



LTN - Love Thy Neighbor

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Prologue

LTG = Love Thy God

LTN = Love Thy Neighbor

Red Font = Jesus Quotes from the Gospel

Blue Font = Quotes from God

mmlj = Books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John

LTE = Love Thy Enemies

I believe this world is in great need of LTN. This book was put together as I explore my growth as a Christian, husband, dad, friend and neighbor to others. I want to thank my wife especially for patiently loving me always.

Major resources of this book is the Bible, sermons and articles from Henry T. Mahan, JC Ryle, Martin Luther King Jr. and Charles Spurgeon.

As technology changes attending church is now available by various methods and platforms. Christians now have the tools that prior generations never even imagined. Explore these new platforms and find sources for your growth as a Christian. They should drive you towards God with emphasizing Christs simplicity that all who believe in him are made right with God.. Christ instructs us to learn the scriptures but just memorizing the scriptures doesn't mean your with Christ.

My desire was to awaken my LTG and LTN to give glory to God. Thank you God almighty for the opportunity to potentially feed the sheep.

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LTN - Chapter 1 - *Jesus Most Important Commandments*

Matthew - Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law?" Jesus said to him, " 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. A second likewise is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments."

Mark - "Which commandment is the greatest of all?" Jesus answered, "The greatest is: 'Hear, Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. 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. The second is like this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

Most people likely have heard these scriptures taught by Jesus prior to this moment. If not, then I would recommend to read Matthew, Mark, Luke and John (mmlj). MMLJ is first four books of the Bible New Testament section (aka. Gospel). If you don't have a Bible email me at LoveThyNeighbor@USA.com for a PDF copy of the Gospel. It is also published on Amazon or Barnes & Noble as "mmlj I AM here for Christs Sake".

Jesus clearly stated these two commandments for which if followed will satisfy all previous old testament commandments. This leads me to wonder why our religious leaders don't give this LTN commandment much attention? Why isn't this emphasized always at every service or mass? There is no mistake that this LTN 2nd most high commandment is challenging to implement. There is also no doubt it is not popular to examine ourselves so closely on this LTN topic.

Why didn't I give this LTN commandment much attention previously? Why couldn't I see these Jesus top 2 commandments very clearly? Shouldn't these top 2 be first and foremost. Please don't take this wrong I realized that going to church once a week or a

couple of times a year really accomplishes hardly anything for me. If I didn't know this LTG and LTN as being the most important commandments then something was broken with that church. Attending church felt more like a business transaction not place of worship to God. I realized that on judgement day I will be the one in front of Jesus and the pastor/priest won't be there with me. Just me..... Jesus knows if how LTG and LTN I performed.

Do I Love my neighbors (LTN)? I initially thought of course I Love my neighbor always. After less than a second I realized not really. Why does Jesus state **"if you love those who love you, what reward do you have?"**

Now I realized I had a huge LTN deficiency. I am in trouble and need to repent. I need to implement LTN the best I could everyday going forward honoring Jesus as he taught us. I lost focus on Jesus teachings (mmlj) and got lazy as a Christian.

Paul writes in Romans "I know what enthusiasm they have for God, but it is misdirected zeal." That was me. "For they don't understand God's way of making people right with himself. Refusing to accept God's way, they cling to their own way of getting right with God by trying to keep the law." That is what church felt like trying to adhere to this and that rule/procedure.

I forgot that "Christ has already accomplished the purpose for which the law was given. As a result, all who believe in him are made right with God." Wow. So simple, "If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved." These writings helped my reboot and release all the anxieties. I felt the chills of the Holy Spirit upon me.

Now I can understand when Jesus stated **"Why did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, 'These people draw near to me with their mouth, and honor me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. And they worship me in vain, teaching as doctrine rules made by men.'"** I am a big Jesus quote believer and from his teachings

this is my only true defense against darkness around us. I realized that going to church was just a routine habit instead of honoring God.

After this enlightenment I focused on the Gospel (mmlj) exclusively. My new LTN growth approach was to first to learn what Jesus taught us and then re-explore the rest of the bible. Jesus words became like a magnet pulling my thoughts to them all day and night. I replaced social media moments or searching the web for reading minutes of mmlj instead. This became refreshing and I finally felt like I was now growing as a Christian. I have not forgotten the rest of bible and as you will see in this book. For reference I have read the full Bible cover to cover several times. But I started to look forward not backwards as much. Jesus is my Lord.

Once I began reading mmlj over and over again I kept seeing Jesus teachings popping out. How great and inspiring these became shaping my growth. I can't tell you how many awakened nights this second golden rule has haunted me for the last year.

Back to LTN since I am full of renewed Jesus power. What does Jesus mean about whom my Neighbor might be? Well Jesus mmlj helps us from a certain lawyer testing Jesus with the same question.

mmLj - "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" He said to him, "**What is written in the law? How do you read it?**" He answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." He said to him, "**You have answered correctly. Do this, and you will live.**"

But he, desiring to justify himself, asked Jesus, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus answered, "**A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who both stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead. By chance a certain priest was going down that way. When he saw him, he passed by on the other side. In the same way a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he traveled, came where he was. When he saw him, he was moved with compassion, came to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. He set**

him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the host, and said to him, 'Take care of him. Whatever you spend beyond that, I will repay you when I return.' Now which of these three do you think seemed to be a neighbor to him who fell among the robbers?" He said, "He who showed mercy on him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

Further in the book we will go through the neighbor definition more. I don't think most people walk down the road to and from anymore and it is extremely hard to tell ones religion by outward appearances anymore. But the concept of anyone is your neighbor is passed to us.

The next thoughts that came in my head was do I Love thyself. For the most part I believe most people truly love themselves very much because they don't want to die. People whom might want to kill themselves please get some help so I am recommending to call the "National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-8255 or at <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org>. Immediately stop reading this book and reach out to these people or a family member or close friend or Christian based religious person.

How many selfies do I take of myself or times I look into a mirror per day? How many times a day you check your social media account(s) to see how many likes I got? How many new shoes or outfits do you get a year for yourself? Mmlj helps us again showing even the disciples got selfish (loving themselves) and what Jesus said to them.

mmLj - A dispute also arose among them (Jesus disciples), which of them was considered to be greatest. He (Jesus) said to them, "The kings of the nations lord it over them, and those who have authority over them are called 'benefactors.' But not so with you. Rather, the one who is greater among you, let him become as the younger, and one who is governing, as one who serves. For who is greater, one who sits at the table, or one who serves? Isn't it he who sits at the table? But I am among you as one who serves. "But you are those who have continued with me in my trials. I confer on you a kingdom, even as my Father conferred on me, that you may eat and drink at my table in my Kingdom. You will sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

The Lord said, “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan asked to have all of you, that he might sift you as wheat, but I prayed for you, that your faith wouldn’t fail. You, when once you have turned again, establish your brothers.”

He said to him, “Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death!” He said, “I tell you, Peter, the rooster will by no means crow today until you deny that you know me three times.”

The next thing we will examine is Love. This examination of this meaning Love was not a joyous but be an eye opening aspect I didn’t think would happen. I believe it is impossible to truly learn what Jesus teaches us without reading the mmlj at least couple of times over. After that point his teachings start to pop out at you finally giving the proper respect and attention they deserve. For example he teaches:

Mmlj - “He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me isn’t worthy of me.”

Wow. Again I initially panicked. I could never obtain this level of Love but then since I have established an awakened knowledge from Jesus teachings. It was not about dis-loving my children but loving God the mostest. Differently in a holy manner.

Mmlj - “Most certainly I tell you, unless you turn and become as little children, you will in no way enter into the Kingdom of Heaven”

Reading mmlj will get you to start thinking about Jesus first and most important commandment Loving God (Farther, Jesus and Holy Spirit) the most of anything. I was starting to get very humbled beyond compare because I will never fully obtain these levels of Love in the proper priorities to please Jesus. We will explore this subject so much more in detail from Jesus teachings in mmlj.

Lastly, we will examine prayer for which I believe is the single most important aspect in our relationship with God. I don’t mean the repetitive type of prayers. I didn’t realize that within mmlj there are 42 times when Jesus was specifically quoted praying to God. Prayer was required for Jesus while on earth to God the farther for strength and communication.

People don't realize but everyone prays to their God whatever it might be. And believe me if we don't follow Jesus teachings especially the top 2 commandments we are worshiping other Gods by mistake. Even Jesus disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray. These disciples could see they didn't understand the prayer power basics. God really wants us to pray and ask for all things.

Mmlj - "When you pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites, for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Most certainly, I tell you, they have received their reward. But you, when you pray, enter into your inner room, and having shut your door, pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. In praying, don't use vain repetitions as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard for their much speaking.

mmLj - "Two men went up into the temple to pray; one was a Pharisee, and the other was a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed by himself like this: 'God, I thank you that I am not like the rest of men: extortionists, unrighteous, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week. I give tithes of all that I get.' But the tax collector, standing far away, wouldn't even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

I must learn to pray always or all hope is lost...

LTN - Chapter 2 - Love Thy Neighbor

Love Thy Neighbour By Charles Haddon Spurgeon Aug 9, 1857
edited by MJ Smith 2021

Very often moral aspects are preached today without any “gospel” within or Christ being mentioned at all. Jesus did not preach every time on the doctrine of election, or atonement, or resurrection, giving glory to religious holidays or idols, or promising loyalty to denomination. No, he mostly spoke about the duties of human life and precious fruits of the Spirit which are given to us by the grace of God. By reading the only four books MMLJ (Matthew, Mark, Luke & John) of the Bible with Jesus teachings much of his teachings are about how we ought to treat one another. Additionally, most of his sermons by today's terms are not full of function and flavor to keep people entertained. For much of today's worship services more involve routine, social networking, choir, politics and modern day issues not the parables and commandments Jesus taught. We of course are not able to understand all of what Jesus spoke because we are reliant on MMLJ authors selection.

As much as I like driving by beautiful churches and dressing up on Sundays or religious holidays I believe it is the ministers responsibility to teach Christ teachings as Christ the whole reasons for the season did while on earth. Very often it seems like much of the teachings of God's ministers preach to man's duty as it is preached to Christ's atonement. And unless he preaches this way people will never be blessed to allow the proper state to see the atonement and develop conviction. Certainly, not the conviction that leads to conversion. Other religious teachings techniques are very structured step by step template to accomplish being in one with Jesus. Teaching a couple of random sentences flying people around the whole bible which feels like we are putting together a 10,000 pieces puzzle over a 3 year period piece by piece.

I am very aware this chapter will not be desirable to hear but I as Spurgeon states he has little care of this aspect. This rough world sometimes needs to be awoken and if we can get some of the people to open their ears it is our job to teach those people. I can't think of a better time when this message is needed it is more now than now. Post Covid, post lockdowns, post Trump, post

Biden lies, etc. This message is a commandment given by Jesus to show us if we follow this all other commandments are fulfilled. To put our minds and soul to the proper authority. Jesus states “**You should love your neighbor as yourself**”.

This commandment is only second greatest to “**Thou shall Love God more than anything especially thyself**”. Meaning this second commandment “**You should love your neighbor as yourself**” is a little lower but still preeminently high. We can split it into three sub-parts:

Whom do I Love? My neighbor and myself

What am I to do? I am to Love

How am I to do it? I am to Love them as myself.

The first logical question is to ask whom is my neighbor. In the Bible a persons asked Jesus, “Who is my neighbor?” Jesus answered, “**A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who both stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead. By chance a certain priest was going down that way. When he saw him, he passed by on the other side. In the same way a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he traveled, came where he was. When he saw him, he was moved with compassion, came to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. He set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the host, and said to him, ‘Take care of him. Whatever you spend beyond that, I will repay you when I return.’ Now which of these three do you think seemed to be a neighbor to him who fell among the robbers?**” He said, “He who showed mercy on him.” Then Jesus said to him, “**Go and do likewise.**”

Spurgeon states a neighbor is any person who is near us. He breaks down the word showing it comes from two old words, nae or near, (near) and buer, (to dwell) persons residing, or being near us, and if anyone in the world is near us, he is our neighbour. My perspective is that since we are connected globally via technology now it should relate to a lot more people. Especially since technology now records and stores our lives for many to see.

Jesus story about the wounded man and the man that helped with completely different religious beliefs is so timeless and brilliant. In today's terms Jesus is stating it is like a Muslim stopping to help a Jewish man. Jesus wants us to help any human not matter their cultural background, religious beliefs, gender/no-gender, rich/poor or race. **"Go and do likewise."** The Samaritan felt he was in his neighborhood and therefore was bound to show him Love. **"Love thy neighbor"**

Perhaps you're poor whom lives in a little leaky roofed shack next to a mega mansion. And from your house you can see their grand estate with wonderful lush landscaped yard, swimming pool and outdoor pizza oven that emits the best smells rumbling your hungry stomach. Especially when you have had nothing but soup, saltines and water for the last week. And perhaps you don't even have running water, electricity or food to eat on a regular basis because of the high prices of the utilities. All you can think is that God has given him all his wonderful life and you must have done something really wrong because you are barely alive. Have hope don't fret because Jesus teaches us **"How hard it is for those who have riches to enter into God's Kingdom! For it is easier for a camel to enter in through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into God's Kingdom"** Those who heard it said, "Then who can be saved?" But he said, **"The things which are impossible with men are possible with God."**

"Blessed are you who are poor, for God's Kingdom is yours. Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be filled. Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh. Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they exclude and mock you, and throw out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven, for their fathers did the same thing to the prophets."

These teachings from Jesus are what I need to trust. Why we are in this earthly world is unknown but it is God's will to endure whether we are poor or rich. Over and over Jesus warns us not to covet wealth and have no hard feelings against others with more. There will always be differences in circumstances between people so let it be. I must stay content and **"Love thy neighbor"**.

Additionally, we are not too promote or wish this rich neighbor that he was as poor like yourself. Don't ever think about ridding him of their wealth to make yourself satisfied because this would be a sin in the mind of God. Remember what Jesus stated **"There-**

fore I tell you, don't be anxious for your life, what you will eat, nor yet for your body, what you will wear." Jesus commands "Love thy neighbor".

Perhaps you on the other hand are the rich neighbor in that mega mansion. Do not think you're better than your poor neighbor but you are bound to Love them as per Jesus commandment. Some people would call the poor neighbor inferior due to their situation. You could be thinking what did this person do to mess up their lives so badly. It must of have been something really bad. In what possible way are they inferior? We are equals with your neighbor in Gods eye always although not in worldly possessions at the moment. God has made one blood for all people that dwell on the face of the earth. You are in no ways better than them or anyone. They are people and maybe in rags, but they are still people. You may be dressed in the best designer cloths but you are still just a human. Remember what Jesus states "...woe to you who are rich! For you have received your consolation. Woe to you, you who are full now, for you will be hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you will mourn and weep. Woe, when men speak well of you, for their fathers did the same thing to the false prophets." Remember to always "Love thy neighbor" as Jesus commands and do not judge that person though in depths of poverty. I told you I believe this is the most difficult to follow.

Perhaps your neighbor is a different religion and you think your religion is nearest to the truth. Maybe you have hope to convert your neighbor to the your religious beliefs because they are lost without it. Maybe you think their religion is unsound and untrue, Let not the differences separate him from you. Perhaps he may be right or wrong but Jesus is telling us to Love and likely will judge more on that aspect than not. Or maybe your neighbor has not religion at all. They disregard God as foolish and pronounces to be an atheist demanding proof of existence. Love them still. Your hard words will not convert and deeds will not make him a Christian. Love them straight on; their sin is not against you but against God. God takes vengeance for sins committed against himself and leave this to God's hand. Later in this book we examine false teachers and ministries for which can undermine your relationship with God.

Jesus let us hear a pray to God the father "I revealed your name to the people whom you have given me out of the world. They were yours, and you have given them to me. They have kept your word. Now they have known that all things whatever you have given me

are from you, for the words which you have given me I have given to them; and they received them, and knew for sure that I came from you. They have believed that you sent me. I pray for them. I don't pray for the world, but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. All things that are mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them through your name which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in your name. I have kept those whom you have given me. None of them is lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. But now I come to you, and I say these things in the world, that they may have my joy made full in themselves. I have given them your word. The world hated them because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that you would take them from the world, but that you would keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in your truth. Your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, even so I have sent them into the world. For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth."

Remember to always "Love thy neighbor" as Jesus commands and no matter their religion or lack of.

"Love thy neighbor" although they might be a competitor in business or trade. This will be hard to accept for you merchants and tradesman trying to earn a living competing with others. Perhaps a young man has just started a shop for which you are afraid will damage your sales. You must not hurt him, you must neither think nor say anything to injure him. Your business is to Love him. Perhaps a different competitor has loan debt to you and your tired of waiting for payback so demand full payment immediately knowing inside that it will likely run them out of business, then more for you. But what if you wait a little longer or ask them to partially pay they can weather out the storm and succeed. Remember as a follower of Jesus it is our 1st and foremost business to Love them as thy neighbor. Remember teachers Jesus us not to hate them but to Love them. Makes no exceptions.

Jesus teaches us "... I tell you that everyone who is angry with his brother without a cause will be in danger of the judgment." And "If therefore you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your

brother, and then come and offer your gift. Agree with your adversary quickly while you are with him on the way; lest perhaps the prosecutor deliver you to the judge, and the judge deliver you to the officer, and you be cast into prison. Most certainly I tell you, you shall by no means get out of there until you have paid the last penny.” We as debtors and loanees need to work things out and discuss. The longer you wait the more the anger grows.

We are bound to “Love thy neighbor” even if offended by their sin. Sometimes our spirits are overwhelmed, and our hearts grieved, when we see the wickedness on our streets, The common habit with how to deal with these sinners was to drive them out of society as a curse. It is not right, it is non Christian-like. We are bound to Love even the worst of these sinners, thief’s and lairs. If their sins are against the law of the land, they should be punished and rightly so. I cannot Love their actions because if so then I am of the same myself. If their actions are against a different neighbor or myself I am still bound to Love them as Jesus commands and not harbor vindictive feelings because I want God to forgive and Love me through my sins, so I must forgive them. I am not to look down upon them going to jail but to know this punishment is for their own good and hope they will repent through this punishment. It is right to give them such a measure of punishment as shall be adequate, not as an atonement for his their crime, but to teach them to evil of it, and induce him to to forsake it. But let me condemn them with a tear in my eye because I still Love them. And let me, when they are thrust into prison, take care that all his keepers attend to him with kindness, and although there be a necessity for sternness and severity in the prison discipline. Pray not it go into cruelty and become evil but be useful instead. I am still obligated to Love them though they be sunken and degraded. The law knows of no exception we are bound still to “Love thy neighbor”.

I am not bound to take these sinners, thief’s and lairs into my house. I am not bound to treat him as one of my family. There are some acts of kindness which would be improper seeing that by doing them I might ruin others and reward vice/sin. I am bound to set my face against him, as I am just, but I feel I am not bound to set my heart against them for we are to Love them. Even though the devil is in his eyes and venom comes from his mouth, so that when he speaks he speaks in oaths, and when walks, his feet are quick to shed blood yet they are still humans. I am wrong if I don’t do it, for I am bound to Love them as myself.

How I pray to God that this great commandment were to be fully carried out but myself and other Christians. But I am afraid that myself and others do not truly love thy neighbor, you know you do not as much or at all. People cannot even love all the people who go to their same church. Certainly, why would you not think of loving those who differ from you in opinion - would you? That would be a too strange in charity. Why, we truly hardly love your own brothers and sisters. Some of you today are at ends with them that born of the same mother. How can we expect to love our enemies if we do not love your friends? Some of us have are angry with our parents, and here is a brother who is angry with his sister for a word she said before he left home. Oh, if we cannot love our brother and sister are we worse than heathen men and tax collectors. How can I expect you to obey this high and mighty "Love your neighbors?" But whether we obey it or not, it is my craving to write about it, and not shift it to a politically correct generation's taste. First, we are bound to love and honor all people, simply because they are people; and we are to love, next, all those who dwell near us, not for their goodness or serviceableness toward us, but simply because the law demands it, and they are our neighbors. "Love thy neighbor as thyself."

But, now, what am I to do to my neighbor? Love them — it is a hard word — love them. "Well I believe," says one, "I never speak an unkind word of any of my neighbors. I do not know that I ever hurt a person's reputation in my life. I am very careful to do my neighbor no damage. When I start in business I do not let my spirit of competition over throw my spirit of charity. I try not to hurt anybody."

That is right as far as it goes, but it does not go the whole way. It is not enough for you to say, you do not hate your neighbor, you are to love them. When you see him in the street it is not sufficient that you keep out of his way, and do not knock them down. It is not sufficient that you do not molest them by night, nor disturb their quiet. It is not a negative, it is a positive command. It is not the not doing, it is the doing.

You must not injure them it is true, but you are not done all when you have not done that. You are to love them. "Well," says one, "when my neighbors are sick and if they be poor, I take a piece from the restaurant for dinner, and send it to them, that they may have a little food and be refreshed, and if they be exceedingly poor, I lay out my money, and see that they are taken care of." Yes, but you may do this, and not love them. We are not to throw charity to

a poor person as a bone is thrown to a dog, and there was no love in it. Do we give money to those who needed it with half the politeness as feeding your dog or cat.

Do you think while at a traffic light in your car seeing a panhandler "There it is, you want it. I suppose I must give it to you, or people will judge me. Why don't you go to somebody else's car instead or get a job? Thinking I am always having destitute hanging on me." Oh, this is not loving our neighbor, and this is not making him love us. If we had spoken a kind word to them, and refused them, he would have loved us better than when we gave to him monies in an unkind manner. No, though we have feed the poor, and visit the sick, we have not obeyed the command, unless our heart goes with in hand and the kindness of our life speaks to the kindness of our soul. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor."

And now others may say, "I cannot love my neighbor, you may love yours perhaps, because they may be better than mine, but mine are such an odd set of neighbors, and I try to love them, and for all I do they do but return insult." So much the more room for heroism. Would you be some light hearted warrior, instead of bearing the rough fight of love? Who dares the most—shall win the most; and if rough be your path of love, tread it boldly, and carry on loving thy neighbors through thick and thin. If the respond in harsh ways and if they are hard to please, seek not to please them, but to please our Master Jesus, and remember if they reject your love, our Master Jesus has not rejected it, and our deed is as acceptable to him as if it had been acceptable to them. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor."

