your faith cannot be **unemployed.**
- Put your faith to work and finish your assignment.
- **Faith without works is dead.**

6. Put Down Deep Roots in Christ

Colossians 2:6–7

- Be rooted and built up in Christ.
- Deep roots produce spiritual stability.
- Trust God even when you cannot see the outcome.
- Test everything by God's Word.
- Stand strong and don't entertain foolishness.

I trust God because my roots are in Christ.

7. Use the Gifts God Has Given You

1 Timothy 4:14; 1 Corinthians 12–14

- Everyone has gifts.
- Don't compare yourself with others.
- Embrace your uniqueness.
- Don't neglect what God has entrusted to you.
- Serving helps you discover and develop your gifts.
- Gifts should operate with spiritual fruit.
- **You cannot effectively love God's people until you fall in love with God.**

8. Get Back Up When You Fall

Proverbs 24:16

- The righteous may fall, but they get back up.

- Develop spiritual **buoyancy**.
- Stay connected to the church.
- You are not called to everyone.
- Don't chase opportunities; stay prepared.
- **You can't give what you don't have.**
- If God brought you to it, He will bring you through it.
- Speak God's Word and speak life.
- Connect with strong, godly people.
- **Leaving God is not an option.**

9. Pass Your Faith to the Next Generation

Deuteronomy 6:6–7

- Teach your children God's Word.
- Share your faith.
- Put God first.
- Guard your mind.
- Make faith part of everyday family life.
- Teach God's Word in the house, when you lie down, and when you wake up.

What God has placed in you should not stop with you.

10. Trust God to Finish What He Started

Philippians 1:6

- We are God's workmanship.
- God is still working on us.
- Spiritual growth is an **inside job**.
- Trust the process and God's timing.
- He will complete what He started.

He that has begun a good work in me is still working on me.

Deal with the weeds.

Feed the soil.

Stay planted.

Put down deep roots.

Bear fruit.

Get back up.

Keep growing.

Trust God to finish what He started.

Key Scriptures

1 Peter 2:1–2 • Ephesians 6:10–17 • Psalm 1 • Philippians 4:8 • John 15:5 • Psalm 92:12–15 • Ephesians 2:8 • Colossians 2:6–7 • Proverbs 24:16 • Deuteronomy 6:6–7 • Philippians 1:6