Now, if this love for our neighbor were carried out — love, real love — it would prevent all quick anger. Who is ever angry with himself? I suppose all people are now and then, and I suspect we should not be righteous if we were not sometimes angry. A person whom is never angry is not worth much. You cannot be a good person, for you will often see things so bad that you must be angry at them. But, remember, you have no right to be more angry with thy neighbor than your are with yourself.

We all get sometimes irritated with ourselves, and sometimes be irritated with others if they have done you wrong. But our anger toward ourself is very short lived and we soon forgive ourselves; Well, we are bound just as soon to forgive others, and though we speak a rough word, if it be too rough, withdraw it and apologize, and if it be but rough enough, do not add more to it to make it too

much so. State the truth if you are obliged to do it, as kindly as you can. Be no more harsh than there is need to be. Deal with others as you would deal with yourself. Above all, harbor no revenge. Never let the sun set on your anger— it is impossible to love thy neighbor if you do that. Revenge renders obedience to this command entirely out of the question.

We are bound to love thy neighbor, then do we neglect them? They may be sick, they may live very near your house, and they does not send for you to visit on him, for they say, "No, I do not like to trouble them." Remember, it is your business to find them out. The most worthy of all poverty is that which never asks for pity. See where thy neighbors are in need; do not wait to be told of it, but find it out yourself, and give them some help. Do not neglect them; and when we go to them, don't go with a haughty pride which charity often assumes, not as some superior being about to give act if charity, but go to your brother as if you were about to pay them a debt due, and sit by their side, and talk to them; and if they be one that have a high spirit, give them not the charity as a charity, give it to him in some other way, do not break their head with the very box of ointment with which your have intended to have anointed him. But be very cautious how you speak to them: break not their spirit. Leave them charity behind you, and they shall forget that, but he shall remember well your kindness toward them in your speech.

Love to our neighbors puts aside every sin that is related to desire for their possessions, and envy, and it makes us at all times ready to serve them, ready to be their footstool, if so it must be, that we may be so proved to be the children of Christ.

"Well," says one, "I can not see that I am always to forgive; even the most defenseless creature will, when sufficiently provoked, attempt to defend itself. A creature will lash bank but a Christian we should not. Christ did not turn when he was criticized in an abusive or angrily insulting manner. When they crucified him, and nailed him to the tree, he stated **"Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing."** Let love, unconquerable love, dwell in your body, love which many waters cannot quench, love from Jesus. He teaches us **"Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never thirst again; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life."** Love thy neighbors.

It would be a good thing if we loved their neighbors as much as we loved our dogs/pets. It would be a fine thing for many of us sports fans if we loved his neighbors as much as he loved their favorite team or sport. What a weak level of morality that appears when put it like that. And yet it were something far superior to what some of us have attained to. We do not truly love our neighbor as we love our house, cars, jobs, or monies. How high is it then to reach "Love thy neighbor as thyself" as per the gospel standard? How much does a person love themselves? Most of us none too little, some of us too much. You may love yourself as much as you please, but take care that you love thy neighbor as much.

I am certain we need not to argue to love yourself, as with this world our own comfort will always be the very primary thing of our focus, our anxieties. Do we not take selfie pictures, dance a tick tok or post our lives online to others. That is loving thyself. There is no need to argue for us to love thyself. We will do that well enough for the most part. Well, then, as much as you love yourself love thy neighbor. And mark, by this is meant — your enemy, the people who oppose you in business, and people of another race or economic class. We ought to love them as we love yourself.

Oh, it would turn the world upside down indeed, if this were practiced. A fine tool this would be for upsetting many things that have now become the normal. It seems like we are going backwards again to having social or political classes as strong as caste systems within Hinduism or Islam. A person will not speak to any one who is a little beneath himself or is a different political party or race, and think they more dignity than others which are below them. Do as we say not as we do. Oh, for the day when these shall be broken down, when the impulse of the one blood shall be felt, and when as one family each shall love the other, and feel that everyone depends upon the other! It were well if each would strive to help and love the other as they ought.

Oh, I say again, blessed be Christ, blessed be his Father for this commandment, and blessed be the world when the commandment shall be obeyed, and we shall love our neighbors as ourselves!

II. And now shall I have to give REASONS WHY WE SHOULD OBEY THIS COMMAND.

The best reason in all the world is that with which we will begin. We are bound to love our neighbors because God commands it. To

the Christian there is no argument so potent as God's will. God's will is the believer's law. He doth not ask what shall it profit him, what shall be the good effect of it upon others, but he simply says, doth my Father say it? Oh, Holy Spirit, help me to obey, not because I may see how it shall be always good for me, but simply because thou commandest. It is the Christian's privilege to do God's commandments, "hearkening to the voice of his Word." But some other reasons may prevail more with others of you who are not Christians.

Let me remark, then, that selfishness itself would bid you love your neighbors. Oh, strange that selfishness should preach a suicidal sermon; but yet if self could speak, it might, if it were wise, deliver an oration like this, "Self, love thy neighbor, for then thy neighbor will love thee. Self, help thy neighbor, for then thy neighbor will help thee. Make to thyself, O self, friends of the mammon of unrighteousness that when thou fairest they may receive thee into abiding habitations. Self, thou wantest ease; make thyself easy by treating everybody well. Self, thou wantest pleasure, thou canst get no pleasure if those around thee hate thee. Make them love thee, dear self, and so shalt thou bless thyself." Ay, even if ye are selfish, I would ye were so pre-eminently selfish, and so wisely selfish that ye would love others to make yourselves happy.

The short cut to be happy yourself is to try to make others happy. The world is bad enough, but it is not so bad as not to feel the power of kindness. Treat servants well. There are some of them that you can't mend at all, but treat them well, and as a rule they will treat you well. Treat your masters well. Some of them are gruff and bad enough, but as a class they know good servants, and they will treat you well. There, now, if I would wish to be happy, I would not ask to have the wealth of this world, nor the things that men call comforts; the best comforts that I should desire would be loving ones round about me, and a sense that where I went I scattered happiness, and made men glad. That is the way to be happy, and selfishness itself might say, "**Love thy neighbour**," for in so doing thou dost love thyself; for there is such a connection between him and thee, that in loving him the stream of thy love returns into thine own heart again.

But I shall not assail you with such a paltry motive as that; it is too poor for a Christian; it should be too base even for a man. "**Love your neighbour**", in the next place, because that will be the way to do good in the world. You are philanthropists, some of you subscribe to missionary societies, you subscribe to the society for or-

phans, and other charitable objects. I am persuaded that these institutions, though they be excellent and good things, are in some respects a loss, for now a man gives to a society one-tenth of what he would have given himself; and where an orphan would have been kept by a single family, ten families join together to keep that orphan, and so there is about one-tenth of the charity. I think the man who has the time is bound to give nothing at all to societies, but to give all away himself. Be your own society. If there be a society for the sick, then if you have enough money, be your own sick society. If you have the time go and visit the sick yourself, you will know money is well spent then, and you will spare the expense of a secretary. There is a society for finding soup for the poor. Make your own soup. Give it yourself; and if every one who gives his half-a-crown to the society would just spend half-a-sovereign to give the soup away himself, there would be more done. Societies are good; God forbid that I should speak against them; do all you can for them: but still I am afraid that they sometimes thwart individual effort, and I know they rob us of a part of the pleasure which we should have in our own benefactions—the pleasure of seeing the gleaming eye, and of hearing the grateful word when we have been our own almoners.

Dear friends, remember that man's good requires that you should be kind to your fellow creatures. The best way for you to make the world better is to be kind yourself. Are you a preacher? Preach in a surly way and in a surly tone to your church; a pretty church you will make of it before long! Are you a Sunday-school teacher? Teach your children with a frown on your face; a fine lot they will learn! Are you a master? Do you hold family prayer? Get in a passion with your servants, and say, "Let us pray." A vast amount of devotion you will develop in such a manner as that. Are you a warder of a jail, and have prisoners under you? Abuse them and ill-treat them, and then send the chaplain to them. A fine preparation for the reception of the Word of God! You have poor around you; you wish to see them elevated, you say. You are always grumbling about the poverty of their dwellings, and the meanness of their tastes. Go and make a great row at them all—a fine way that would be to improve them! Now, just wash your face of that black frown, and buy a little essence of summer somewhere, and put it on your face, and have a smile on your lip, and say, "I love you. I am no cant, but I love you, and as far as I can I will prove my love to you. What can I do for you? Can I help you over a stile? Can I give you any assistance, or speak a kind word to you? Methinks I could see after your little daughter. Can I fetch the doctor to your wife now she is ill?" All these kind things would be making the

world a little better. Your jails and gibbets, and all that, never made the world better yet. You may hang men as long as you like; you will never stop murder. Hang us all, we should not be much the better for it. There is no necessity for hanging any; it will never improve the world. Deal gently, deal kindly, deal lovingly, and there is not a wolf in human shape but will be melted by kindness; and there is not a tiger in woman form but will break down and sue for pardon, if God should bless the love that is brought to bear upon her by her friend. I say again, for the world's good, love your neighbours.

And now, once more, love your neighbour, for there is a deal of misery in the world that you do not know of. We have often spoken hard words to poor miserable souls; we did not know their misery, but we should have known it, we should have found it out. Shall I tell you, my friend landlord, you went yesterday to get a warrant against a poor woman that has got three children. Her husband died a long while ago. She was three weeks back in her rent; the last time, to pay you, she sold off her late husband's watch and her own wedding ring; it was all that she had that was dear to her, and she paid you; and you went to her the next week, and she begged a little patience, and you think yourself highly exemplary because you had that little patience. "The woman," you have said, "I dare say is good for nothing, and if not, it is no particular business of mine whether she has got three children, or none; rent is rent, and business is business." Out she goes directly. Oh, if you could have seen that woman's heart when she stood penniless and homeless, and knew not where to send the children for the night, you would have said, "Never mind, my good woman, stop there; I can not turn a widow out of house and home." You did not do it yourself, did you? No, but you sent your agent to do it and the sin lay on you just as much for all that. You had no right to do it; you had a right in the eye of man's law but God's law says, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy self." A young man called upon you a little time ago. He said, "Sir, you know my little business. I have been struggling very hard, and you have kindly let me have some things on credit. But through the pressure of the times, I don't know how it is, I seem to get very hard up. I think, sir, if I could weather the next month, I might be able to get on well. I have every prospect of having a trade yet, if I could but have a little more credit, if you could possibly allow it." "Young man," you have said, "I have had a great many bad debts lately. Besides you do not bring me any good security; I can not trust you." The young man bowed, and left you. You did not know how he bowed in spirit as well as in body. That young man had a poor old mother and two sisters in the house,

and he had tried to establish a little business that he might earn bread and cheese for them as well as for himself. For the last month they have eaten scarcely anything but bread and butter, and the weakest tea has been their drink, and he has been striving hard; but some one, poorer than he seemed to be, did not pay him the little debt that was due to him, and he could not pay you. And if you had helped him, it might have been all well with him; and now what to do he cannot tell. His heart is broken, his soul is swollen within him. That aged mother of his, and those girls, what shall become of them? You did not know his agony, or else you would have helped him. But you ought to have known. You never should have dismissed his case until you had known a little more about him. It would not be business-like, would it? No, sir, to be business-like is sometimes to be devil-like. But I would not have you business-like when it is so. Out on your business; be Christian-like. If you be professors, seek to serve God in obeying his commands—"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

"Nay," says another, "but I am always very kind to the poor." There is a lady here who has got a tolerable share of money to spare, and to her, money is about as common as pins. And she goes to see the poor; and when she gets in, they set her a chair, and she sits down, and begins to talk to them about economy, and gives them a tolerably good lecture on that. The poor souls wonder how they are to economise any more than they do; for they eat nothing but bread, and they cannot see that they can get anything much cheaper. Then she begins to exhort them about cleanliness, and makes about fifty impertinent remarks about the children's clothes. "Now," says she, "my good woman, before I leave you I will give you this tract, it is about drunkenness: perhaps you will give it to your husband." If she does he will beat her, you may depend upon it. "Come now," she says, "there is a shilling for you." And now, my lady thinks, "I love my neighbour." Did you shake hands with her? "No, sir." Did you speak lovingly to her? "Of course not. She is an inferior." Then you did not obey this command, "Love thy neighbour as thyself." Shall I tell you what happened after you left? That woman as soon as ever you were gone, began to cry. She started off to the minister for consolation. She said to him, "Do you know, sir, I am very thankful to God that I have had a little relief given me this morning, but my spirit was almost broken. Do you know, sir, we used to be in better circumstances. This morning Mrs. So-and-so came and talked to me in such a way, as if I had been a dog, or as if I had been a child, and though she gave me a shilling I did not know what to do. I wanted the shilling bad enough, or else I really think I should have thrown it after her. She did talk in such a way,

I could not bear it. Now, if you come to see me, sir, I know you will speak kindly to me, and if you give me nothing you will not abuse me and find fault with me." "Oh," she said, "my heart is broken within me. I can not bear this, for we have seen better days, and we have been used to different treatment to this." Now, you did not love her. Your shilling, what was the good of that, if you did not put a little love on it. You might have made it as good as a golden sovereign if you had spread a little love upon it. She would have thought far more of it. "Love thy neighbours." Oh! would to God that I could always practice it myself, and would that I could impress it into every one of your hearts. Love thy neighbour as thou lovest thyself.

And now the last argument I shall use is one especially appropriate to the Christian. Christian, your religion claims your love—Christ loved you before you loved him. He loved you when there was nothing good in you. He loved you though you insulted him, though you despised him and rebelled against him. He has loved you right on, and never ceased to love you. He has loved you in your backslidings and loved you out of them. He has loved you in your sins, in your wickedness and folly. His loving heart was still eternally the same, and he shed his heart's blood to prove his love for you. He has given you what you want on earth, and provided for you an habitation in heaven. Now Christian, your religion claims from you, that you should love as your Master loved. How can you imitate him, unless you love too? We will leave to the Mahometans, to the Jew, and to the infidel, coldheartedness and unkindness; 'twere more in keeping with their views, but with you unkindness is a strange anomaly. It is a gross contradiction to the spirit of your religion, and if you love not your neighbor, I see not how you can be a true follower of the Lord Jesus.

And now I conclude with just a weighty suggestion or two, and I will not weary you. My text suggests first, the guilt of us all. My friends, if this be God's law, who here can plead that he is not guilty? If God's law demands I should love my neighbor, I must stand in my pulpit, and confess my guilt. In thinking of this text yesterday, my eyes ran with tears at the recollection of many a hard thing I had spoken in unwary moments. I thought of many an opportunity of loving my neighbor that I had slighted, and I labored to confess the sin. I am certain there is not one of all this immense audience who would not do the same, if he felt this law applied by the Spirit in power to his soul.

Oh! are we not guilty? Kindest of spirits, most benevolent of souls, are you not guilty? Will you not confess it? And then that suggests this remark. If no man can be saved by his works, unless he keeps this law perfectly, who can be saved by his works? Have any of you loved your neighbor all your life with all your heart? Then shall you be saved by your own deeds, if you have not broken any other command. But if you have not done it, and cannot do it, then hear the sentence of the law. You have sinned, and you shall perish for your sin. Hope not to be saved by the mandate of the law. And oh! how this endears the gospel to me! If I have broken this law, and I have—and if I can not enter heaven with this law broken, precious is the Savior who can wash me from all my sins in his blood! Precious is he that can forgive my want of charity, and pardon my want of kindness—can forgive my roughness and my rudeness, can put away all my harsh speaking, my bigotry and unkindness, and can through his all-atoning sacrifice give me a seat in heaven, notwithstanding all my sins. You are sinners this morning—you must feel it: my sermon, if blessed of God, must convince you all of guilt. Well, then, as sinners, let me preach to you the gospel. "Whosoever believeth in the Lord Jesus shall he saved." Though he hath hitherto broken this law God shall forgive him, and put a new heart and a right spirit into his bosom, whereby he shall be enabled to keep the law in future, at least to an eminent degree, and shall, by-and-by, attain to a crown of life in glory everlasting.

Now, I do not know whether I have been personal to anybody this morning. I sincerely hope I have. I meant to be. I know there are a great many characters in the world that must have a cap made exactly to fit them, or else they will never wear it, and I have tried as near as I could to do it. If you would not say, "How well that applied to my neighbor," but just for once say, "How well it applied to me," I shall hope that there will be some good follow from this exhortation; and though the Antinomian may turn away, and say, "Ah! it was only a legal sermon," my love to that precious Antinomian. I do not care about his opinion. My Saviour preached like that, and I shall do the same. I believe it is right that Christians should be told what they should do, and that worldlings should know what Christianity will lead us to do; that the highest standard of love, of kindness, and of law, should be uplifted in the world, and kept constantly before the people's eyes.

May God bless you, and be with you, for Jesus' sake!

LTN - Chapter 3 - Whom is your Neighbor?

John Calvin best describes neighbor as:

“Christ might have stated simply, that the word neighbor extends indiscriminately to every man, because the whole human race is united by a sacred bond of fellowship. And, indeed, the Lord employed this word in the Law, for no other reason than to draw us sweetly to mutual kindness. The commandment would have run more clearly thus: Love every man as thyself. But as men are blinded by their pride, so that every man is satisfied with himself, scarcely deigns to admit others to an equal rank, and withholds from them the duties he owes them, the Lord purposely declares that all are neighbors that the very relationship may produce mutual love. To make any person our neighbor, therefore, it is enough that he be, a man; for it is not in our power to blot out our common nature.”

Who Is Our Neighbor? Lessons from the Good Samaritan - By Ryan McDowell on June 30, 2016 describes:

“Being a neighbor is not restricted to relation or proximity. It is merely the demonstration of the love and mercy of God to all in need, whomever and wherever they may be, regardless of race, denomination, or belief. Jesus teaches us that love is an action, not just a feeling or a theory, and that it sometimes requires the shouldering of others’ burdens, an often uncomfortable process. The priest and the Levite were religious men and yet they acted inhumanely, and the Samaritan demonstrated just the opposite. Religious vocation or affiliation is empty without the actions to back it up. To be a neighbor, according to Jesus, means to come alongside someone. As Christian Americans, we must remember that we are Christians first, and Americans second. Our nationality should never surpass our faith and its duties. This is what we must keep in mind when we consider our “neighbor”.

Who Is My Neighbor According To Jesus? MARCH 26, 2018 BY JACK WELLMAN describes”

“Who is our neighbor? Who do you see? Whoever you meet or see today is your neighbor, and the Bible doesn’t specify that only Christians are our neighbors. Our neighbor is anyone that we can help. We have three things to offer...our time, talent, and treasure, so “if anyone has the world’s goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God’s love abide in him” (1 John 3:17)? That’s an excellent question, isn’t it? Perhaps a neighbor, whoever that might be, would reach out for help today. What would be your and my response? “Well, I will pray for you, “ but if “one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that” (James 2:16)? That’s another fine question. The best thing we can do for our neighbor is to love them, and the love of God should compel us to share Christ with them. We need to let them know that God demands perfect righteousness to enter the kingdom, but God provides what He demands through Jesus Christ. Who else is sinless, perfect, and completely holy? There is no reconciliation between us and God without Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12). Telling your neighbor that is the most loving thing you could ever do.”

“On Being a Good Neighbor” by Martin Luther King Jr. describes:

“Who is my neighbor? “I do not know his name,” says Jesus in essence. “He is anyone toward whom you are neighborly. He is anyone who lies in need at life’s roadside. He is neither Jew nor Gentile; he is neither Russian nor American; he is neither Negro nor white. He is ‘a certain man’ any needy man on one of the numerous Jericho roads of life.” So Jesus defines a neighbor, not in a theological definition, but in a life situation.”

LTN - Chapter 4 - LOVE

What is Love?

There is a common approach to reading the Bible called the First Mention Principle which states that God indicates in the first mention of a subject the truth with which that subject stands connected in the mind of God. Remember the Bible is Gods book,

When I applied this First Mentioned concept to Love it shows up in Genesis 22. This “Take your son, your only son—yes, Isaac, whom you love so much—and go to the land of Moriah. Go and sacrifice him as a burnt offering on one of the mountains, which I will show you.” Wow. I was not expecting that to be the first mentioned. Not only a direct instruction from GOD the father but also not a good way to explain what Love is I initially thought.

God did tempt Abraham putting his faith and obedience to a huge test. For twenty-five years Abraham had wandered in Palestine waiting for the fulfilment of the promise for a son. At length he long wished for his heir to be born. He accepted the grievous pain of parting with Ishmael (born of their maidservant). God told Abraham, “Do not be upset over the boy and your servant. Do whatever Sarah tells you, for Isaac is the son through whom your descendants will be counted. 13But I will also make a nation of the descendants of Hagar’s son because he is your son, too.” All went well with this after they departure and there was a calm and happy time for Abraham and Isaac. He was at peace with his neighbours, had quiet possession of ample pasture for his cattle, knew that Ishmael was prosperous, and saw Isaac fast approaching man’s estate. Just when not expecting it came his severest trial of all; for he was commanded to slay his son from God. The trial was twofold. For, first, human sacrifice was detested to the nature of God, and Abraham’s clear duty would be to prove the command. Could such a deed really be asked upon him by God? God wanted to reset Abraham showing making him acknowledge whole he loved the most. LTN at its core.

How about the Gospel (mmlj) First Mention “Behold, a voice out of the heavens said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”” Okay some might say Beloved is not the same as Love so the first mention of exactly Love in mmlj is “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who mistreat you and per-

secute you, that you may be children of your Father who is in heaven.” Wow again. These three First Mentions didn’t appear the typical Lovey-Dovey affectionate usage typically used in our current day.

If you're still reading your like where the heck is this guy going? Well at this point I went back and starting reading mmlj over and over again and praying for a way forward so I can continue this book. It finally hit me that Gods definition of Love is more like a testing type of meaning than any other meaning. I am not building this solely from the above First Mention examples but from the teachings of Jesus and especially the top 2 commandments.

Mmlj - Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law?” Jesus said to him, “ ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. A second likewise is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments.”

My commandment #1 attributes associated with Godly Love

Holy + Affection + Truthful + Humbled

My commandment #2 & Other Love attributes

Affection + Mercy + Truthful + Peaceful + Empathy

Short Definitions

Holy - dedicated or consecrated to God; a religious purpose; sacred

Affection - a gentle feeling of fondness or liking

Truthful - telling or expressing the truth; honest

Humbled - not proud, haughty, arrogant or assertive

Mercy = a blessing that is act of favor or compassion

Peaceful - devoid of violence or force

What is Holy?

Let us start by exploring the Bible for the first mentioned of the word holy. First mentioned is within Genesis 2:3 “**And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because it was the day when he rested from all his work of creation.**”

Secondly, let's explore the first mentioned within the gospel (mmlj). First mentioned is Matthew 1:18 which states “**This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit.**”

- a. Holiness is the habit of being of one mind with God all the time. It is by default agreeing in God's judgment and divinity.
- b. Holiness attempting to not sin with a great fear of offending God more than of displeasing the world.
- c. Holiness causes a person to strive to be like the Lord Jesus Christ. Live the life of faith in Jesus, draw Jesus for their daily peace and strength, forgive others as Jesus forgave us, to walk the talk of Jesus, keep a lowly humbled approach, witness for the truth and minister to others. Not to seek praise and glory because good is only from God.
- d. Holiness means to be meek, patience, gentleness, patience, kind tempers, control of his tongue.
- e. Being holy will show a spirit of mercy and kindness towards others even when they don't deserve it.

What is Affection?

I consider affection in all types of love especially LTG and LTN. As followers of Jesus we need to present a gentle way of showing fondness or liking. Remember the Golden Rules Jesus taught us “**Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you. This is**

the essence of all that is taught in the law and the prophets.”. Also stated within Philippians 2:4 Don’t look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too.

I remember going through a Dale Carnegie Course back in high school. I can’t remember why I was invited to attend this course but it was one so eye opening. I am going to list some of these principals for which were taught which might be being affectionate. Always remember as followers of Jesus we need to:

- Not criticize, condemn or complain - People normally don’t criticize themselves for anything, no matter how wrong they may be, so you shouldn’t criticize them either. Criticism is dangerous because it puts people on the defensive and usually makes them strive to justify themselves. Anyone can complain and criticize, but it takes a strong character to be understanding and forgiving. Try to figure out why they do what they do. This will breed sympathy, tolerance and kindness.
- Be genuinely interested in others/God - we need to build real friendships and to help others at the same time as you help yourself, don’t hesitate to show interest. But remember, a show of interest must be sincere. It must be beneficial not only to the person showing the interest, but also the person receiving the attention.
- Smile and shine your Gods light - If you want to make a good first impression don’t forget to smile. Actions speak louder than words, and a smile says, I am glad to see you. If you don’t feel like smiling, force yourself to smile and act if you were already happy. This should elevate your mood, since actions and feelings go together. But remember, don’t be insincere. An insincere grin usually has the opposite effect it comes across as mechanical. A genuine smile comes from genuine happiness. Happiness doesn’t depend on external conditions, it depends on internal conditions.
- Be a good listener, Encourage others to talk about themselves - Being a good listener is a huge sign of interest. The more you pay attention to people and allow them to talk, the more they’ll consider you a good conversationalist. Are you a talker or listener? Of course, a good conversationalist is better, but generally you should aim to do 25% talking and 75% listening.
- Make the other person feel important and do it sincerely - Always make the other person feel important. As already men-

tioned, the desire to be important is the deepest craving of human nature. Remember that everyone is important in the eyes of Jesus but always secondary to God. Empathy yields happiness, kindness and cooperation. Selfishness, on the other hand, breeds misery, exclusion and isolation.

What is about to be Truthful?

Give honest and sincere appreciation - The desire to feel important is on the main distinctions between mankind and the animals. Without it, civilization would have been impossible. Some people may actually develop different types of mental disorders if they fail to feel important. However, do not confuse honest appreciation with flattery. One is genuine and the other is phony.

What is like to be Humbled? - not proud, haughty, arrogant or assertive

Humility like this is one of the strongest evidences of the indwelling of the Spirit of God. We know nothing of humility by nature, for we are all born proud. To convince us of sin, to show us our own vileness and corruption, to put us in our right place, to make us lowly and self-abased, these are among the principal works which the Holy Spirit works in the soul of man. Few of our Lord's sayings are so often repeated as the one which closes the parable of the Pharisee and Tax-collector—"Every one that exalts himself shall be abased, and he that humbles himself shall be exalted." (Luke 18:14.) To have great gifts, and do great works for God, is not given to all believers. But all believers ought to strive to be clothed with humility.

How do show Mercy? a blessing that is act of favor or compassion

Mmlj: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy"

Mmlj: 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice'

The Lord Jesus calls those blessed, who are merciful. He means those who are full of compassion towards others. They pity all who are suffering either from sin or sorrow, and are tenderly desirous to make their sufferings less. They are full of good works, and en-

deavors to do good. Blessed are all such! Both in this life and that to come they shall reap a rich reward.

Of all the doctrines of the Bible none is so offensive to human nature as the doctrine of God's sovereignty. To be told that God is great, and just, and holy, and pure, man can bear. But to be told that "He has mercy on whom He will have mercy" that He "gives no account of His matters," that it is "not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy" these are truths that natural man cannot stand. They often call forth all his enmity against God, and fill him with wrath. Nothing, in short, will make him submit to them but the humbling teaching of the Holy Spirit.

What is Peaceful? - devoid of violence or force

Mmlj: Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.

Mmlj: Don't think that I came to send peace on the earth. I didn't come to send peace, but a sword. For I came to set a man at odds against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. A man's foes will be those of his own household. He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me isn't worthy of me. He who doesn't take his cross and follow after me isn't worthy of me. He who seeks his life will lose it; and he who loses his life for my sake will find it. "He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives him who sent me.

Peace is Christ's distinctive gift, not money, not worldly ease, not temporal prosperity. These are at best very questionable possessions. They often do more harm than good to the soul. They act as clogs and weights to our spiritual life. Inward peace of conscience, arising from a sense of pardoned sin and reconciliation with God, is a far greater blessing. This peace is the property of all believers, whether high or low, rich or poor.

The peace which Christ gives He calls "my peace." It is specially His own to give, because He bought it by His own blood, purchased it by His own substitution, and is appointed by the Father to dispense it to a perishing world. Just as Joseph was sealed and commissioned to give grain to the starving Egyptians, so is Christ specially commissioned, in the counsels of the Eternal Trinity, to give peace to mankind.

The peace that Christ gives is not given as the world gives. What He gives the world cannot give at all, and what He gives is given neither unwillingly, nor sparingly, nor for a little time. Christ is far more willing to give than the world is to receive. What He gives He gives to all eternity, and never takes away.

As a Christian I must always remember that God is the most important aspect in my life. Jesus states clearly "He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me isn't worthy of me". Our Love to God has to be holy above anything else is holy and Jesus commands us clearly to put God first and foremost.

After much thought and prayer I currently believe the above are the true attributes of the two different kinds of love. Jesus teaches us to Love one another and even our enemies for which expands the attributes of the word Love. That doesn't mean that one cannot further define their Love by adding other words such as "I have parental Love for my children" or I will always have "Love and Cherish my wife for the rest of my life". The key factor we must always remember is that to put Gods Love the highest as he commands otherwise we have failed to follow Jesus commandments.

Our Love to God is holy and Jesus commands us clearly to put God first and foremost when it comes to this aspect. To me this seems like the very most important purpose of my life. Why God put me on this plant. For this commandment #1 constant focus and prayer is needed for which will examine further in this book. For those first hearing of this commandment #1 and now realizing the top level of importance please drink this in slowly and don't panic. This type of thought change took me a while to fully understand and I am still growing in Holy Love for God beyond the worldly Love of others including my wife and children. We need to realize that we will be judged on these commandments when our human lives end. I surely want to be worthy in Gods eyes by following Jesus commandments.

Mmlj - "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only born Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God didn't send his Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through him. He who believes in him is not judged. He who doesn't believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only born Son of God. This is the judgment, that the light has

come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light, for their works were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the light and doesn't come to the light, lest his works would be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his works may be revealed, that they have been done in God."

LTN - Chapter 5 - Sermon on the Mount Part 1

These verses deserve the closest attention of all readers of the Bible. A right understanding of the doctrines they contain lies at the very root of Christianity. The Lord Jesus here explains more fully the meaning of His words, "I came not to destroy the law, but to fulfill." He teaches us that His Gospel magnifies the law, and exalts its authority. He shows us that the law, as expounded by Him, was a far more spiritual and heart-searching rule than most of the Jews supposed.

Teaching about Anger

You have heard that it was said to the ancient ones, You shall not murder; and Whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment. But I tell you that everyone who is angry with his brother without a cause will be in danger of the judgment. Whoever says to his brother, Raca! will be in danger of the council. Whoever says, You fool! will be in danger of the fire of Gehenna.

If therefore you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Agree with your adversary quickly while you are with him on the way; lest perhaps the prosecutor deliver you to the judge, and the judge deliver you to the officer, and you be cast into prison. Most certainly I tell you, you shall by no means get out of there until you have paid the last penny.

Here Jesus expounds the sixth commandment. Many thought that they kept this part of God's law, so long as they did not commit actual MURDER. Jesus shows, that its requirements go much further than this. It condemns all angry and passionate language, and especially when used without a cause. Let us mark this well. We may be perfectly innocent of taking life away, and yet be guilty of breaking the sixth commandment.

Teaching about Adultery

You have heard that it was said, You shall not commit adultery; but I tell you that everyone who gazes at a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart. If your right eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out and throw it away from you. For it is more profitable for you that one of your members should perish than for your whole body to be cast into Gehenna. If your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off, and throw it away from you. For it is more profitable for you that one of your members should perish, than for your whole body to be cast into Gehenna.

Here Jesus expounds the seventh commandment. Many supposed that they kept this part of God's law, if they did not actually commit ADULTERY. The Lord Jesus teaches, that we may break it in our thoughts, hearts, and imaginations, even when our outward conduct is moral and correct. The God with whom we have to do looks far beyond actions. With him even a glance of the eye may be a sin. If a stranger knows within a couple of minutes your sexual preference by you talking about it this applies to you.

Teaching about Divorce

It was also said, Whoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorce, but I tell you that whoever puts away his wife, except for the cause of sexual immorality, makes her an adulteress; and whoever marries her when she is put away commits adultery.

Teaching about Vows

Again you have heard that it was said to the ancient ones, You shall not make false vows, but shall perform to the Lord your vows, but I tell you, don't swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is the throne of God; nor by the earth, for it is the footstool of his feet; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Neither shall you swear by your head, for you can't make one hair white or black. But let your Yes be Yes and your No be No. Whatever is more than these is of the evil one.

Here Jesus expounds the third commandment. Most people believe that they keep this part of God's law, so long as they did not swear falsely, and performed their OATHS. The Lord Jesus forbids all vain and light swearing altogether. All swearing by created things, even when God's name is not brought forward—all calling upon God to witness, excepting on the most solemn occasions, is a great sin. Now all this is very instructive. It ought to raise very serious reflections in our minds. It calls us loudly to use great searching of heart.

It teaches us the exceeding holiness of God. He is a most pure and perfect Being, who sees faults and imperfections, where man's eyes often see none. He reads our inward motives. He notes our words and thoughts, as well as our actions.

It teaches us the exceeding ignorance of man in spiritual things. There are millions and tens of millions of professing Christians, it may be feared, who know no more of the requirements of God's law than the most ignorant Jews. They know the letter of the ten commandments well enough. And so they live on satisfied with themselves, and quite content with their little bit of religion. Happy indeed are they who really understand God's law!

Teaching about Revenge

You have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. But I tell you, don't resist him who is evil; but whoever strikes you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also. If anyone sues you to take away your coat, let him have your cloak also. Whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks you, and don't turn away him who desires to borrow from you.

The Lord Jesus forbids everything like an unforgiving and revengeful spirit. A readiness to resent injuries—a quickness in taking offense, an argumentative and contentious character, a keenness in asserting our rights—all, all are contrary to the mind of Christ. The world may see no harm in these habits of mind. But they do not correspond to the character of the Christian. Our Master says, "Don't resist him who is evil."

Teaching about Love for Enemies

You have heard that it was said, You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I tell you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who mistreat you and persecute you, that you may be children of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Don't even the tax collectors do the same? If you only greet your friends, what more do you do than others? Don't even the tax collectors do the same? Therefore, you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.

The Lord Jesus enjoins on us a spirit of universal love and charity. We ought to put away all malice. We ought to return good for evil, and blessing for cursing. We ought to "love even our enemies." Moreover we are not to love in word only, but in deed. We are to deny ourselves, and take trouble, in order to be kind and courteous. If any man "compels you to go one mile, go with him two." We are to put up with much and bear much, rather than hurt another, or give offense. In all things we are to be unselfish. Our thought must never be, "how do others behave to me?" but "what would Christ have me to do?"

A standard of conduct like this may seem, at first sight, extravagantly high. But we must never content ourselves with aiming at one lower. We must observe the two weighty arguments by which our Lord backs up this part of His instruction. They deserve serious attention.

For one thing, if we do not aim at the spirit and temper which are here recommended, we are not yet children of God. Our "Father in heaven" is kind to all. He sends rain on good and on evil alike. He causes "His sun" to shine on all without distinction. A son should be like his father. But where is our likeness to our Father in heaven, if we cannot show mercy and kindness to everybody? Where is the evidence that we are new creatures, if we lack charity? It is altogether lacking. We must yet be "born again."

For another thing, if we do not aim at the spirit and temper here recommended, we are manifestly yet of the world. Even those who have no religion can "love those who love them." They can do good and show kindness, when their affection or interest moves them. But a Christian ought to be influenced by higher principles than these. Do we flinch from the test? Do we find it impossible to do

good to our enemies? If that be the case, we may be sure we have yet to be converted. As yet we have not "received the Spirit of God."

It is attention to the spirit of this passage which makes our religion beautiful. It is the neglect of the things which it contains by which our religion is deformed. Unfailing courtesy, kindness, tenderness, and consideration for others, are some of the greatest attributes to the character of the child of God. The world can understand these things, if it cannot understand doctrine. There is no religion in rudeness, roughness, practical Christianity consists in attending to the little duties of holiness as well as to the great.

Who does not know that arguments, disagreement, selfishness, and unkindness cause half the miseries by which mankind is visited? Who can fail to see that nothing would so much tend to increase happiness as the spread of Christian love, such as is here recommended by our Lord? Let us all remember this. Those who fancy that true religion has any tendency to make humans unhappy, are greatly mistaken. It is the absence of it that does this, and not the presence. True religion has the directly contrary effect. It tends to promote peace, and charity, and kindness, and goodwill among humans. The more humans are brought under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, the more they will love one another, and the more happy they will be.

Teaching about Giving to the Needy

Be careful that you don't do your charitable giving before men, to be seen by them, or else you have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. Therefore, when you do merciful deeds, don't sound a trumpet before yourself, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may get glory from men. Most certainly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you do merciful deeds, don't let your left hand know what your right hand does, so that your merciful deeds may be in secret, then your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

Observe that our Lord takes it for granted, that all who call themselves His disciples will GIVE ALMS. He assumes as a matter of course, that they will think it a solemn duty to give, according to their means, to relieve the needs of others. The only point He handles is the manner in which the duty should be done. This is a

weighty lesson. It condemns the selfish stinginess of many in the matter of giving money. How many are "rich towards themselves," but poor towards God! How many never give a coin to do good to the bodies and souls of men! And have such people any right to be called Christians, in their present state of mind? It may be well doubted. A giving Savior should have giving disciples.

Teaching about Prayer and Fasting

When you pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites, for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Most certainly, I tell you, they have received their reward. But you, when you pray, enter into your inner room, and having shut your door, pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. In praying, don't use vain repetitions as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard for their much speaking. Therefore, don't be like them, for your Father knows what things you need before you ask him. Pray like this: "Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy. Let your Kingdom come. Let your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors. Bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For yours is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen." "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you don't forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Observe again that our Lord takes it for granted, that all who call themselves His disciples will PRAY. He assumes this also as a matter of course. He only gives directions as to the best way of praying. This is another lesson which deserves to be continually remembered. It teaches plainly that prayerless people are not genuine Christians. It is not enough to join in the prayers of the congregation on Sundays, or attend the prayer of a family on weekdays.

There must be private prayer also. Without this we may be outward members of Christ's church, but we are not living members of Christ.

In PRAYING, the principal object to be sought, is to be alone with God. We should endeavor to find some place where no mortal eye

sees us, and where we can pour out our hearts with the feeling that no one is looking at us but God. This is a rule which many find it very difficult to follow. Some people (mothers, lower income, big families, etc.) often find it almost impossible to be really alone. But it is a rule which we must all make great efforts to obey. Necessity, in such cases, is often the mother of invention. When a person has a real desire to find some place, where he can be in secret with his God, he will generally find a way.

The Lord's prayer consists of ten parts or sentences. There is one declaration of the Being to whom we pray. There are three prayers respecting His name, His kingdom, and His will. There are four prayers respecting our daily needs, our sins, our weakness, and our dangers. There is one profession of our feeling towards others. There is one concluding ascription of praise. In all these parts we are taught to say "we," and "our." We are to remember others, as well as ourselves. On each of these parts a volume might be written. We must content ourselves at present with taking up sentence by sentence, and marking out the direction in which each sentence points.

The first sentence declares to whom we are to pray "Our Father who is in heaven." We are not to cry to saints and angels, but to the everlasting Father, the Father of spirits, the Lord of heaven and earth.

The second sentence is a petition respecting God's name "May your name be kept holy." By the "name" of God we mean all those attributes under which He is revealed to us; His power, wisdom, holiness, justice, mercy, and truth. By asking that they may be "holy," we mean that they may be made known and glorified. The glory of God is the first thing that God's children should desire.

The third sentence is a petition concerning God's kingdom "May your kingdom come." By His kingdom we mean first, the kingdom of grace which God sets up and maintains in the hearts of all living members of Christ, by His Spirit and word.

The fourth sentence is a petition concerning God's will "May your will be done, as in heaven, so on earth." We here pray that God's laws may be obeyed by men as perfectly, readily, and unceasingly, as they are by angels in heaven. We ask that those who now obey not His laws, may be taught to obey them, and that those who do obey them, may obey them better. Our truest happiness is perfect

submission to God's will, and it is the highest charity to pray that all mankind may know it, obey it, and submit to it.

The fifth sentence is a petition respecting our own daily needs "give us this day our daily bread." We are here taught to acknowledge our entire dependence on God, for the supply of our daily necessities. As Israel required daily manna, so we require daily "bread." We confess that we are poor, weak, needy creatures, and beseech Him who is our Maker to take care of us. We ask for "bread," as the simplest of our needs, and in that word we include all that our bodies require.

The sixth sentence is a petition respecting our sins "Forgive us our debts." We confess that we are sinners, and need daily grants of pardon and forgiveness. This is a part of the Lord's prayer which deserves especially to be remembered. It condemns all self-righteousness and self-justifying. We are instructed here to keep up a continual habit of confession at the throne of grace, and a continual habit of seeking mercy and remission. Let this never be forgotten

The seventh sentence is a profession respecting our own feelings towards others—we ask our Father to "forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors." This is the only profession in the whole prayer, and the only part on which our Lord comments and dwells, when He has concluded the prayer. The plain object of it is, to remind us that we must not expect our prayers for forgiveness to be heard, if we pray with malice and spite in our hearts towards others. To pray in such a frame of mind is mere formality and hypocrisy.

The eighth sentence is a petition respecting our weakness "Bring us not into temptation." It teaches us that we are liable, at all times, to be led astray, and fall. It instructs us to confess our infirmity, and beseech God to hold us up, and not allow us to run into sin. We ask Him, who orders all things in heaven and earth, to restrain us from going into that which would injure our souls, and never to allow us to be tempted above that which we are able to bear.

The ninth sentence is a petition respecting our dangers "deliver us from evil." We are here taught to ask God to deliver us from the evil that is in the world, the evil that is within our own hearts, and not least from that evil one, the devil. We confess that, so long as we are in the body, we are constantly seeing, hearing, and feeling

the presence of evil. It is about us, and within us, and around us on every side

The last sentence is an ascription of praise "yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory." We declare in these words our belief, that the kingdoms of this world are the rightful property of our Father—that to Him alone belongs all "power,"—and that He alone deserves to receive all "glory." And we conclude by offering to Him the profession of our hearts, that we give Him all honor and praise, and rejoice that He is King of kings, and Lord of lords.

Fasting, or occasional abstinence from food, in order to bring the body into subjection to the spirit, is a practice frequently mentioned in the Bible, and generally in connection with prayer. David fasted, when his child was sick. Daniel fasted, when he sought special light from God. Paul and Barnabas fasted, when they appointed elders. Esther fasted, before going in to Ahasuerus. It is a subject about which we find no direct command in the New Testament. It seems to be left to every one's discretion, whether he will fast or not. There is great wisdom in this. Many a poor man never has enough to eat, and it would be an insult to tell him to fast. Many a sickly person can hardly be kept well with the closest attention to diet, and could not fast without bringing on illness. It is a matter in which every one must be persuaded in his own mind, and not be hasty to condemn others, who do not agree with him.

One thing only must never be forgotten. Those who fast should do it quietly, secretly, and without ostentation. Let them not "appear to men" to fast. Let them not fast to man, but to God.

Teaching about Money and Possessions

Moreover, when you fast, don't be like the hypocrites, with sad faces. For they disfigure their faces that they may be seen by men to be fasting. Most certainly I tell you, they have received their reward. But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you are not seen by men to be fasting, but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you.

Don't lay up treasures for yourselves on the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay

up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consume, and where thieves don't break through and steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is sound, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is evil, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You can't serve both God and man. Therefore, I tell you, don't be anxious for your life: what you will eat, or what you will drink; nor yet for your body, what you will wear. Isn't life more than food, and the body more than clothing? See the birds of the sky, that they don't sow, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns. Your heavenly Father feeds them. Aren't you of much more value than they?

Which of you by being anxious, can add one moment to his life-span? Why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They don't toil, neither do they spin, yet I tell you that even Solomon in all his glory was not dressed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today exists and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, won't he much more clothe you, you of little faith?

Therefore, don't be anxious, saying, What will we eat?, What will we drink? or, With what will we be clothed? For the Gentiles seek after all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first God's Kingdom and his righteousness; and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore, don't be anxious for tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Each day's own evil is sufficient.

Worldliness is one of the greatest dangers that beset man's soul. It is no wonder that we find our Lord speaking strongly about it. It is an treacherous, harmful, enticing, and powerful enemy. It seems so innocent to pay close attention to our business! It seems so harmless to seek our happiness in this world, so long as we keep clear of open sins! Yet here is a rock on which many make shipwreck to all eternity. They "lay up treasure on earth," and forget to "lay up treasure in heaven." May we all remember this! Where are our hearts? What do we love best? Are our chief affections on things in earth, or things in heaven? Life or death depends on the answer we can give to these questions. If our treasure is earthly,

our hearts will be earthly also. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be."

God must be king over our hearts and purpose is one great secret of spiritual prosperity. If our eyes do not see distinctly, we cannot walk without stumbling and falling. If we attempt to work for two different masters, we are sure to give satisfaction to neither. It is just the same with respect to our souls. We cannot serve Christ and the world at the same time. It is vain to attempt it. The thing cannot be done.

He knows that we are all ready to turn off warnings against worldliness, by the argument that we cannot help being anxious about the things of this life. "Have we not our families to provide for? Must not our bodily needs be supplied? How can we possibly get through life, if we think first of our souls?" The Lord Jesus foresaw such thoughts, and furnished an answer.

He forbids us to keep up an anxious spirit about the things of this world. Four times over He says, "Don't be anxious." About life, about food, about clothing, about the morrow, "don't be anxious." Be not over-careful. Be not over-anxious. Prudent provision for the future is right. Wearing, corroding, self-tormenting anxiety is wrong.

He reminds us of the providential care that God continually takes of everything that He has created. Has He given us "life?" Then He will surely not let us lack anything necessary for its maintenance. Has He given us a "body?" Then He will surely not let us die for lack of clothing. He that calls us into being, will doubtless find food to feed us.

He points out the uselessness of over-anxiety. Our life is entirely in God's hand. All the care in the world will not make us continue a minute beyond the time which God has appointed. We shall not die until our work is done.

He sends us to the birds of the air for instruction. They make no provision for the future. "They don't sow, neither do they reap." They lay up no stores against time yet to come. They do not "gather into barns." They literally live from day to day on what they can pick up, by using the instinct God has put in them. They ought to teach us that no man doing his duty in the station to which God has called him, shall ever be allowed to come to poverty.

He suggests to us, that anxiety about the things of this world is most unworthy of a Christian. One great feature of heathenism is living for the present. Let the heathen, if he will, be anxious. He knows nothing of a Father in heaven. But let the Christian, who has clearer light and knowledge, give proof of it by his faith and contentment. When bereaved of those whom we love, we are not to "sorrow as those who have no hope." When tried by cares about this life, we are not to be over-anxious, as if we had no God, and no Christ.

Last of all, He seals up all His instruction on this subject, by laying down one of the wisest maxims. "Tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Each day's own evil is sufficient." We are not to carry cares before they come. We are to attend to today's business, and leave tomorrow's anxieties until tomorrow dawns. We may die before tomorrow. We know not what may happen on the morrow. This only we may be assured of, that if tomorrow brings a cross, He who sends it, can and will send grace to bear it.

LTN - Chapter 6 - Sermon on the Mount Part 2

Do Not Judge Others

Don't judge, so that you won't be judged. For with whatever judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with whatever measure you measure, it will be measured to you. Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but don't consider the beam that is in your own eye? Or how will you tell your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye,' and behold, the beam is in your own eye? You hypocrite! First remove the beam out of your own eye, and then you can see clearly to remove the speck out of your brother's eye.

Our Lord does not mean that it is wrong, under any circumstances, to pass an unfavorable judgment on the conduct and opinions of others. We ought to have decided opinions. We are to "prove all things." We are to "try the spirits." Nor yet does He mean that it is wrong to reprove the sins and faults of others, until we are perfect and faultless ourselves. Such an interpretation would contradict other parts of Scripture. It would make it impossible to condemn error and false doctrine. It would debar any one from attempting the office of a minister or a judge. The earth would be "given into the hands of the wicked."

What our Lord means to condemn is a censorious and fault finding spirit. A readiness to blame others for trifling offenses, or matters of indifference—a habit of passing rash and hasty judgments, a disposition to magnify the errors and infirmities of our neighbors, and make the worst of them—this is what our Lord forbids. It was common among the Pharisees. It has always been common from their day down to the present time. We must all watch against it. We should "believe all things," and "hope all things" about others, and be very slow to find fault. This is Christian charity.

The second lesson contained in this passage, is the importance of exercising discretion as to the person with whom we speak on the subject of religion.

Everything is beautiful in its place and season. Our zeal is to be tempered by a prudent consideration of times, places, and people. "Don't reprove a scoffer," says Solomon, "lest he hate you." It is not everybody to whom it is wise to open our minds on spiritual matters. There are many, who from violent tempers, or openly reckless habits, are utterly incapable of valuing the things of the Gospel. They will even fly into a passion, and run into greater excesses of sin, if you try to do good to their souls. To name the name of Christ to such people, is truly to "cast pearls before swine." It does them not good but harm. It rouses all their corruption, and makes them angry.

This is a lesson which it is peculiarly difficult to use in the proper way. The right application of it needs great wisdom. We are most of us far more likely to err on the side of over-caution than of over-zeal. We are generally far more disposed to remember the "time to be silent," than "the time to speak." It is a lesson, however, which ought to stir up a spirit of self-inquiry in all our hearts. Do we ourselves never check our friends from giving us good advice, by our ill-tempered and irritability of temper? Have we never obliged others to hold their peace and say nothing, by our pride and impatient contempt of counsel?

Have we never turned against our kind advisers, and silenced them by our violence and passion? Alas! we may well fear that we have erred in this matter.

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Effective Prayer

Don't give that which is holy to the dogs, neither throw your pearls before the pigs, lest perhaps they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces. Ask, and it will be given you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and it will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives. He who seeks finds. To him who knocks it will be opened.

Or who is there among you who, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, who will give him a serpent? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!

The last lesson contained in this passage is the duty of prayer, and the rich encouragements there are to pray. There is a beautiful connection between this lesson and that which goes before it. Would we know when to be "silent," and when to "speak,"—when to bring forward "holy" things, and produce our "pearls?" We must pray. This is a subject to which the Lord Jesus evidently attaches great importance. The language that He uses is a plain proof of this. He employs three different words to express the idea of prayer. "Ask." "Seek." "Knock." He holds out the broadest, fullest promise to those who pray. "Everyone who asks receives." He illustrates God's readiness to hear our prayers, by an argument drawn from the notorious practice of parents on earth. "Evil" and selfish as they are by nature, they do not neglect the needs of their children according to the flesh. Much more will a God of love and mercy attend to the cries of those who are His children by grace.

Let us take special notice of these words of our Lord about prayer. Few of His sayings, perhaps, are so well known and so often repeated as this. The poorest and most unlearned can tell you, that "if we do not seek we shall not find." But what is the good of knowing it, if we do not use it? Knowledge, not improved and well employed, will only increase our condemnation at the last day.

Do we know anything of this asking, seeking, and knocking? Why should we not? There is nothing so simple and plain as praying, if a man really has a will to pray. There is nothing, unhappily, which men are so slow to do. They will use many of the forms of religion, attend many ordinances, do many things that are right, before they will do this. And yet without this no soul can be saved.

Do we ever really pray? If not, we shall at last be without excuse before God, except we repent. We shall not be condemned for not

doing what we could not have done, or not knowing what we could not have known. But we shall find that one main reason why we are lost is this, that we never asked that we might be saved.

Do we indeed pray? Then let us pray on, and not faint. It is not lost labor. It is not useless. It will bear fruit after many days. That word never yet failed,

"Everyone who asks receives."

The Golden Rule

Therefore, whatever you desire for men to do to you, you shall also do to them; for this is the law and the prophets.

He lays down a general principle for our guidance in all doubtful questions between man and man. We are "to do to others as we would have others do to us." We are not to deal with others as others deal with us. This is mere selfishness and heathenism. We are to deal with others as we would like others to deal with us. This is real Christianity.

This is a golden rule indeed! It does not merely forbid all petty malice and revenge, all cheating and over-reaching. It does much more. It settles a hundred difficult points, which in a world like this are continually arising between man and man. It prevents the necessity of laying down endless little rules for our conduct in specific cases. It sweeps the whole debatable ground with one mighty principle. It shows us a balance and measure, by which every one may see at once what is his duty. Is there a thing we would not like our neighbor to do to us? Then let us always remember, that this is the thing we ought not to do to him. Is there a thing we would like him to do to us? Then this is the very thing we ought to do to him. How many intricate questions would be decided at once, if this rule were honestly used!

The Narrow Gate

Enter in by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter in

by it. How narrow is the gate and the way is restricted that leads to life! There are few who find it.

Our Lord gives us a general caution against the way of the many in religion. It is not enough to think as others think, and do as others do. It must not satisfy us to follow the fashion, and swim with the stream of those among whom we live. He tells us that the way that leads to everlasting life is "narrow," and "few" travel in it. He tells us that the way that leads to everlasting destruction is "broad," and full of travelers. "Many are those who enter in by it."

These are fearful truths! They ought to raise great searchings of heart in the minds of all who hear them. "Which way am I going? By what road am I traveling?" In one or other of the two ways here described, every one of us may be found. May God give us an honest, self-inquiring spirit, and show us what we are!

We may well tremble and be afraid, if our religion is that of the multitude. If we can say no more than this, that "we go where others go, and worship where others worship, and hope we shall do as well as others at last," we are literally pronouncing our own condemnation. What is this but being in the "broad way?" What is this but being in the road whose end is "destruction?" Our religion at present is not saving religion.

The Tree and Its Fruit

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves. By their fruits you will know them. Do you gather grapes from thorns or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree produces good fruit, but the corrupt tree produces evil fruit. A good tree can't produce evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree produce good fruit. Every tree that doesn't grow good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore, by their fruits you will know them.

The Lord Jesus gives us a general warning against false teachers in the church. We are to "beware of false prophets." The connection between this passage and the preceding one is striking. Would we keep clear of this "broad way?" We must beware of false prophets. They will arise. They began in the days of the apostles. Even then the seeds of error were sown.

They have appeared continually ever since. We must be prepared for them, and be on our guard. This is a warning which is much needed. There are millions who seem ready to believe anything in religion if they hear it from an ordained minister. They forget that clergymen may err as much as laymen. They are not infallible.

Their teaching must be weighed in the balance of Holy Scripture. They are to be followed and believed, so long as their doctrine agrees with the Bible, but not a minute longer. We are to try them "by their fruits." Sound doctrine and holy living are the marks of true prophets. Let us remember this. Our minister's mistakes will not excuse our own. "If the blind lead the blind, both will fall into the ditch."

What is the best safe-guard against false teaching? Beyond all doubt the regular study of the word of God, with prayer for the teaching of the Holy Spirit. The Bible was given to be a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. (Psalm. 119:105.) The man who reads it aright will never be allowed greatly to err. It is neglect of the Bible which makes so many a prey to the first false teacher whom they hear. They would have us believe that "they are not learned, and do not pretend to have decided opinions." The plain truth is that they are lazy and idle about reading the Bible, and do not like the trouble of thinking for themselves. Nothing supplies false prophets with followers so much as spiritual sloth under a cloak of humility.

May we all bear in mind our Lord's warning! The world, the devil, and the flesh, are not the only dangers in the way of the Christian. There remains another yet, and that is the "false prophet," the wolf in sheep's clothing.

Happy is he who prays over his Bible and knows the difference between truth and error in religion! There is a difference, and we are meant to know it, and use our knowledge.

True Disciples

Not everyone who calls out to me, 'Lord! Lord! will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Only those who actually do the will of my Father

in heaven will enter. On judgment day many will say to me, Lord! Lord! We prophesied in your name and cast out demons in your name and performed many miracles in your name. But I will reply, I never knew you. Get away from me, you who break God's laws.

The Lord Jesus winds up the sermon on the mount by a passage of heart- piercing application. He turns from false prophets to false professors, from unsound teachers to unsound hearers. Here is a word for all. May we have grace to apply it to our own hearts! The first lesson here is the uselessness of a mere outward profession of Christianity. Not every one that says "Lord, Lord," shall enter the kingdom of heaven. Not all that profess and call themselves Christians shall be saved.

Let us take notice of this. It requires far more than most people seem to think necessary, to save a soul. We may be baptized in the name of Christ, and boast confidently of our ecclesiastical privileges. We may possess head-knowledge, and be quite satisfied with our own state. We may even be preachers, and teachers of others, and do "many wonderful works" in connection with our church. But all this time are we practically doing the will of our Father in heaven? Do we truly repent, truly believe on Christ, and live holy and humble lives? If not, in spite of all our privileges and profession, we shall miss heaven at last, and be forever cast away. We shall hear those dreadful words, "I never knew you. Depart from me."

The day of judgment will reveal strange things. The hopes of many, who were thought great Christians while they lived, will be utterly confounded. The rottenness of their religion will be exposed and put to shame before the whole world. It will then be proved, that to be saved means something more than "making a profession." We must make a "practice" of our Christianity as well as a "profession." Let us often think of that great day. Let us often "judge ourselves, that we be not judged," and condemned by the Lord.

Whatever else we are, let us aim at being real, true, and sincere.

Building on a Solid Foundation

Everyone therefore who hears these words of mine and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on a rock. The rain came down, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it didn't fall, for it was founded on the rock. Everyone who hears these words of mine and doesn't do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. The rain came down, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell—and its fall was great.

Here Jesus tells is a striking picture of two classes of Christian hearers. Those who hear and do nothing—and those who hear and do as well as hear— are both placed before us, and their histories traced to their respective ends.

The man who hears Christian teaching, and practices what he hears, is like "a wise man who built his house on a rock." He does not content himself with listening to exhortations to repent, believe in Christ, and live a holy life. He actually repents. He actually believes. He actually ceases to do evil, learns to do well, abhors that which is sinful, and cleaves to that which is good. He is a doer as well as a hearer. (James 1:22.)

And what is the result? In the time of trial his religion does not fail him. The floods of sickness, sorrow, poverty, disappointments, bereavements beat upon him in vain. His soul stands unmoved. His faith does not give way. His comforts do not utterly forsake him. His religion may have cost him trouble in time past. His foundation may have been obtained with much labor and many tears. To discover his own interest in Christ may have required many a day of earnest seeking, and many an hour of wrestling in prayer. But his labor has not been thrown away. He now reaps a rich reward. The religion that can stand trial is the true religion.

The man who hears Christian teaching, and never gets beyond hearing, is like "a foolish man who built his house on the sand." He satisfies himself with listening and approving, but he goes no further. He flatters himself, perhaps, that all is right with his soul, because he has feelings, and convictions, and desires, of a spiritual kind. In these he rests. He never really breaks off from sin, and casts aside the spirit of the world. He never really lays hold of Christ. He never really takes up the cross. He is a hearer of truth, but nothing more.

And what is the end of this man's religion? It breaks down entirely under the first flood of tribulation. It fails him completely, like a

summer-dried fountain, when his need is the sorest. It leaves its possessor high and dry, like a wreck on a sand bank, a scandal to the church, a by-word to the infidel, and a misery to himself. Most true is it that what costs little is worth little! A religion which costs us nothing, and consist in nothing but hearing sermons, will always prove at last to be a useless thing.

So ends the sermon on the mount. Such a sermon never was preached before. Such a sermon perhaps has never been preached since. Let us see that it has a lasting influence on our own souls. It is addressed to us as well as to those who first heard it. We are they who shall have to give account of its heart-searching lessons. It is no light matter what we think of them. The word that Jesus has spoken, "the same will judge us in the last day."

When Jesus had finished saying these things, the multitudes were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them with authority, and not like the scribes.

LTN - Chapter 7 - What is Prayer?

Why do you think Jesus prayed so much while on earth? Wasn't he the son of God? Somehow when Jesus became human there was a separation that blocked communication to God and Heaven. This is why I believe that Jesus prayed because this how us humans communicate with God. I believe we can succeed at Jesus top 2 commandments without prayer.

Let us examine prayer for this chapter and try to gain some understanding what is prayer. Which one of these types of prayer do you perform or want to perform? Secondly, I have listed 42 prayers of Jesus within MMLJ right below. Please read through as many times as you want. Let us get in sync with how Jesus prays and what kind of prayers he gives.

Definition of prayer per Oxford:

- 1) A solemn request for help or expression of thanks addressed to God or an object of worship
- 2) Religious service, especially a regular one, at which people gather in order to pray together
- 3) An earnest hope or wish

Definitions of prayer explained via Wikipedia:

New Testament - In the New Testament prayer is presented as a positive command. The People of God are challenged to include Christian prayer in their everyday life, even in the busy struggles of marriage as it brings people closer to God.

Jesus encouraged his disciples to pray in secret in their private rooms, using the Lord's Prayer, as a humble response to the prayer of the Pharisees, whose practices in prayer were regarded as impious by the New Testament writers.

Throughout the New Testament, prayer is shown to be God's appointed method by which we obtain what He has to bestow. Further, the Book of James says that the lack of blessings in life results from a failure to pray. Jesus healed through prayer and expected his followers to do so also. The apostle Paul wrote to the churches of Thessalonica to "Pray continually."

Hebrew Bible - Prayer is an evolving means of interacting with God, most frequently through a spontaneous, individual, unorganized form of petitioning and/or thanking. Standardized prayer such as is done today is non-existent, although beginning in Deuteronomy, the Bible lays the groundwork for organized prayer, including basic liturgical guidelines, and by the Bible's later books, prayer has evolved to a more standardized form, although still radically different from the form practiced by modern Jews.

Individual prayer is described by the Tanakh two ways. The first of these is when prayer is described as occurring, and a result is achieved, but no further information regarding a person's prayer is given. In these instances, such as with Isaac, Moses, Samuel, and Job, the act of praying is a method of changing a situation for the better. The second way in which prayer is depicted is through fully fleshed out episodes of prayer, where a person's prayer is related in full. Many famous biblical personalities have such a prayer, including every major character from Hannah to Hezekiah.

Direct petitions - There are different form of prayer. One of them is to directly appeal to a deity to grant one's requests. Some have termed this as the social approach to prayer. Atheist arguments against prayer are mostly directed against petitionary prayer in particular. Daniel Dennett argued that petitionary prayer might have the undesirable psychological effect of relieving a person of the need to take active measures. This potential drawback manifests in extreme forms in such cases as Christian Scientists who rely on prayers instead of seeking medical treatment for family members for easily curable conditions which later result in death. Christopher Hitchens (2012) argued that praying to a god which is omnipotent and all-knowing would be presumptuous. For example, he interprets Ambrose Bierce's definition of prayer by stating that "the man who prays is the one who thinks that god has arranged matters all

wrong, but who also thinks that he can instruct god how to put them right.”

Judaism - Observant Jews pray three times a day, Shacharit, Mincha, and Ma'ariv with lengthier prayers on special days, such as the Shabbat and Jewish holidays including Musaf and the reading of the Torah. The siddur is the prayerbook used by Jews all over the world, containing a set order of daily prayers. Jewish prayer is usually described as having two aspects: kavanah (intention) and keva (the ritualistic, structured elements). The most important Jewish prayers are the Shema Yisrael ("Hear O Israel") and the Amidah ("the standing prayer"). Communal prayer is preferred over solitary prayer, and a quorum of ten adult males (a minyan) is considered by Orthodox Judaism a prerequisite for several communal prayers. There are also many other ritualistic prayers a Jew performs during their day, such as washing before eating bread, washing after one wakes up in the morning, and doing grace after meals. Picture is of Orthodox Jewish men praying in Jerusalem's Western Wall

Educational approach - In this view, prayer is not a conversation. Rather, it is meant to inculcate certain attitudes in the one who prays, but not to influence. Among Jews, this has been the approach of Rabbenu Bachya, Rabbi Yehuda Halevi, Joseph Albo, Samson Raphael Hirsch, and Joseph B. Soloveitchik. This view is expressed by Rabbi Nosson Scherman in the overview to the Artscroll Siddur (p. XIII). Among Christian theologians, E.M. Bounds stated the educational purpose of prayer in every chapter of his book, *The Necessity of Prayer*. Prayer books such as the Book of Common Prayer are both a result of this approach and an exhortation to keep it.[38]

Rationalist approach - In this view, the ultimate goal of prayer is to help train a person to focus on divinity through philosophy and intellectual contemplation (meditation). This approach was taken by the Jewish scholar and philosopher Maimonides and the other medieval rationalists. It became popular in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic intellectual circles, but never became the most popular under-

standing of prayer among the laity in any of these faiths. In all three of these faiths today, a significant minority of people still hold to this approach.

Experiential approach - In this approach, the purpose of prayer is to enable the person praying to gain a direct experience of the recipient of the prayer (or as close to direct as a specific theology permits). This approach is very significant in Christianity and widespread in Judaism (although less popular theologically). In Eastern Orthodoxy, this approach is known as hesychasm. It is also widespread in Sufi Islam, and in some forms of mysticism. It has some similarities with the rationalist approach, since it can also involve contemplation, although the contemplation is not generally viewed as being as rational or intellectual.

Islam - The Arabic word for prayer is salah. In Islam, five daily obligatory prayers are considered as one of the pillars of the religion. The command of ritual prayer repeatedly occurs in the Quran. The person performs the prayer while they are facing the Kaaba in Mecca. There is the "call for prayer" (the adhan), where the muezzin calls for all the followers to stand together for the prayer. The prayer consists of actions such as glorifying and praising God (such as mentioning 'Allāhu Akbar' (God is Great)) while standing, recitation of chapters of the Quran (such as the opening chapter of the book (Al-Fatiha)), bowing down then praising God, prostrating (sujud) then again praising God. It ends with the words: "Peace be with you and God's mercy."

During the prayer, a Muslim cannot talk or do anything else besides pray. Once the prayer is complete, one can offer personal prayers or supplications to God for their needs, known as dua. There are many standard invocations in Arabic to be recited at various times (e.g. after the prayer) and for various occasions (e.g. for one's parents) with manners and etiquette such as before eating. Muslims may also say dua in their own words and languages for any issue they wish to communicate with God in the hope that God will answer their prayers. Certain Shi'a sects pray the five daily prayers divided into three separate parts of the

day, providing several Hadith as supporting evidence; although according to Shia Islam, it is also permissible to pray at five times. Picture is Muslims in prostration at the Umayyad Mosque in Syria

Buddhism - In the earliest Buddhist tradition, the Theravada, and in the later Mahayana tradition of Zen (or Chán), prayer plays only an ancillary role. It is largely a ritual expression of wishes for success in the practice and in helping all beings

Hinduism - Shakta Hindus in Dhaka, Bangladesh, pray to the goddess during Durga Puja, October 2003

Hinduism - Has incorporated many kinds of prayer (Sanskrit: *prārthanā*), from fire-based rituals to philosophical musings. While chanting involves 'by dictum' recitation of timeless verses or verses with timings and notations, *dhyānam* involves deep meditation (however short or long) on the preferred deity/God. Again the object to which prayers are offered could be a persons referred as *devtas*, trinity or incarnation of either *devtas* or trinity or simply plain formless meditation as practiced by the ancient sages. These prayers can be directed to fulfilling personal needs or deep spiritual enlightenment, and also for the benefit of others. Ritual invocation was part and parcel of the Vedic religion and as such permeated their sacred texts. Indeed, the highest sacred texts of the Hindus, the Vedas, are a large collection of mantras and prayer rituals. Classical Hinduism came to focus on extolling a single supreme force, Brahman, that is made manifest in several lower forms as the familiar gods of the Hindu pantheon[dubious – discuss]. Hindus in India have numerous devotional movements. Hindus may pray to the highest absolute God Brahman, or more commonly to its three manifestations, a creator god called Brahma, a preserver god called Vishnu and a destroyer god (so that the creation cycle can start afresh) Shiva, and at the next level to Vishnu's avatars (earthly appearances) Rama and Krishna or to many other male or female deities. Typically, Hindus pray with their hands (the palms) joined together in *pranam*. The hand gesture is similar to the popular Indian greeting *namaste*.

1st Timothy 2:1 thru 8 states:

I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them. Pray this way for kings and all who are in authority so that we can live peaceful and quiet lives marked by godliness and dignity. This is good and pleases God our Savior, who wants everyone to be saved and to understand the truth. For, There is one God and one Mediator who can reconcile God and humanity—the man Christ Jesus. He gave his life to purchase freedom for everyone. This is the message God gave to the world at just the right time.

Jesus Prayers in MMLJ - Jesus prayed always.

- 1) You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who mistreat you and persecute you, that you may be children of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Don’t even the tax collectors do the same? If you only greet your friends, what more do you do than others? Don’t even the tax collectors do the same? Therefore, you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.
- 2) “When you pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites, for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Most certainly, I tell you, they have received their reward. But you, when you pray, enter into your inner room, and having shut your door, pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. In praying, don’t use vain repetitions as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard for their much speaking. Therefore, don’t be like them, for your Father knows what things you need before you ask him. Pray like this: “ ‘Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy. Let your Kingdom come. Let your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors. Bring us not into

temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For yours is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen.’ “For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you don’t forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Please not that I read Jesus as saying pray like this as an example or template not as a repetitive phase like he talks about in the 2 sentences prior to this prayer.

- 3) Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest indeed is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Pray therefore that the Lord of the harvest will send out laborers into his harvest.”
- 4) He said to them, “Because of your unbelief. For most certainly I tell you, if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you will tell this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. But this kind doesn’t go out except by prayer and fasting.”
- 5) He said to them, “It is written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer,’ but you have made it a den of robbers!”
- 6) Jesus answered them, “Most certainly I tell you, if you have faith and don’t doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but even if you told this mountain, ‘Be taken up and cast into the sea,’ it would be done. All things, whatever you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.”
- 7) Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows’ houses, and as a pretense you make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation.
- 8) Pray that your flight will not be in the winter nor on a Sabbath, for then there will be great suffering, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, nor ever will be. Unless those days had been shortened, no flesh would have been saved. But for the sake of the chosen ones, those days will be shortened.
- 9) Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to his disciples, “Sit here, while I go there and pray.” He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and severely troubled. Then he said to them, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to

death. Stay here and watch with me.” He went forward a little, fell on his face, and prayed, saying, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass away from me; nevertheless, not what I desire, but what you desire.”

- 10) Again, a second time he went away and prayed, saying, “My Father, if this cup can’t pass away from me unless I drink it, your desire be done.” He came again and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. He left them again, went away, and prayed a third time, saying the same words.
- 11) Early in the morning, while it was still dark, he rose up and went out, and departed into a deserted place, and prayed there.
- 12) Immediately he made his disciples get into the boat and go ahead to the other side, to Bethsaida, while he himself sent the multitude away. After he had taken leave of them, he went up the mountain to pray.
- 13) When he had come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, “Why couldn’t we cast it out?” He said to them, “This kind can come out by nothing but by prayer and fasting.”
- 14) He taught, saying to them, “Isn’t it written, ‘My house will be called a house of prayer for all the nations?’ But you have made it a den of robbers!”
- 15) Jesus answered them, “Have faith in God. For most certainly I tell you, whoever may tell this mountain, ‘Be taken up and cast into the sea,’ and doesn’t doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is happening, he shall have whatever he says. Therefore, I tell you, all things whatever you pray and ask for, believe that you have received them, and you shall have them. Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father, who is in heaven, may also forgive you your transgressions. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your transgressions.”
- 16) “Beware of the scribes, who like to walk in long robes, and to get greetings in the marketplaces, and to get the best seats in the synagogues and the best places at feasts, those

who devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation."

- 17) "Now from the fig tree, learn this parable. When the branch has now become tender and produces its leaves, you know that the summer is near; even so you also, when you see these things coming to pass, know that it is near, at the doors. Most certainly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things happen. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. "But of that day or that hour no one knows—not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Watch, keep alert, and pray; for you don't know when the time is.
- 18) They came to a place which was named Gethsemane. He said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." He took with him Peter, James, and John, and began to be greatly troubled and distressed. He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch."
- 19) He went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass away from him. He said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible to you. Please remove this cup from me. However, not what I desire, but what you desire."
- 20) He came and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "Simon, are you sleeping? Couldn't you watch one hour? Watch and pray, that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."
- 21) Again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. Again he returned and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they didn't know what to answer him. He came the third time and said to them, "Sleep on now, and take your rest. It is enough. The hour has come. Behold, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Arise! Let's get going. Behold, he who betrays me is at hand."
- 22) But he withdrew himself into the desert and prayed.
- 23) In these days, he went out to the mountain to pray, and he continued all night in prayer to God.

24) “But I tell you who hear: love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who mistreat you. To him who strikes you on the cheek, offer also the other; and from him who takes away your cloak, don’t withhold your coat also. Give to everyone who asks you, and don’t ask him who takes away your goods to give them back again. “As you would like people to do to you, do exactly so to them. “If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them.

25) As he was praying alone, the disciples were near him, and he asked them, “Who do the multitudes say that I am?” They answered, “ ‘John the Baptizer,’ but others say, ‘Elijah,’ and others, that one of the old prophets has risen again.” He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered, “The Christ of God.” But he warned them and commanded them to tell this to no one, saying, “The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up.”

26) About eight days after these sayings, he took with him Peter, John, and James, and went up onto the mountain to pray. As he was praying, the appearance of his face was altered, and his clothing became white and dazzling. Behold, two men were talking with him, who were Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.

27) Then he said to them, “The harvest is indeed plentiful, but the laborers are few. Pray therefore to the Lord of the harvest, that he may send out laborers into his harvest. Go your ways. Behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves.”

28) When he finished praying in a certain place, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John also taught his disciples.” He said to them, “When you pray, say, ‘Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy. May your Kingdom come. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us day by day our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, for we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. Bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.’”

- 29) He also spoke a parable to them that they must always pray and not give up, saying, “There was a judge in a certain city who didn’t fear God and didn’t respect man. A widow was in that city, and she often came to him, saying, ‘Defend me from my adversary!’ He wouldn’t for a while; but afterward he said to himself, ‘Though I neither fear God nor respect man, yet because this widow bothers me, I will defend her, or else she will wear me out by her continual coming.’” The Lord said, “Listen to what the unrighteous judge says. Won’t God avenge his chosen ones who are crying out to him day and night, and yet he exercises patience with them? I tell you that he will avenge them quickly. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?”
- 30) He also spoke this parable to certain people who were convinced of their own righteousness, and who despised all others: “Two men went up into the temple to pray; one was a Pharisee, and the other was a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed by himself like this: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like the rest of men: extortionists, unrighteous, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week. I give tithes of all that I get.’ But the tax collector, standing far away, wouldn’t even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted.”
- 31) He entered into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in it, saying to them, “It is written, ‘My house is a house of prayer,’ but you have made it a ‘den of robbers!’”
- 32) “Beware of those scribes who like to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the marketplaces, the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts; who devour widows’ houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation.”
- 33) “So be careful, or your hearts will be loaded down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that day will come on you suddenly. For it will come like a snare on all those who dwell on the surface of all the earth. There-

fore be watchful all the time, praying that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will happen, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

34) The Lord said, “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan asked to have all of you, that he might sift you as wheat, but I prayed for you, that your faith wouldn’t fail. You, when once you have turned again, establish your brothers.”

35) “Pray that you don’t enter into temptation.”

36) He was withdrawn from them about a stone’s throw, and he knelt down and prayed, saying, “Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.” An angel from heaven appeared to him, strengthening him. Being in agony, he prayed more earnestly. His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down on the ground.

37) When he rose up from his prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping because of grief, and said to them, “Why do you sleep? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation.”

38) “Whatever you will ask in my name, I will do it, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you will ask anything in my name, I will do it. If you love me, keep my commandments. I will pray to the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, that he may be with you forever: the Spirit of truth, whom the world can’t receive, for it doesn’t see him and doesn’t know him. You know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans. I will come to you.”

39) “I have spoken these things to you in figures of speech. But the time is coming when I will no more speak to you in figures of speech, but will tell you plainly about the Father. In that day you will ask in my name; and I don’t say to you that I will pray to the Father for you, for the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me, and have believed that I came from God. I came from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father.”

40) “They have believed that you sent me. I pray for them. I don’t pray for the world, but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. All things that are mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them through your name which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are.”

41) “I pray not that you would take them from the world, but that you would keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in your truth. Your word is truth.”

42) “Not for these only do I pray, but for those also who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one; even as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that you sent me. The glory which you have given me, I have given to them, that they may be one, even as we are one, I in them, and you in me, that they may be perfected into one, that the world may know that you sent me and loved them, even as you loved me. “

One of the most important things I learned is that prayer even by Jesus was required for strength. This prayer was to the Father and kept simple but not repetitive. My prayers so deficient after reading those Jesus prayers.

LTN - Chapter 8 - A Call to Prayer

By J.C. Ryle

"Men ought always to pray." Luke 18:1

"I will that men pray everywhere." 1 Timothy 2:1

I have a question to offer you. It is contained in three words, Do you pray?

The question is one that none but you can answer. Whether you attend public worship or not, your minister knows. Whether you have family prayers in your house or not, your relations know. But whether you pray in private or not, is a matter between yourself and God.

I beseech you in all affection to attend to the subject I bring before you. Do not say that my question is too close. If your heart is right in the sight of God, there is nothing in it to make you afraid. Do not turn off my question by replying that you say your prayers. It is one thing to say your prayers and another to pray. Do not tell me that my question is unnecessary. Listen to me for a few minutes, and I will show you good reasons for asking it.

I ask whether you pray, because prayer is absolutely needful to a man's salvation.

I say, absolutely needful, and I say so advisedly. I am not speaking now of infants or idiots. I am not settling the state of the heathen. I know that where little is given, there little will be required. I speak especially of those who call themselves Christians, in a land like our own. And of such I say, no man or woman can expect to be saved who does not pray.

I hold salvation by grace as strongly as any one. I would gladly offer a free and full pardon to the greatest sinner that ever lived. I would not hesitate to stand by his dying bed, and say, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ even now, and you shall be saved." But that a man can have salvation without asking for it, I cannot see in the

Bible. That a man will receive pardon of his sins, who will not so much as lift up his heart inwardly, and say, "Lord Jesus, give it to me," this I cannot find. I can find that nobody will be saved by his prayers, but I cannot find that without prayer anybody will be saved.

It is not absolutely needful to salvation that a man should read the Bible. A man may have no learning, or be blind, and yet have Christ in his heart. It is not absolutely needful that a man should hear public preaching of the gospel. He may live where the gospel is not preached, or he may be bedridden, or deaf. But the same thing cannot be said about prayer. It is absolutely needful to salvation that a man should pray.

There is no royal road either to health or learning. Princes and kings, poor men and peasants, all alike must attend to the wants of their own bodies and their own minds. No man can eat, drink, or sleep by proxy. No man can get the alphabet learned for him by another. All these are things which everybody must do for himself, or they will not be done at all.

Just as it is with the mind and body, so it is with the soul. There are certain things absolutely needful to the soul's health and well-being. Each must attend to these things for himself. Each must repent for himself. Each must apply to Christ for himself. And for himself each must speak to God and pray. You must do it for yourself, for by nobody else can it be done.

To be prayerless is to be without God, without Christ, without grace, without hope, and without heaven. It is to be on the road to hell. Now can you wonder that I ask the question, Do you pray?

I ask again whether you pray, because a habit of prayer is one of the surest marks of a true Christian.

All the children of God on earth are alike in this respect. From the moment there is any life and reality about their religion, they pray. Just as the first sign of life in an infant when born into the world is the act of breathing, so the first act of men and women when they are born again is praying.

This is one of the common marks of all the elect of God, "They cry unto him day and night" (Luke 18:1). The Holy Spirit, who makes them new creatures, works in them the feeling of adoption, and makes them cry, "Abba, Father" (Rom. 8:15). The Lord Jesus,

when he quickens them, gives them a voice and a tongue, and says to them, "Be dumb no more." God has no dumb children. It is as much a part of their new nature to pray, as it is of a child to cry. They see their need of mercy and grace. They feel their emptiness and weakness. They can not do otherwise than they do. They must pray.

I have looked carefully over the lives of God's saints in the Bible. I cannot find one of whose history much is told us, from Genesis to Revelation, who was not a man of prayer. I find it mentioned as a characteristic of the godly, that "they call on the Father" (I Peter 1:17), or "the name of the Lord Jesus Christ" (I Cor. 1:2). Recorded as a characteristic of the wicked is the fact that "they call not upon the Lord" (Ps. 14:4).

I have read the lives of many eminent Christians who have been on earth since the Bible days. Some of them, I see, were rich, and some poor. Some were learned, and some unlearned. Some of them were Episcopalians, and some Christians of other names. Some were Calvinists, and some were Arminians. Some have loved to use a liturgy, and some to use none. But one thing, I see, they all had in common. They have all been men of prayer.

I study the reports of missionary societies in our own times. I see with joy that heathen men and women are receiving the gospel in various parts of the globe. There are conversions in Africa, in New Zealand, in Hindustan, in China. The people converted are naturally unlike one another in every respect. But one striking thing I observe at all the missionary stations: the converted people always pray.

I do not deny that a man may pray without heart and without sincerity. I do not for a moment pretend to say that the mere fact of a person's praying proves is everything about his soul. As in every other part of religion, so also in this, there may be deception and hypocrisy.

But this I do say, that not praying is a clear proof that a man is not yet a true Christian. He cannot really feel his sins. He cannot love God. He cannot feel himself a debtor to Christ. He cannot long after holiness. He cannot desire heaven. He has yet to be born again. He has yet to be made a new creature. He may boast confidently of election, grace, faith, hope, and knowledge, and deceive ignorant people. But you may rest assured it is all vain talk if he does not pray.

And I say, furthermore, that of all the evidences of the real work of the Spirit, a habit of hearty private prayer is one of the most satisfactory that can be named. A man may preach from false motives. A man may write books and make fine speeches and seem diligent in good works, and yet be a Judas Iscariot. But a man seldom goes into his closet, and pours out his soul before God in secret, unless he is in earnest. The Lord himself has set his stamp on prayer as the best proof of a true conversion. When he sent Ananias to Saul in Damascus, he gave him no other evidence of his change of heart than this, "Behold, he prayeth" (Acts 9: 11).

I know that much may go on in a man's mind before he is brought to pray. He may have many convictions, desires, wishes, feelings, intentions, resolutions, hopes, and fears. But all these things are very uncertain evidences. They are to be found in ungodly people, and often come to nothing. In many a case they are not more lasting than the morning cloud, and the dew that passeth away. A real, hearty prayer, coming from a broken and contrite spirit, is worth all these things put together.

I know that the Holy Spirit, who calls sinners from their evil ways, does in many instances lead them by very slow degrees to acquaintance with Christ. But the eye of man can only judge by what it sees. I cannot call any one justified until he believes. I dare not say that any one believes until he prays. I cannot understand a dumb faith. The first act of faith will be to speak to God. Faith is to the soul what life is to the body. Prayer is to faith what breath is to life. How a man can live and not breathe is past my comprehension, and how a man can believe and not pray is past my comprehension too.

Never be surprised if you hear ministers of the gospel dwelling much on the importance of prayer. This is the point we want to bring you to; we want to know that you pray. Your views of doctrine may be correct. Your love of Protestantism may be warm and unmistakable. But still this may be nothing more than head knowledge and party spirit. We want to know whether you are actually acquainted with the throne of grace, and whether you can speak to God as well as speak about God.

Do you wish to find out whether you are a true Christian? Then rest assured that my question is of the very first importance - Do you pray?

I ask whether you pray, because there is no duty in religion so neglected as private prayer.

We live in days of abounding religious profession. There are more places of public worship now than there ever were before. There are more persons attending them than there ever were before. And yet in spite of all this public religion, I believe there is a vast neglect of private prayer. It is one of those private transactions between God and our souls which no eye sees, and therefore one which men are tempted to pass over and leave undone. I believe that thousands never utter a word of prayer at all. They eat. They drink. They sleep. They rise. They go forth to their labor. They return to their homes. They breathe God's air. They see God's sun. They walk on God's earth. They enjoy God's mercies. They have dying bodies. They have judgment and eternity before them. But they never speak to God. They live like the beasts that perish. They behave like creatures without souls. They have not one word to say to Him in whose hand are their life and breath, and all things, and from whose mouth they must one day receive their everlasting sentence. How dreadful this seems; but if the secrets of men were only known, how common.

I believe there are tens of thousands whose prayers are nothing but a mere form, a set of words repeated by rote, without a thought about their meaning.

Some say over a few hasty sentences picked up in the nursery when they were children. Some content themselves with repeating the Creed, forgetting that there is not a request in it. Some add the Lord's Prayer, but without the slightest desire that its solemn petitions may be granted.

Many, even of those who use good forms, mutter their prayers after they have gotten into bed, or while they wash or dress in the morning. Men may think what they please, but they may depend upon it that in the sight of God this is not praying. Words said without heart are as utterly useless to our souls as the drum beating of the poor heathen before their idols. Where there is no heart, there may be lip work and tongue work, but there is nothing that God listens to; there is no prayer. Saul, I have no doubt, said many a long prayer before the Lord met him on the way to Damascus. But it was not till his heart was broken that the Lord said, "He prayeth."

Does this surprise you? Listen to me, and I will show you that I am not speaking as I do without reason. Do you think that my assertions are extravagant and unwarrantable? Give me your attention, and I will soon show you that I am only telling you the truth.

Have you forgotten that it is not natural to any one to pray? "The carnal mind is enmity against God." The desire of man's heart is to get far away from God, and have nothing to do with him. His feeling towards him is not love, but fear. Why then should a man pray when he has no real sense of sin, no real feeling of spiritual wants, no thorough belief in unseen things, no desire after holiness and heaven? Of all these things the vast majority of men know and feel nothing. The multitude walk in the broad way. I cannot forget this. Therefore I say boldly, I believe that few pray.

Have you forgotten that it is not fashionable to pray? It is one of the things that many would be rather ashamed to own. There are hundreds who would sooner storm a breach, or lead a forlorn hope, than confess publicly that they make a habit of prayer. There are thousands who, if obliged to sleep in the same room with a stranger, would lie down in bed without a prayer. To dress well, to go to theaters, to be thought clever and agreeable, all this is fashionable, but not to pray. I cannot forget this. I cannot think a habit is common which so many seem ashamed to own. I believe that few pray.

Have you forgotten the lives that many live? Can we really believe that people are praying against sin night and day, when we see them plunging into it? Can we suppose they pray against the world, when they are entirely absorbed and taken up with its pursuits? Can we think they really ask God for grace to serve him, when they do not show the slightest desire to serve him at all? Oh, no, it is plain as daylight that the great majority of men either ask nothing of God or do not mean what they say when they do ask, which is just the same thing. Praying and sinning will never live together in the same heart. Prayer will consume sin, or sin will choke prayer. I cannot forget this. I look at men's lives. I believe that few pray.

Have you forgotten the deaths that many die? How many, when they draw near death, seem entirely strangers to God. Not only are they sadly ignorant of his gospel, but sadly wanting in the power of speaking to him. There is a terrible awkwardness and shyness in their endeavors to approach him. They seem to be taking up a fresh thing. They appear as if they wanted an introduction to God,

and as if they had never talked with him before. I remember having heard of a lady who was anxious to have a minister to visit her in her last illness. She desired that he would pray with her. He asked her what he should pray for. She did not know, and could not tell. She was utterly unable to name any one thing which she wished him to ask God for her soul. All she seemed to want was the form of a minister's prayers. I can quite understand this. Death beds are great revealers of secrets. I cannot forget what I have seen of sick and dying people. This also leads me to believe that few pray.

I cannot see your heart. I do not know your private history in spiritual things. But from what I see in the Bible and in the world I am certain I cannot ask you a more necessary question than that before you - Do you pray?

I ask whether you pray, because prayer is an act in religion to which there is great encouragement.

There is everything on God's part to make prayer easy, if men will only attempt it. All things are ready on his side. Every objection is anticipated. Every difficulty is provided for. The crooked places are made straight and the rough places are made smooth. There is no excuse left for the prayerless man.

There is a way by which any man, however sinful and unworthy, may draw near to God the Father. Jesus Christ has opened that way by the sacrifice he made for us upon the cross. The holiness and justice of God need not frighten sinners and keep them back. Only let them cry to God in the name of Jesus, only let them plead the atoning blood of Jesus, and they shall find God upon a throne of grace, willing and ready to hear. The name of Jesus is a never-failing passport for our prayers. In that name a man may draw near to God with boldness, and ask with confidence. God has engaged to hear him. Think of this. Is not this encouragement?

There is an Advocate and Intercessor always waiting to present the prayers of those who come to God through him. That advocate is Jesus Christ. He mingles our prayers with the incense of his own almighty intercession. So mingled, they go up as a sweet savor before the throne of God. Poor as they are in themselves, they are mighty and powerful in the hand of our High Priest and Elder Brother. The bank note without a signature at the bottom is nothing but a worthless piece of paper. The stroke of a pen confers on it all its value. The prayer of a poor child of Adam is a feeble thing in

itself, but once endorsed by the hand of the Lord Jesus it availeth much. There was an officer in the city of Rome who was appointed to have his doors always open, in order to receive any Roman citizen who applied to him for help. just so the ear of the Lord Jesus is ever open to the cry of all who want mercy and grace. It is his office to help them. Their prayer is his delight. Think of this. Is not this encouragement?

There is the Holy Spirit ever ready to help our infirmities in prayer. It is one part of his special office to assist us in our endeavors to speak with God. We need not be cast down and distressed by the fear of not knowing what to say. The Spirit will give us words if we seek his aid. The prayers of the Lord's people are the inspiration of the Lord's Spirit, the work of the Holy Ghost who dwells within them as the Spirit of grace and supplication. Surely the Lord's people may well hope to be heard. It is not they merely that pray, but the Holy Ghost pleading in them. Reader, think of this. Is not this encouragement?

There are exceeding great and precious promises to those who pray. What did the Lord Jesus mean when he spoke such words as these: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened" (Matt. 7:7, 8). "All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer believing, ye shall receive" (Matt. 21:22). "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it" (John 14:13, 14). What did the Lord mean when he spoke the parables of the friend 'at midnight and the importunate widow (Luke 11:5; 18:1)? Think over these passages. If this is not encouragement to pray, words have no meaning.

There are wonderful examples in Scripture of the power of prayer. Nothing seems to be too great, too hard, or too difficult for prayer to do. It has obtained things that seemed impossible and out of reach. It has won victories over fire, air, earth, and water. Prayer opened the Red Sea. Prayer brought water from the rock and bread from heaven. Prayer made the sun stand still. Prayer brought fire from the sky on Elijah's sacrifice. Prayer turned the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness. Prayer overthrew the army of Sennacherib. Well might Mary Queen of Scots say, "I fear John Knox's prayers more than an army of ten thousand men." Prayer has healed the sick. Prayer has raised the dead. Prayer has procured the conversion of souls. "The child of many prayers," said an

old Christian to Augustine's mother, "shall never perish." Prayer, pains, and faith can do anything. Nothing seems impossible when a man has the spirit of adoption. "Let me alone," is the remarkable saying of God to Moses when Moses was about to intercede for the children of Israel - the Chaldee version has, "Leave off praying" - (Exod. 32:10). So long as Abraham asked mercy for Sodom, the Lord went on giving. He never ceased to give till Abraham ceased to pray. Think of this. Is not this encouragement?

What more can a man want to lead him to take any step in religion, than the things I have just told him about prayer? What more could be done to make the path to the mercy seat easy, and to remove all occasions of stumbling from the sinner's way? Surely if the devils in hell had such a door set open before them, they would leap for gladness, and make the very pit ring with joy.

But where will the man hide his head at last who neglects such glorious encouragements? What can possibly be said for the man who, after all, dies without prayer? Surely I may feel anxious that you should not be that man. Surely I may well ask - Do you pray?

I ask whether you pray, because diligence in prayer is the secret of eminent holiness:

Without controversy there is a vast difference among true Christians. There is an immense interval between the foremost and the hindermost in the army of God.

They are all fighting the same good fight but how much more valiantly some fight than others. They are all doing the Lord's work but how much more some do than others. They are all light in the Lord; but how much more brightly some shine than others. They are all running the same race; but how much faster some get on than others. They all love the same Lord and Saviour; but how much more some love him than others. I ask any true Christian whether this is not the case. Are not these things so?

There are some of the Lord's people who seem never able to get on from the time of their conversion. They are born again, but they remain babes all their lives. You hear from them the same old experience. You remark in them the same want of spiritual appetite, the same want of interest in any thing beyond their own little circle, which you remarked ten years ago. They are pilgrims, indeed, but pilgrims like the Gibeonites of old; their bread is always dry and moldy, their shoes always old, and their garments always rent

and torn. I say this with sorrow and grief; but I ask any real Christian, Is it not true?

There are others of the Lord's people who seem to be always advancing. They grow like the grass after rain; they increase like Israel in Egypt; they press on like Gideon, though sometimes faint, yet always pursuing. They are ever adding grace to grace, and faith to faith, and strength to strength. Every time you meet them their hearts seem larger, and their spiritual stature taller and stronger. Every year they appear to see more, and know more, and believe more, and feel more in their religion. They not only have good works to prove the reality of their faith, but they are zealous of them. They not only do well, but they are unwearied in well-doing. They attempt great things, and they do great things. When they fail they try again, and when they fall they are soon up again. And all this time they think themselves poor, unprofitable servants, and fancy they do nothing at all. These are those who make religion lovely and beautiful in the eyes of all. They wrest praise even from the unconverted and win golden opinions even from the selfish men of the world. It does one good to see, to be with, and to hear them. When you meet them, you could believe that like Moses, they had just come out from the presence of God. When you part with them you feel warmed by their company, as if your soul had been near a fire. I know such people are rare. I only ask, Are there not many such?

Now how can we account for the difference which I have just described? What is the reason that some believers are so much brighter and holier than others? I believe the difference, in nineteen cases out of twenty, arises from different habits about private prayer. I believe that those who are not eminently holy pray little, and those who are eminently holy pray much.

I dare say this opinion will startle some readers. I have little doubt that many look on eminent holiness as a kind of special gift, which none but a few must pretend to aim at. They admire it at a distance in books. They think it beautiful when they see an example near themselves. But as to its being a thing within the reach of any but a very few, such a notion never seems to enter their minds. In short, they consider it a kind of monopoly granted to a few favored believers, but certainly not to all.

Now I believe that this is a most dangerous mistake. I believe that spiritual as well as natural greatness depends in a high degree on the faithful use of means within everybody's reach. Of course I do

not say we have a right to expect a miraculous grant of intellectual gifts; but this I do say, that when a man is once converted to God, his progress in holiness will be much in accordance with his own diligence in the use of God's appointed means. And I assert confidently that the principal means by which most believers have become great in the church of Christ is the habit of diligent private prayer.

Look through the lives of the brightest and best of God's servants, whether in the Bible or not. See what is written of Moses and David and Daniel and Paul. Mark what is recorded of Luther and Bradford the Reformers. Observe what is related of the private devotions of Whitefield and Cecil and Venn and Bickersteth and M'Cheyne. Tell me of one of all the goodly fellowship of saints and martyrs, who has not had this mark most prominently - he was a man of prayer. Depend upon it, prayer is power.

Prayer obtains fresh and continued outpourings of the Spirit. He alone begins the work of grace in a man's heart. He alone can carry it forward and make it prosper. But the good Spirit loves to be entertained. And those who ask most will have most of his influence.

Prayer is the surest remedy. Against the devil and besetting sins. That sin will never stand firm which is heartily prayed against. That devil will never long keep dominion over us which we beseech the Lord to cast forth. But then we must spread out all our cage before our heavenly Physician, if he is to give us daily relief.

Do you wish to grow in grace and be a devoted Christian? Be very sure, if you wish it, you could not have a more important question than this - Do you pray?

I ask whether you pray, because neglect of prayer is one great cause of backsliding.

There is such a thing as going back in religion after making a good profession. Men may run well for a season, like the Galatians, and then turn aside after false teachers. Men may profess loudly while their feelings are warm, as Peter did, and then in the hour of trial deny their Lord. Men may lose their first love as the Ephesians did. Men may cool down in their zeal to do good, like Mark the companion of Paul. Men may follow an apostle for a season, and like Demas go back to the world. All these things men may do.

It is a miserable thing to be a backslider. Of all unhappy things that can befall a man, I suppose it is the worst. A stranded ship, a brokenwinged eagle, a garden overrun with weeds, a harp without strings, a church in ruins, all these are sad sights, but a backslider is a sadder sight still. A wounded conscience - a mind sick of itself - a memory full of self-reproach - a heart pierced through with the Lord's arrows - a spirit broken with a load of inward accusation - all this is a taste of hell. It is a hell on earth. Truly that saying of the wise man is solemn and weighty, "The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways" (Prov. 14:14).

Now what is the cause of most backslidings? I believe, as a general rule, one of the chief causes is neglect of private prayer. Of course the secret history of falls will not be known till the last day. I can only give my opinion as a minister of Christ and a student of the heart. That opinion is, I repeat distinctly, that backsliding generally first begins with neglect of private prayer.

Bibles read without prayer; sermons heard without prayer; marriages contracted without prayer; journeys undertaken without prayer; residences chosen without prayer; friendships formed without prayer; the daily act of private prayer itself hurried over, or gone through without heart: these are the kind of downward steps by which many a Christian descends to a condition of spiritual palsy, or reaches the point where God allows him to have a tremendous fall. This is the process which forms the lingering Lots, the unstable Samsons, the wife-idolizing Solomons, the inconsistent Asas, the pliable Jehoshaphats, the over-careful Marthas, of whom so many are to be found in the church of Christ. Often the simple history of such cases is this: they became careless about private prayer.

You may be very sure men fall in private long before they fall in public. They are backsliders on their knees long before they backslide openly in the eyes of the world. Like Peter, they first disregard the Lord's warning to watch and pray, and then like Peter, their strength is gone, and in the hour of temptation they deny their Lord.

The world takes notice of their fall, and scoffs loudly. But the world knows nothing of the real reason. The heathen succeeded in making a well-known Christian offer incense to an idol, by threatening him with a punishment worse than death. They then triumphed greatly at the sight of his cowardice and apostasy. But the heathen did not know the fact of which history informs us, that on

that very morning he had left his bed chamber hastily, and without finishing his usual prayers.

If you are a Christian indeed, I trust you will never be a backslider. But if you do not wish to be a backsliding Christian, remember the question I ask you: Do you pray?

I ask, lastly, whether you pray because prayer is one of the best means of happiness and contentment.

We live in a world where sorrow abounds. This has always been its state since sin came in. There cannot be sin without sorrow. And until sin is driven out from the world, it is vain for any one to suppose he can escape sorrow.

Some without doubt have a larger cup of sorrow to drink than others. But few are to be found who live long without sorrows or cares of one sort or another. Our bodies, our property, our families, our children, our relations, our servants, our friends, our neighbors, our worldly callings, each and all of these are fountains of care. Sicknesses, deaths, losses, disappointments, partings, separations, ingratitude, slander, all these are common things. We cannot get through life without them. Some day or other they find us out. The greater are our affections the deeper are our afflictions, and the more we love the more we have to weep.

And what is the best means of cheerfulness in such a world as this? How shall we get through this valley of tears with least pain? I know no better means than the regular, habitual practice of taking everything to God in prayer. This is the plain advice that the Bible gives, both in the Old Testament and the New. What says the psalmist? "Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me" (Ps. 50:15). "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved" (Ps. 55:22). What says the apostle Paul? "Be careful for nothing; but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God: and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:6, 7). What says the apostle James? "Is any afflicted among you? let him pray" (James 5:13).

This was the practice of all the saints whose history we have recorded in the Scriptures. This is what Jacob did when he feared his brother Esau. This is what Moses did when the people were

ready to stone him in the wilderness. This is what Joshua did when Israel was defeated before the men of Ai. This is what David did when he was in danger at Keilah. This is what Hezekiah did when he received the letter from Sennacherib. This is what the church did when Peter was put in prison. This is what Paul did when he was cast into the dungeon at Philippi.

The only way to be really happy in such a world as this, is to be ever casting all our cares on God. It is trying to carry their own burdens which so often makes believers sad. If they will tell their troubles to God, he will enable them to bear them as easily as Samson did the gates of Gaza. If they are resolved to keep them to themselves, they will find one day that the very grasshopper is a burden.

There is a friend ever waiting to help us, if we will unbosom to him our sorrow - a friend who pitied the poor and sick and sorrowful, when he was upon earth - a friend who knows the heart of man, for he lived thirty-three years as a man among us - a friend who can weep with the weepers, for he was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief - a friend who is able to help us, for there never was earthly pain he could not cure. That friend is Jesus Christ. The way to be happy is to be always opening our hearts to him. Oh that we were all like that poor Christian who only answered, when threatened and punished, "I must tell the Lord."

Jesus can make those happy who trust him and call on him, whatever be their outward condition. He can give them peace of heart in a prison, contentment in the midst of poverty, comfort in the midst of bereavements, joy on the brink of the grave. There is a mighty fulness in him for all his believing members - a fulness that is ready to be poured out on every one that will ask in prayer. Oh that men would understand that happiness, does not depend on outward circumstances, but on the state of the heart.

Prayer can lighten crosses for us however heavy. It can bring down to our side One who will help us to bear them. Prayer can open a door for us when our way seems hedged up. It can bring down One who will say, "This is the way, walk in it." Prayer can let in a ray of hope when all our earthly prospects seem darkened. It can bring down One who will say, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Prayer can obtain relief for us when those we love most are taken away, and the world feels empty. It can bring down One who can fill the gap in our hearts with himself, and say to the waves within,

"Peace; be still." Oh that men were not so like Hagar in the wilderness, blind to the well of living waters close beside them.

I want you to be happy. I know I cannot ask you a more useful question than this: Do you pray?

And now it is high time for me to bring this tract to an end. I trust I have brought before you things that will be seriously considered. I heartily pray God that this consideration may be blessed to your soul.

Let me speak a parting word to those who do not pray. I dare not suppose that all who read these pages are praying people. If you are a prayerless person, suffer me to speak to you this day on God's behalf.

Prayerless reader, I can only warn you, but I do warn you most solemnly. I warn you that you are in a position of fearful danger. If you die in your present state, you are a lost soul. You will only rise again to be eternally miserable. I warn you that of all professing Christians you are most utterly without excuse. There is not a single good reason that you can show for living without prayer.

It is useless to say you know not how to pray. Prayer is the simplest act in all religion. It is simply speaking to God. It needs neither learning nor wisdom nor book knowledge to begin it. It needs nothing but heart and will. The weakest infant can cry when he is hungry. The poorest beggar can hold out his hand for alms, and does not wait to find fine words. The most ignorant man will find something to say to God, if he has only a mind.

It is useless to say you have no convenient place to pray in. Any man can find a place private enough, if he is disposed. Our Lord prayed on a mountain; Peter on the housetop; Isaac in the field; Nathanael under the fig tree; Jonah in the whale's belly. Any place may become a closet, an oratory, and a Bethel, and be to us the presence of God.

It is useless to say you have no time. There is plenty of time, if men will employ it. Time may be short, but time is always long enough for prayer. Daniel had the affairs of a kingdom on his hands, and yet he prayed three times a day. David was ruler over a mighty nation, and yet he says, "Evening and morning and at noon will I pray" (Ps. 55:17). When time is really wanted, time can always be found.

It is useless to say you cannot pray till you have faith and a new heart, and that you must sit still and wait for them. This is to add sin to sin. It is bad enough to be unconverted and going to hell. It is even worse to say, "I know it, but will not cry for mercy." This is a kind of argument for which there is no warrant in Scripture. "Call ye upon the Lord," saith Isaiah, "while he is near" (Isa. 55:6). "Take with you words, and turn unto the Lord," says Hosea (Hos. 14:1). "Repent and pray," says Peter to Simon Magus (Acts 8:22). If you want faith and a new heart, go and cry to the Lord for them. The very attempt to pray has often been the quickening of a dead soul.

Oh, prayerless reader, who and what are you that you will not ask anything of God? Have you made a covenant with death and hell? Are you at peace with the worm and the fire? Have you no sins to be pardoned? Have you no fear of eternal torment? Have you no desire after heaven? Oh that you would awake from your present folly. Oh that you would consider your latter end. Oh that you would arise and call upon God. Alas, there is a day coming when many shall pray loudly, "Lord, Lord, open to us," but all too late; when many shall cry to the rocks to fall on them and the hills to cover them, who would never cry to God. In all affection, I warn you, beware lest this be the end of your soul. Salvation is very near you. Do not lose heaven for want of asking.

Let me speak to those who have real desires for salvation, but know not what steps to take, or where to begin. I cannot but hope that some readers may be in this state of mind, and if there be but one such I must offer him affectionate counsel.

In every journey there must be a first step. There must be a change from sitting still to moving forward. The journeyings of Israel from Egypt to Canaan were long and wearisome. Forty years pass away before they crossed Jordan. Yet there was some one who moved first when they marched from Ramah to Succoth. When does a man really take his first step in coming out from sin and the world? He does it in the day when he first prays with his heart.

In every building the first stone must be laid, and the first blow must be struck. The ark was one hundred and twenty years in building. Yet there was a day when Noah laid his axe to the first tree he cut down to form it. The temple of Solomon was a glorious building. But there was a day when the first huge stone was laid deep in mount Moriah. When does the building of the Spirit really

begin to appear in a man's heart? It begins, so far as we can judge, when he first pours out his heart to God in prayer.

If you desire salvation, and want to know what to do, I advise you to go this very day to the Lord Jesus Christ, in the first private place you can find, and earnestly and heartily entreat him in prayer to save your soul.

Tell him that you have heard that he receives sinners, and has said, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." Tell him that you are a poor vile sinner, and that you come to him on the faith of his own invitation. Tell him you put yourself wholly and entirely in his hands; that you feel vile and helpless, and hopeless in yourself: and that except he saves you, you have no hope of being saved at all. Beseech him to deliver you from the guilt, the power, and the consequences of sin. Beseech him to pardon you, and wash you in his own blood. Beseech him to give you a new heart, and plant the Holy Spirit in Your Soul. Beseech him to give you grace and faith and will and power to be his disciple and servant from this day forever. Oh, reader, go this very day, and tell these things to the Lord Jesus Christ, if you really are in earnest about your soul.

Tell him in your own way, and your own words. If a doctor came to see you when sick you could tell him where you felt pain. If your soul feels its disease indeed, you can surely find something to tell Christ.

Doubt not his willingness to save you, because you are a sinner. It is Christ's office to save sinners. He says himself, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Luke 5:32).

Wait not because you feel unworthy. Wait for nothing. Wait for nobody. Waiting comes from the devil. just as you are, go to Christ. The worse you are, the more need you have to apply to him. You will never mend yourself by staying away.

Fear not because your prayer is stammering, your words feeble, and your language poor. Jesus can understand you. Just as a mother understands the first lisping of her infant, so does the blessed Saviour understand sinners. He can read a sigh, and see a meaning in a groan.

Despair not because you do not get an answer immediately. While you are speaking, Jesus is listening. If he delays an answer, it is

only for wise reasons, and to try if you are in earnest. The answer will surely come. Though it tarry, wait for it. It will surely come.

Oh, reader, if you have any desire to, be saved, remember the advice I have given you this day. Act upon it honestly and heartily, and you shall be saved.

Let me speak, lastly, to those who do pray. I trust that some who read this tract know well what prayer is, and have the Spirit of adoption. To all such, I offer a few words of brotherly counsel and exhortation. The incense offered in the tabernacle was ordered to be made in a particular way. Not every kind of incense would do. Let us remember this, and be careful about the matter and manner of our prayers.

Brethren who pray, if I know anything of a Christian's heart, you are often sick of your own prayers. You never enter into the apostle's words, "When I would do good, evil is present with me," so thoroughly as you sometimes do upon your knees. You can understand David's words, I hate vain thoughts." You can sympathize with that poor converted Hottentot who was overheard praying, "Lord, deliver me from all my enemies, and above all, from that bad man myself." There are few children of God who do not often find the season of prayer a season of conflict. The devil has special wrath against us when he sees us on our knees. Yet, I believe that prayers which cost us no trouble should be regarded with great suspicion. I believe we are very poor judges of the goodness of our prayers, and that the prayer which pleases us least, often pleases God most. Suffer me then, as a companion in the Christian warfare, to offer you a few words of exhortation. One thing, at least, we all feel: we must pray. We cannot give it up. We must go on.

I commend then to your attention, the importance of reverence and humility in prayer. Let us never forget what we are, and what a solemn thing it is to speak with God. Let us beware of rushing into his presence with carelessness and levity. Let us say to ourselves: "I am on holy ground. This is no other than the gate of heaven. If I do not mean what I say, I am trifling with God. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." Let us keep in mind the words of Solomon, "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thy heart be hasty to utter anything before God; for God is in heaven, and thou on earth" (Eccl. 5:2). When Abraham spoke to God, he said, "I am dust and ashes." When Job spoke to God, he said, I am vile." Let us do likewise.

I commend to you the importance of praying spiritually. I mean by that, that we should labor always to have the direct help of the Spirit in our prayers, and beware above all things of formality. There is nothing so spiritual but that it may become a form, and this is specially true of private prayer. We may insensibly get into the habit of using the fittest possible words, and offering the most scriptural petitions, and yet do it all by rote without feeling it, and walk daily round an old beaten path. I desire to touch this point with caution and delicacy. I know that there are certain great things we daily want, and that there is nothing necessarily formal in asking for these things in the same words. The world, the devil, and our hearts, are daily the same. Of necessity we must daily go over old ground. But this I say, we must be very careful on this point. If the skeleton and outline of our prayers be by habit almost a form, let us strive that the clothing and filling up of our prayers be as far as possible of the Spirit. As to praying out of a book in our private devotions, it is a habit I cannot praise. If we can tell our doctors the state of our bodies without a book, we ought to be able to tell the state of our souls to God. I have no objection to a man using crutches when he is first recovering from a broken limb. It is better to use crutches, than not to walk at all. But if I saw him all his life on crutches, I should not think it matter for congratulation. I should like to see him strong enough to throw his crutches away.

I commend to you the importance of making prayer a regular business of life. I might say something of the value of regular times in the day for prayer. God is a God of order. The hours for morning and evening sacrifice in the Jewish temple were not fixed as they were without a meaning. Disorder is eminently one of the fruits of sin. But I would not bring any under bondage. This only I say, that it is essential to your soul's health to make praying a part of the business of every twenty four hours in your life. just as you allot time to eating, sleeping, and business, so also allot time to prayer. Choose your own hours and seasons. At the very least, speak with God in the morning, before you speak with the world: and speak with God at night, after you have done with the world. But settle it in your minds, that prayer is one of the great things of every day. Do not drive it into a corner. Do not give it the scraps and parings of your duty. Whatever else you make a business of, make a business of prayer.

I commend to you the importance of perseverance in prayer. Once having begun the habit, never give it up. Your heart will sometimes say, "You have had family prayers: what mighty harm if you leave private prayer undone?" Your body will sometimes say, "You are

unwell, or sleepy, or weary; you need not pray." Your mind will sometimes say, "You have important business to attend to today; cut short your prayers." Look on all such suggestions as coming direct from Satan. They are all as good' as saying, "Neglect your soul." I do not maintain that prayers should always be of the same length; but I do say, let no excuse make you give up prayer. Paul said, "Continue in prayer, and, "Pray without ceasing." He did not mean that men should be always on their knees, but he did mean that our prayers should be, like the continual burnt offering, steadily persevered in every day; that it should be like seed time and harvest, and summer and winter, unceasingly coming round at regular seasons; that it should be like the fire on the altar, not always consuming sacrifices, but never completely going out. Never forget that you may tie together morning and evening devotions, by an endless chain of short ejaculatory prayers throughout the day. Even in company, or business, or in the very streets, you may be silently sending up little winged messengers to God, as Nehemiah did in the very presence of Artaxerxes. And never think that time is wasted which is given to God. A nation does not become poorer because it loses one year of working days in seven, by keeping the Sabbath. A Christian never finds he is a loser, in the long run, by persevering in prayer.

I commend to you the importance of earnestness in prayer. It is not necessary that a man should shout, or scream, or be very loud, in order to prove that he is in earnest. But it is desirable that we should be hearty and fervent and warm, and ask as if we were really interested in what we were doing. It is the "effectual fervent" prayer that "availeth much." This is the lesson that is taught us by the expressions used in Scripture about prayer. It is called, "crying, knocking, wrestling, laboring, striving." This is the lesson taught us by scripture examples. Jacob is one. He said to the angel at Penuel, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me" (Gen. 32:26). Daniel is another. Hear how he pleaded with God: "O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, o my God" (Dan. 9:19). Our Lord Jesus Christ is another. It is written of him, "In the days of his flesh, he offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears" (Heb. 5:7). Alas, how unlike is this to many of our supplications! How tame and lukewarm they seem by comparison. How truly might God say to many of us, "You do not really want what you pray for." Let us try to amend this fault. Let us knock loudly at the door of grace, like Mercy in Pilgrim's Progress, as if we must perish unless heard. Let us settle it in our minds, that cold prayers are a sacrifice without fire. Let us remember the story of Demosthenes the great ora-

tor, when one came to him, and wanted him to plead his cause. He heard him without attention, while he told his story without earnestness. The man saw this, and cried out with anxiety that it was all true. "Ah," said Demosthenes, "I believe you now."

I commend to you the importance of praying with faith. We should endeavor to believe that our prayers are heard, and that if we ask things according to God's will, we shall be answered. This is the plain command of our Lord Jesus Christ: "Whatsoever things ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them" (Mark 11:24). Faith is to prayer what the feather is to the arrow: without it prayer will not hit the mark. We should cultivate the habit of pleading promises in our prayers.

We should take with us some promise, and say, "Lord, here is thine own word pledged. Do for us as thou hast said." This was the habit of Jacob and Moses and David. The 119th Psalm is full of things asked, "according to thy word." Above all, we should cultivate the habit of expecting answers to our prayers. We should do like the merchant who sends his ships to sea. We should not be satisfied, unless we see some return. Alas, there are few points on which Christians come short so much as this. The church at Jerusalem made prayer without ceasing for Peter in prison; but when the prayer was answered, they would hardly believe it (Acts 12:15). It is a solemn saying of Traill, "There is no surer mark of trifling in prayer, than when men are careless what they get by prayer."

I commend to you the importance of boldness in prayer. There is an unseemly familiarity in some men's prayers which I cannot praise. But there is such a thing as a holy boldness, which is exceedingly to be desired. I mean such boldness as that of Moses, when he pleads with God not to destroy Israel "Wherefore," says he, "should the Egyptians speak and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains? Turn from thy fierce anger" (Exod. 32:12). I mean such boldness as that of Joshua, when the children of Israel were defeated before men of Ai: "What," says he, "wilt thou do unto thy great name?" (Josh. 7:9). This is the boldness for which Luther was remarkable. One who heard him praying said, "What a spirit, what a confidence was in his very expressions. With such a reverence he sued, as one begging of God, and yet with such hope and assurance, as if he spoke with a loving father or friend." This is the boldness which distinguished Bruce, a great Scotch divine of the seventeenth century. His prayers were said to be "like bolts shot up into heaven." Here

also I fear we sadly come short. We do not sufficiently realize the believer's privileges. We do not plead as often as we might, "Lord, are we not thine own people? Is it not for thy glory that we should be sanctified? Is it not for thy honor that thy gospel should increase?"

I commend to you the importance of fullness in prayer. I do not forget that our Lord warns us against the example of the Pharisees, who, for pretense, made long prayers; and commands us when we pray not to use vain repetitions. But I cannot forget, on the other hand, that he has given his own sanction to large and long devotions by continuing all night in prayer to God. At all events, we are not likely in this day to err on the side of praying too much. Might it not rather be feared that many believers in this generation pray too little? Is not the actual amount of time that many Christians give to prayer, in the aggregate, very small? I am afraid these questions cannot be answered satisfactorily. I am afraid the private devotions of many are most painfully scanty and limited; just enough to prove they are alive and no more. They really seem to want little from God. They seem to have little to confess, little to ask for, and little to thank him for. Alas, this is altogether wrong. Nothing is more common than to hear believers complaining that they do not get on. They tell us that they do not grow in grace as they could desire. Is it not rather to be suspected that many have quite as much grace as they ask for? Is it not the true account of many, that they have little, because they ask little? The cause of their weakness is to be found in their own stunted, dwarfish, clipped, contracted, hurried, narrow, diminutive prayers. They have not, because they ask not. Oh, we are not straitened in Christ, but in ourselves. The Lord says, "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." But we are like the King of Israel who smote on the ground thrice and stayed, when he ought to have smitten five or six times.

I commend to you the importance of particularity in prayer. We ought not to be content with great general petitions. We ought to specify our wants before the throne of grace. It should not be enough to confess we are sinners: we should name the sins of which our conscience tells us we are most guilty. It should not be enough to ask for holiness; we should name the graces in which we feel most deficient. It should not be enough to tell the Lord we are in trouble; we should describe our trouble and all its peculiarities. This is what Jacob did when he feared his brother Esau. He tells God exactly what it is that he fears (Gen. 32:11). This is what Eliezer did, when he sought a wife for his master's son. He spreads before God precisely what he wants (Gen. 24:12). This is what Paul

did when he had a thorn in the flesh. He besought the Lord (II Cor. 12:8). This is true faith and confidence. We should believe that nothing is too small to be named before God. What should we think of the patient who told his doctor he was ill, but never went into particulars? What should we think of the wife who told her husband she was unhappy, but did not specify the cause? What should we think of the child who told his father he was in trouble, but nothing more? Christ is the true bridegroom of the soul, the true physician of the heart, the real father of all his people. Let us show that we feel this by being unreserved in our communications with him. Let us hide no secrets from him. Let us tell him all our hearts.

I commend to you the importance of intercession in our prayers. We are all selfish by nature, and our selfishness is very apt to stick to us, even when we are converted. There is a tendency in us to think only of our own Souls, our own spiritual conflicts, our own progress in religion, and to forget others. Against this tendency we all have need to watch and strive, and not least in our prayers. We should study to be of a public spirit. We should stir ourselves up to name other names besides our own before the throne of grace. We should try to bear in our hearts the whole world, the heathen, the Jews, the Roman Catholics, the body of true believers, the professing Protestant churches, the country in which we live, the congregation to which we belong, the household in which we sojourn, the friends and relations we are connected with. For each and all of these we should plead. This is the highest charity. He loves me best who loves me in his prayers. This is for our soul's health. It enlarges our sympathies and expands our hearts. This is for the benefit of the church. The wheels of all machinery for extending the gospel are moved by prayer. They do as much for the Lord's cause who intercede like Moses on the mount, as they do who fight like Joshua in the thick of the battle. This is to be like Christ. He bears the names of his people, as their High Priest, before the Father. Oh, the privilege of being like Jesus! This is to , be a true helper to ministers. If I must choose a congregation, give me a people that pray.

I commend to you the importance of thankfulness in prayer. I know well that asking God is one thing and praising God is another. But I see so close a connection between prayer and praise in the Bible, that I dare not call that true prayer in which thankfulness has no part. It is not for nothing that Paul says, "By prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God" (Phil. 4:6). "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same

with thanksgiving" (Col. 4:2). It is of mercy that we are not in hell. It is of mercy that we have the hope of heaven. It is of mercy that we live in a land of spiritual light. It is of mercy that we have been called by the Spirit, and not left to reap the fruit of our own ways. It is of mercy that we still live and have opportunities of glorifying God actively or passively. Surely these thoughts should crowd on our minds whenever we speak with God. Surely we should never open our lips in prayer without blessing God for that free grace by which we live, and for that loving kindness which endureth for ever. Never was there an eminent saint who was not full of thankfulness. St. Paul hardly ever writes an epistle without beginning with thankfulness.

Men like Whitefield in the last century, and Bickersteth in our time, abounded in thankfulness. Oh, reader, if we would be bright and shining lights in our day, we must cherish a spirit of praise. Let our prayers be thankful prayers.

I commend to you the importance of watchfulness over your prayers. Prayer is that point in religion at which you must be most of all on your guard. Here it is that true religion begins; here it flourishes, and here it decays. Tell me what a man's prayers are, and I will soon tell you the state of his soul. Prayer is the spiritual pulse. By this the spiritual health may be tested. Prayer is the spiritual weatherglass. By this we may know whether it is fair or foul with our hearts. Oh, let us keep an eye continually upon our private devotions. Here is the pith and marrow of our practical Christianity. Sermons and books and tracts, and committee meetings and the company of good men, are all good in their way, but they will never make up for the neglect of private prayer. Mark well the places and society and companions that unhinge your hearts for communion with God and make your prayers drive heavily. There be on your guard. Observe narrowly what friends and what employments leave your soul in the most spiritual frame, and most ready to speak with God. To these cleave and stick fast. If you will take care of your prayers, nothing shall go very wrong with your soul.

I offer these points for your private consideration. I do it in all humility. I know no one who needs to be reminded of them more than I do myself. But I believe them to be God's own truth, and I desire myself and all I love to feel them more.

I want the times we live in to be praying times. I want the Christians of our day to be praying Christians. I want the church to be a

praying church. My heart's desire and prayer in sending forth this tract is to promote a spirit of prayerfulness. I want those who never prayed yet, to arise and call upon God, and I want those who do pray, to see that they are not praying amiss.

John Charles Ryle (10 May 1816 – 10 June 1900) was an English evangelical Anglican bishop. He was the first Anglican bishop of Liverpool.

LTN - Chapter 9 - *Blocker - Pride*

mMlj Jesus said - “For from within, out of the hearts of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, sexual sins, murders, thefts, covetings, wickedness, deceit, lustful desires, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, and foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile the man.”

Jesus describes pride as evil with out any doubt. This learning LTN journey is meant to help me grow and learn what God wants us to do or not do. I have always thought being proud of something was okay and it meant that you had passion for it or for someone else. As you dive into the teachings Jesus teachings this topic is eye opening for me. If so, it doesn't matter whether it's pride of race, pride of family, pride of country, pride of faith or whether it's pride of grace. It doesn't matter whether it's pride of position or whether it's pride of ability, whether it's pride of appearance, whether it's pride of accomplishment, whether it's pride of righteousness, or holiness. To have a proud heart blocks our ability to LTN as especially the 1st commandment LTG.

Going back to a sermon I once heard it explains that pride comes out of the hearts of all humans and is as natural as breathing. This seems very true now that you think about it. So natural that it grows in our hearts like weeds in a garden or lawn. It cannot be destroyed but only controlled by custom treatment plan. Pride is hard to get rid. And no one has more pride than a person who thinks that they have none. You can hunt down pride in your life and think that you've killed it. But you're very thought of defeat over it is pride. Because of its perpetual changing it escapes captivity and full destruction. Pride is found in the prison and in the pulpit. Pride is found in the old and the young. Pride is found in the poor and in the rich. Pride is found in the ignorant and the educated. Pride is found in the weak and in the strong. Pride is found in the unbeliever and in the believer. The most amazing thing of pride is that it will grow and prosper on the very thing that ought to kill it.

If it's so prevalent and if it's so impossible to kill when why do we have deal with it? Because it must be dealt with and God actually hates it as described in the bible. No doubt it will keep us from fully embracing Christ and performing LTN. What I'm saying is

this pride though, difficult and impossible to stamp out completely must be dealt with every day by the believers because Let's examine some scriptures about pride.

Proverbs 6:16-18 - There are six things the LORD hates - no, seven things he detests:

- 1) A proud look
- 2) A lying tongue
- 3) Hands that shed innocent blood
- 4) An heart that plots wicked imaginations
- 5) Feet that be swift in running to mischief
- 6) A false witness that speaks lies
- 7) A person who sows discord in a family

Proverbs 16.5 - The LORD detests the proud; they will surely be punished.

Proverbs 16.18-17 - Pride goes before destruction, a haughty (mw-*having or showing an attitude of superiority and contempt for people or things perceived to be inferior*) spirit before a fall. Better to be lowly in spirit along with the oppressed than to share plunder (mw-*to take by force or wrongfully*) with the proud.

During research for this book I found an article “How to be a Humble Person: 20 Ways to Get Rid of Pride” by Cyril Abelloe (). I have incorporated this into the pride chapter along with Jesus quotes from mmlj that relate to her 20 ways that can help you do it..

1. Do Not Compare Yourself With Anyone Else - This is the usual culprit of pride—comparison. So that you will not think too good about yourself, avoid checking how you do by comparing your achievements and capabilities with other people.

“For the Kingdom of Heaven is like a man who was the master of a household, who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. When he had agreed with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. He went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace. He said to

them, You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you. So they went their way. Again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did likewise. About the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing idle. He said to them, Why do you stand here all day idle? They said to him, Because no one has hired us. He said to them, You also go into the vineyard, and you will receive whatever is right.”

“When evening had come, the lord of the vineyard said to his manager, Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning from the last to the first. When those who were hired at about the eleventh hour came, they each received a denarius. When the first came, they supposed that they would receive more; and they likewise each received a denarius. When they received it, they murmured against the master of the household, saying, These last have spent one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat! But he answered one of them, Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Didn’t you agree with me for a denarius? Take that which is yours, and go your way. It is my desire to give to this last just as much as to you. Isn’t it lawful for me to do what I want to with what I own? Or is your eye evil, because I am good? So the last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few are chosen.”

2. Do Not Compete Against Anyone - In connection with the first tip, do not aim to be better or higher than anyone else. This will affect how you treat others because everyone becomes a potential threat to you. If competition is an effective motivating force for you, then just compete with your past self so you will be determined to be better.

He came to Capernaum, and when he was in the house he asked them, “What were you arguing among yourselves on the way?” But they were silent, for they had disputed with one another on the way about who was the greatest. He sat down and called the twelve; and he said to them, “If any man wants to be first, he shall be last of all, and servant of all.” He took a little child and set him in the middle of them. Taking him in his arms, he said to them, “Whoever receives one such little child in my name receives me; and whoever receives me, doesn’t receive me, but him who sent me.”

John said to him, “Teacher, we saw someone who doesn’t follow us casting out demons in your name; and we forbade him, because he doesn’t follow us.” But Jesus said, “Don’t forbid him, for there is no one who will do a mighty work in my name and be able quickly to speak evil of me. For whoever is not against us is on our side. For whoever will give you a cup of water to drink in my name because you are Christ’s, most certainly I tell you, he will in no way lose his reward. “

3. Acknowledge The Strength Of Others - If someone does better than you in one area or another, then accept that truth and do not resent the person. Remember that there will always be someone greater than you so accepting this fact and being happy for those who stand out will save you from bitterness and poor social life.

Neither be called masters, for one is your master, the Christ. But he who is greatest among you will be your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted. “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows’ houses, and as a pretense you make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation.

4. Encourage Those Who Are Weaker Than You - If someone does not do well as you do, cheer that person up and sincerely encourage him/her. If you can, then be willing to help him/her to improve. Do not be afraid that s/he might exceed you.

“It is impossible that no occasions of stumbling should come, but woe to him through whom they come! It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, rather than that he should cause one of these little ones to stumble. Be careful. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him. If he repents, forgive him. If he sins against you seven times in the day, and seven times returns, saying, ‘I repent,’ you shall forgive him.”

5. Admit Your Mistakes - Whenever you have committed a mistake, be humble enough to admit it. Knowing when you are wrong and admitting it is a sign of maturity and wisdom. Moreover, only courageous people can do this.

He entered and was passing through Jericho. There was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector, and he was rich.

He was trying to see who Jesus was, and couldn't because of the crowd, because he was short. He ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was going to pass that way.

When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and saw him, and said to him, **"Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for today I must stay at your house."** He hurried, came down, and received him joyfully. When they saw it, they all murmured, saying, "He has gone in to lodge with a man who is a sinner." Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, half of my goods I give to the poor. If I have wrongfully exacted anything of anyone, I restore four times as much." Jesus said to him, **"Today, salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost."**

One of the criminals who was hanged insulted him, saying, "If you are the Christ, save yourself and us!" But the other answered, and rebuking him said, "Don't you even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong."

He said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when you come into your Kingdom." Jesus said to him, **"Assuredly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise."**

6. Be Willing To Apologize If You Have Done Wrong - It is not enough that you admit your mistake. You have to sincerely face the people you have hurt or done harm and apologize. Together with this, you need to accept open-heartedly whatever their response would be to your apology.

He said, **"A certain man had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, Father, give me my share of your property. So he divided his livelihood between them. Not many days after, the younger son gathered all of this together and traveled into a far country. There he wasted his property with riotous living. When he had spent all of it, there arose a severe famine in that country, and he began to be in need. He went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed pigs. He wanted to fill his belly with the pods that the pigs ate, but no one gave him any. But when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough to spare, and I'm dying with hunger! I will get up and go to my fa-**

ther, and will tell him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight. I am no more worthy to be called your son. Make me as one of your hired servants. He arose and came to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was moved with compassion, and ran, fell on his neck, and kissed him. The son said to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.”

“But the father said to his servants, Bring out the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let’s eat and celebrate; for this, my son, was dead and is alive again. He was lost and is found. Then they began to celebrate. Now his elder son was in the field. As he came near to the house, he heard music and dancing. He called one of the servants to him and asked what was going on. He said to him, Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and healthy. But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and begged him. But he answered his father, Behold, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed a commandment of yours, but you never gave me a goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this your son came, who has devoured your living with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him. He said to him, Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But it was appropriate to celebrate and be glad, for this, your brother, was dead, and is alive again. He was lost, and is found.”

7. Practice Sportsmanship - In competitions, it is normal that someone wins and someone loses. Prepare your heart for the truth that you cannot be the winner all the time—but that is part of improving your craft. In case you lose, stop crying foul but rather genuinely congratulate the winner.

“For there is no good tree that produces rotten fruit, nor again a rotten tree that produces good fruit. For each tree is known by its own fruit. For people don’t gather figs from thorns, nor do they gather grapes from a bramble bush. The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings out that which is good, and the evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings out that which is evil, for out of the abundance of the heart, his mouth speaks.”

8. Do Not Let Appreciation Get Into Your Head - Too many praises and appreciations could make your head grow big. To avoid this from happening, just treasure in your heart those appreciations you receive but do not meditate on them. Always evaluate yourself to make sure pride has not got into your head.

“It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.”

“Get behind me, Satan! For it is written, You shall worship the Lord your God, and you shall serve him only.”

“It has been said, You shall not tempt the Lord your God.”

9. Do Not Envy Others - Envy and jealousy can cause pride too. Since you want to prove you are better than the subject of your envy you tend to compare yourself with that person, highlight your advantages and his/her flaws.

“How hard it is for those who have riches to enter into God’s Kingdom! For it is easier for a camel to enter in through a needle’s eye than for a rich man to enter into God’s Kingdom.”

“The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is sound, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is evil, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You can’t serve both God and man.”

“Why do you see the speck of chaff that is in your brother’s eye, but don’t consider the beam that is in your own eye? Or how can you tell your brother, Brother, let me remove the speck of chaff that is in your eye, when you yourself don’t see the beam that is in your own eye? You hypocrite! First remove the beam from your own eye, and then you can see clearly to remove the speck of chaff that is in your brother’s eye.”

10. Be Content And Thankful For What You Have - This does not mean that you should not aim for greater things—you always have to persevere to achieve them. However, while you do not have them yet, be content and grateful for what you currently possess.

This will stop you from being envious of what others have, which could lead you to compete.

“Don’t lay up treasures for yourselves on the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consume, and where thieves don’t break through and steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

“The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is sound, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is evil, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! “No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You can’t serve both God and man. Therefore, I tell you, don’t be anxious for your life: what you will eat, or what you will drink; nor yet for your body, what you will wear. Isn’t life more than food, and the body more than clothing? See the birds of the sky, that they don’t sow, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns. Your heavenly Father feeds them. Aren’t you of much more value than they?”

“Which of you by being anxious, can add one moment to his life-span? Why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They don’t toil, neither do they spin, yet I tell you that even Solomon in all his glory was not dressed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today exists and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, won’t he much more clothe you, you of little faith?”

“Therefore, don’t be anxious, saying, ‘What will we eat?’, ‘What will we drink?’ or, ‘With what will we be clothed?’ For the Gentiles seek after all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first God’s Kingdom and his righteousness; and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore, don’t be anxious for tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Each day’s own evil is sufficient.”

11. Put Others Before Yourself - Another trait of being humble is being selfless—putting the needs and interests of others before yours—just do not overdo it so your kindness would not be abused.

“A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be like his teacher, and the servant like his lord.”

12. Do Not Demand Attention And Respect - Never demand special treatment, acknowledgment, or respect from others no matter what your position or credentials are. Like trust, respect is earned, and being unassuming is the first step to it. As the Bible says, do not exalt yourself because even God resists the proud.

“When you are invited by anyone to a wedding feast, don’t sit in the best seat, since perhaps someone more honorable than you might be invited by him, and he who invited both of you would come and tell you, Make room for this person. Then you would begin, with shame, to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place, so that when he who invited you comes, he may tell you, Friend, move up higher. Then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at the table with you.

For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.”

13. Treat Others Like How You Want To Be Treated - If you want to be respected, then you have to respect everyone else. If you want to be served, then you have to serve others too. Never think you deserve better treatment than how you treat others.

Then Peter came and said to him, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Until seven times?” Jesus said to him, “I don’t tell you until seven times, but, until seventy times seven. Therefore, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. When he had begun to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. But because he couldn’t pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, with his wife, his children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down and knelt before him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will repay you all! The lord of that servant, being moved with compassion, released him and forgave him the debt. But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him one hundred denarii, and he grabbed him and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me what you owe! So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will repay you! He would not, but went and cast him into prison until he

should pay back that which was due. So when his fellow servants saw what was done, they were exceedingly sorry, and came and told their lord all that was done. Then his lord called him in and said to him, You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. Shouldn't you also have had mercy on your fellow servant, even as I had mercy on you? His lord was angry, and delivered him to the tormentors until he should pay all that was due to him. So my heavenly Father will also do to you, if you don't each forgive your brother from your hearts for his misdeeds."

14. Serve Others - Do not wait to be served like you're royalty. Be willing to serve anyone, especially those who are less privileged than you. Even Jesus washed the feet of His disciples.

The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith." The Lord said, "If you had faith like a grain of mustard seed, you would tell this sycamore tree, Be uprooted and be planted in the sea, and it would obey you. But who is there among you, having a servant plowing or keeping sheep, that will say when he comes in from the field, Come immediately and sit down at the table? Wouldn't he rather tell him, Prepare my supper, clothe yourself properly, and serve me while I eat and drink. Afterward you shall eat and drink? Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded? I think not. Even so you also, when you have done all the things that are commanded you, say, We are unworthy servants. We have done our duty."

15. Do Not Think Highly Of Yourself - No matter how high your education level is or how much you have in the bank, never think that you are better or more important than anyone else. The more blessings you have received, the humbler you should be. Notice how the more fruits a tree branch has, the lower it bows.

"He who is without sin among you, let him throw the first stone at her."

"Beware of those scribes who like to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the marketplaces, the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts; who devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation."

“He looked up and saw the rich people who were putting their gifts into the treasury. He saw a certain poor widow casting in two small brass coins. He said, Truly I tell you, this poor widow put in more than all of them, for all these put in gifts for God from their abundance, but she, out of her poverty, put in all that she had to live on.”

16. Do Not Boast About Your Achievements - Moreover, stop flaunting your accomplishments and titles. Instead of impressing people you might annoy and disgust them.

“Two men went up into the temple to pray; one was a Pharisee, and the other was a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed by himself like this: God, I thank you that I am not like the rest of men: extortionists, unrighteous, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week. I give tithes of all that I get. But the tax collector, standing far away, wouldn’t even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, God, be merciful to me, a sinner! I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

17. Let Others Notice Your Strengths Or Positive Traits - Stop telling others how good you are at something. Let them discover that and appreciate you. What could be worse than boasting you are the best only to find out that the one you are talking to does better than you?

“Be careful that you don’t do your charitable giving before men, to be seen by them, or else you have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. Therefore, when you do merciful deeds, don’t sound a trumpet before yourself, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may get glory from men. Most certainly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you do merciful deeds, don’t let your left hand know what your right hand does, so that your merciful deeds may be in secret, then your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.”

18. Submit To The Authorities Set Above You - You have to respect and submit to authority figures like your parents, teachers, boss,

government officials, and spiritual leaders. Even if sometimes they seem wrong, you have to honor their authority because they have been appointed to be accountable for you.

“Therefore, I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men. Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age, or in that which is to come.”

19. Associate With Those Who Are Weaker Or ‘Lower’ Than You - Do not be an ‘untouchable’ to those considered ‘underdogs’. Being intimidating may seem cool (yeah, because you are cold) but if you want to be considered hot, then you need to be warm and approachable to people from all walks of life.

“When you make a dinner or a supper, don’t call your friends, nor your brothers, nor your kinsmen, nor rich neighbors, or perhaps they might also return the favor, and pay you back. But when you make a feast, ask the poor, the maimed, the lame, or the blind; and you will be blessed, because they don’t have the resources to repay you. For you will be repaid in the resurrection of the righteous.”

20. Always Thank Those Who Help Or Serve You, Even In Small Things - Gratitude is one of the best traits of a humble person. Thank everyone who does something helpful to you like the waiter who serves you or the guard who holds the door for you. Make “thank you” your favorite line.

“A certain lender had two debtors. The one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. When they couldn’t pay, he forgave them both. Which of them therefore will love him most?” Simon answered, “He, I suppose, to whom he forgave the most.” He said to him, “You have judged correctly.” Turning to the woman, he said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I entered into your house, and you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head. You gave me no kiss, but she, since the time I came in, has not ceased to kiss my feet. You didn’t anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But one to whom little is

forgiven, loves little.” He said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.” Those who sat at the table with him began to say to themselves, “Who is this who even forgives sins?” He said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.”

LTN - Chapter 10 - Blocker - Spite

Meriam-Webster defines Spite as "petty ill will or hatred with the disposition to irritate, annoy, or thwart".

dictionary.com defines Spite as "a malicious, usually petty, desire to harm, annoy, frustrate, or humiliate another person; bitter ill; malice".

Driving

I think driving a car is probably the most when I am tempted to do spiteful things to others. I saw in a recent internet article the top 10 annoying things other drivers do by cartalk.com. Take a look at the below list of a couple of these items from cartalk.com and truly answer have done any other these actions while driving and/or responded back to some other driver because they have done this.

- Texting or talking on a cell phone
- Driving too fast for road conditions
- Not cleaning snow off their cars
- Not signaling when turning or changing lanes, or leaving a signal on
- Leaving high beams on
- Faulty equipment
- Staying in the far left lane
- Not acknowledging making a mistake or overreacting to an honest mistake
- Dangerous loads improperly secured

It is so tempting to react in spite to that other driver who just did something to you how wrong they are by honking, tailgating, flashing headlights, etc. Driving in Houston highways is like being on a NASCAR race. Have you noticed NASCAR don't use turn signals. Same here. But now for ~95% of the time pray for that person and others impacted from that other driver to be safe in a sincere LTN way. The other 5% is usually performing a slight honk if they are texting not noticing the light is green (3 second rule) or driving all over the place/slow (wake up to others).

I try to envision that other driver as a person having a really bad day like the story Jesus told about the Samaritan helping the beaten man on the road. I also think to treat that other driver as my daughter, mother, grandmother or friend.

But the people who lash back in spite seems to get filled with anger and hurtful pride like that other person is cheating and ruining their day. If someone cuts you off and that is the worst thing that happens that day it is a blessing.

Another aspect I try to do is learn from flash spots where non-LTN type drivers like to do battle. Merging last minute or tailgating so close that everyone behind them have to react to their over pumping of the brakes. There is this one over pass going to work is a hot spot for this so I actually get off the highway the exit prior to the buildup and joyfully go down the frontage road and take a different overpass. Wow. This lack of dealign with this one hotspot of stress changes my whole day coming into work. Try to find your way around hot spots. I would rather take an extra 3 minutes and be relaxed. I also think I am also somewhat helping that hotspot by not being one extra car involved.

LTN - Chapter 11 - People are Different (Florida Georgia Line)

White collar, blue collar, hillbilly, high dollar
Hot head, pot head, non-believer, holy water
Big city, small town, y'all take a look around
People are different

Heavy metal, hip hop, steal toe, flip flops
Sip it slow, cold beer, hits you fast, whiskey shot
Accent North, South, good as gold, sailor mouth
People are different

Yeah, we all know it's true
But it don't mean that me and you

Can't walk down a street
And smile at a stranger
Heart on your sleeve
And love thy neighbor
No matter what shape
No matter what color
Break bread instead of fighting each other

Slip on a pair of another man's shoes
You'll see by the time you get back
This old world would be a whole lot better place
If we'd all just embraced the fact
That people are different
People are different

Left wing, right wing, jail house, freedom ring
Old school, new school, everything in-between
Like a snowflake no fingerprint's the same
And people are different

I wish that it was something that we all understood
Lord knows it'd do us all some good

To walk down a street
And smile at a stranger

Heart on your sleeve
And love thy neighbor
No matter what shape
No matter what color
Break bread instead of fighting each other

Slip on a pair of another man's shoes
You'll see by the time you get back
This old world would be a whole lot better place
If we'd all just embraced the fact
That people are different
Yeah, people are different

You can turn on the TV
Change the channel if you don't like what you see
You can get your money back if it ain't your size
You can throw it in the trash if you don't like it
But listen, people are different

So walk down a street
And smile at a stranger
Heart on your sleeve
And love thy neighbor
No matter what shape
No matter what color
Break bread instead of fighting each other

Slip on a pair of another man's shoes
You'll see by the time you get back
This old world would be a whole lot better place
If we'd all just embraced the fact
That people are different
People are different
People are different
Whoa, yeah

LTN - Chapter 12 - Eternal Life

I have to tell this that both Heaven and Hell are forms eternal life. There is no escaping eternal life one way or another. This is a fundamental aspect that God not humans control life after this body.

Now, we either take the Word of God or we throw it all out the window. There's nothing hard to understand about that. "A man can receive nothing except it be given him from above." That's what God's Word says.

The God of love and mercy, is also a God of justice. He will surely reward or punish. The flood in Noah's day, and the burning of Sodom, were meant to show us what He will one day do. No lips have ever spoken so clearly about hell as those of Christ Himself. Hardened sinners will find out, to their cost, that there is such a thing as the "wrath of the Lamb."

Jesus teaches about the reality of future punishment after death. Two strong expressions are used by our Lord. He spoke of being "cast into everlasting fire." He speaks of being "cast into hell fire."

I am trying to scare you to believe in Jesus and accept him as your savior. My heart always yearns for a way to allow the quicken to happen from the holy spirit so in truth I somehow do want you to open a thought that could lead to better places. But just like mask wearing trying to keep covid away from yourself my intent is not to trick someone to Jesus. If he calls your heart you will be awakened. Just don't be the fool who delays and states tomorrow I will read the gospel (mmlj) or behave like a christian. This very moment needs to be timing. Do I want to go to heaven of course.

In some ways I feel this earthly voyage we are now on might be a form of hell why else would God the father send his son into this world as a human. Maybe this is our second or another chance in our spiritual way to obtain heaven we missed out before. Either way I need Jesus and love him and thank him for coming into this world to save his sheep. So much Godly things we know hardly anything about. We are just mere humans. Love you Jesus.

Jesus Raises the Dead - John 11 - Lazarus

Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus from Bethany, of the village of Mary and her sister, Martha. It was that Mary who had anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus, was sick. The sisters therefore sent to him, saying, "Lord, behold, he for whom you have great affection is sick." But when Jesus heard it, he said, "This sickness is not to death, but for the glory of God, that God's Son may be glorified by it." Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. When therefore he heard that he was sick, he stayed two days in the place where he was. Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let's go into Judea again."

The disciples asked him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just trying to stone you. Are you going there again?" Jesus answered, "Aren't there twelve hours of daylight? If a man walks in the day, he doesn't stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if a man walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light isn't in him." He said these things, and after that, he said to them, "Our friend Lazarus, has fallen asleep, but I am going so that I may awake him out of sleep." The disciples therefore said, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover." Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that he spoke of taking rest in sleep. So Jesus said to them plainly then, "Lazarus is dead.

I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, so that you may believe. Nevertheless, let's go to him." Thomas therefore, who is called Didymus, said to his fellow disciples, "Let's also go, that we may die with him."

So when Jesus came, he found that he had been in the tomb four days already. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about fifteen stadia away. Many of the Jews had joined the women around Martha and Mary, to console them concerning their brother. Then when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary stayed in the house. Therefore Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you would have been here, my brother wouldn't have died. Even now I know that whatever you ask of God, God will give you."

Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will still live, even

if he dies. Whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" She said to him, "Yes, Lord. I have come to believe that you are the Christ, God's Son, he who comes into the world." When she had said this, she went away and called Mary, her sister, secretly, saying, "The Teacher is here and is calling you."

When she heard this, she arose quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was in the place where Martha met him. Then the Jews who were with her in the house and were consoling her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up quickly and went out, followed her, saying, "She is going to the tomb to weep there."

Therefore when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying to him, "Lord, if you would have been here, my brother wouldn't have died." When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews weeping who came with her, he groaned in the spirit and was troubled, and said, "Where have you laid him?"

They told him, "Lord, come and see." Jesus wept. The Jews therefore said, "See how much affection he had for him!" Some of them said, "Couldn't this man, who opened the eyes of him who was blind, have also kept this man from dying?" Jesus therefore, again groaning in himself, came to the tomb.

Now it was a cave, and a stone lay against it. Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to him, "Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been dead four days." Jesus said to her, "Didn't I tell you that if you believed, you would see God's glory?"

So they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying. Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you that you listened to me. I know that you always listen to me, but because of the multitude standing around I said this, that they may believe that you sent me." When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" He who was dead came out, bound hand and foot with wrappings, and his face was wrapped around with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Free him, and let him go."

Jesus Groaned in the spirit as was troubled

After ready this miracle of Jesus raising his dead friend from 4 days laying in the grave the aspects that most catches my heart is that Jesus grounded and was troubled. Thank you Jesus for your patience with us humans. There is no doubt in my mind that Jesus can do anything. Anything.... But to be so sinlessly focused of the fathers instructions instead of being boastful or proud. Just like Jesus was with Peter who denied him 3 times before the roaster crowing. Just like many other times.

Grow with Bible Reading different Translations

Just like we don't speak the same as back 100 years, 300 years and 2,000 ago bible translations matter. Explore various when you run into a question such as why does the Father's house have many mansions? Knowledge of God comes from reading the Bible not just attending couple of hours of Sunday school and mass. I would argue that hours spent reading at home vs. at church benefit a person more. Fellowship is important but don't not read the Bible assuming church is enough. Download your churches sermon and listen on the way to work or at night instead of watching TV falling asleep.

New Living Translation (1996) - John 14-1:4

“Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me. There is more than enough room in my Father's home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am. And you know the way to where I am going.”

King James Translation (Year 1611) - John 14-1:4

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.

LTN - Chapter 13 - Peace on Earth for Humans

KJK - Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

NLT - “Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased.”

When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, “Let’s go to Bethlehem! Let’s see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.” They hurried to the village and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in the manger. After seeing him, the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child. All who heard the shepherds’ story were astonished, but Mary kept all these things in her heart and thought about them often. The shepherds went back to their flocks, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. It was just as the angel had told them.

This moment in time when Jesus was born was the most important gift from God to mankind ever. It allowed for the potential for human sins to be forgiven for Jesus was our proxy dealing with God the father/creator. As promised over the thousands of years prior the Christ was born of a virgin. This is not just the reason for the season (Christmas) but the greatest gift a person can ever have. By Jesus living a perfect sinless life for which Adam and all that followed failed to accomplished to please God.

Such great mysteries are God ways for which will humans will never barely to understand while on this planet. God is sovereign.

LTN - Chapter 14 - Blocker - Sin

Wikipedia states Sin in a religious context, sin is a transgression against divine law. Each culture has its own interpretation of what it means to commit a sin. While sins are generally considered actions, any thought, word, or act considered immoral, selfish, shameful, harmful, or alienating might be termed “sinful”.

Human sin is the only reason Jesus came into the world born of a woman and had to sacrifice himself for his selected humans. There are many Godly aspects such as whom are his selected humans Jesus died for. This selected humans is one of many aspects of Jesus teachings we will need to belief but not understand. That is why he is God. This would be a LTN blocker if we don't take God at his word this time and always. God doesn't make mistakes.... Ever.

We are going to explore the teachings in the Bible about sin and post this chapter I am hoping to understand more.

The first important simple question is whether you believe in God (sinning) or not. Secondly, if you do believe in God (sinning) the what makes you care about sinning? Third, if you do believe in God and we are sinners than what do we do about it?

Jesus answered them **”If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have had sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. He who hates me, hates my Father also. If I hadn't done among them the works which no one else did, they wouldn't have had sin. But now they have seen and also hated both me and my Father. But this happened so that the word may be fulfilled which was written in their law, They hated me without a cause.”**

Jesus continued, **“You are from below; I am from above. You belong to this world; I do not. That is why I said that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I Am who I claim to be, you will die in your sins.”**“Who are you?” they demanded. Jesus replied, **“The one I have always claimed to be I have much to say about you and much to condemn, but I won't. For I say only what I have heard from the one who sent me, and he is completely truthful.”** But they still didn't understand that he was talking about his Father. So Jesus said, **“When you have lifted up the Son of Man on**

the cross, then you will understand that I Am he I do nothing on my own but say only what the Father taught me. And the one who sent me is with me—he has not deserted me. For I always do what pleases him.” Then many who heard him say these things believed in him.

Using the first mentioned approach the first time the word sin is mentioned within the Bible is Genesis 4. “The LORD accepted Abel and his gift, but he did not accept Cain and his gift. This made Cain very angry, and he looked dejected. “Why are you so angry?” the LORD asked Cain. “Why do you look so dejected? You will be accepted if you do what is right. But if you refuse to do what is right, then watch out! Sin is crouching at the door, eager to control you. But you must subdue it and be its master.” We all know what happened next Cain killed his brother Abel.”

Genesis is the documenting of how God created the earth, Adam and Eve, first sin, first murder, Noah, the great flood, Abram turning into Abraham, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Issac, Jacob, Joseph, Jacob blesses the Egyptian Pharaoh, Israel and twelve sons. During this whole time God is directing and blessings his selected humans along in events that will eventually end up with Jesus birth from a virgin. Punishing sin for those who don't repent or perform sacrificial ceremonies.

After Genesis is the book of Exodus for which God was to recover his selected people from Egypt. The once upon blessed prior Egyptian Pharaoh which took Joseph from slave to leader was long ago. The initial 70 people in Joseph family turned into +1 million people some 430 years when God called upon Moses recover his Jewish people and Pharaoh now considers them his slaves. After God hardened the heart of that Pharaoh to not let his people go he performed great acts to Egypt. Such as the river turned to blood, plague of frogs, gnats, flies, livestock (only for non-Israelites), festering boils, hail storm, locusts, causing darkness for 3 days (only for non Israelites) and finally ending with the death of firstborn children. The miracles were essential for the Jews as well because they had humbled the Pharaoh to allow them to leave with Moses to the promised land.

So where I am going with this history is that it wasn't really until away from Egypt when God gave his people the specific 10 commandments in Exodus 20. This essentially was the birth of documented sin directly from Gods hand. Prior to this moment it

seems like humans were not ready or mature enough to get to know of the true God.

These are the 10 commandment instructions:

- I am the LORD your God, who rescued you from the land of Egypt, the place of your slavery. You must not have any other god but me. You must not make for yourself an idol of any kind or an image of anything in the heavens or on the earth or in the sea. You must not bow down to them or worship them, for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God who will not tolerate your affection for any other gods. I lay the sins of the parents upon their children; the entire family is affected—even children in the third and fourth generations of those who reject me. But I lavish unfailing love for a thousand generations on those who love me and obey my commands.
- You must not misuse the name of the LORD your God. The LORD will not let you go unpunished if you misuse his name.
- Remember to observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. You have six days each week for your ordinary work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath day of rest dedicated to the LORD your God. On that day no one in your household may do any work. This includes you, your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, your livestock, and any foreigners living among you. For in six days the LORD made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and everything in them; but on the seventh day he rested. That is why the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and set it apart as holy.
- Honor your father and mother. Then you will live a long, full life in the land the LORD your God is giving you.
- You must not murder.
- You must not commit adultery.
- You must not steal.
- You must not testify falsely against your neighbor.
- You must not covet your neighbor's house.
- You must not covet your neighbor's wife, male or female servant, ox or donkey, or anything else that belongs to your neighbor."

When the people heard the thunder and the loud blast of the ram's horn, and when they saw the flashes of lightning and the smoke billowing from the mountain, they stood at a distance, trembling with fear.

That is what I call Holy. Remember that God is God and we must LTG in a way above all other kinds of love. Like greek agape love as an unconditional love that transcends and persists regardless of circumstance.

For the next +1,400 years the Jewish people created 613 commandments include "positive commandments", to perform an act, and "negative commandments", to abstain from certain acts. The negative commandments number 365, which coincides with the number of days in the solar year, and the positive commandments number 248, a number ascribed to the number of bones and main organs in the human body. According to one standard reckoning there are only 77 positive and 194 negative commandments that can be observed today, of which there are 26 commands that apply only within the Land of Israel. Wow. Complicated.

So in turn this was complicated way of

Jesus answered them “You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and these are they which testify about me. Yet you will not come to me, that you may have life. I don't receive glory from men. But I know you, that you don't have God's love in yourselves. I have come in my Father's name, and you don't receive me. If another comes in his own name, you will receive him. How can you believe, who receive glory from one another, and you don't seek the glory that comes from the only God? “Don't think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you, even Moses, on whom you have set your hope. For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote about me. But if you don't believe his writings, how will you believe my words?”

Jesus was straight forward from where and why he came to this earth. To fulfill the will of the God father.

Do you believe in God? Sins are making mistakes against God's will and teachings. For the people whom don't believe in God there is no sin occurring and such no need for Jesus. Maybe they only believe in human right or wrong.

Let's say your asked to give sworn testimony or file a signed tax return but don't tell the truth and now you have committed per-

jury. Is perjury a “sin”? Based upon Wikipedia it is not but perjury is not used in a religious context but only a civil. But if you believe in God it is a sin to the people impacted and God as well. Sin is one of the most wrongfully used words because it relates to God and humans.

Jesus teaches us “If your brother sins against you, go, show him his fault between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained back your brother. But if he doesn’t listen, take one or two more with you, that at the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the assembly. If he refuses to hear the assembly also, let him be to you as a Gentile or a tax collector. Most certainly I tell you, whatever things you bind on earth will have been bound in heaven, and whatever things you release on earth will have been released in heaven. Again, assuredly I tell you, that if two of you will agree on earth concerning anything that they will ask, it will be done for them by my Father who is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the middle of them.” Then Peter came and said to him, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Until seven times?” Jesus said to him, “I don’t tell you until seven times, but, until seventy times seven.”

I am noting from Jesus teachings we are to forgive as many times as required if forgiveness is asked of us. But he also teaches us that if that person refuses to hear or listen (doesn’t ask to be forgiven) then treat them as a gentile or a tax collector. What is a gentile? Gentile in the context of his teaching was a person who is not Jewish (non-believer). What is a tax collector? Again back in the context of this period the tax collector represented a government official that was corrupt and powerful to impose their evil on Jewish (non-believer) people.

What we now see that some people have a natural helplessness and inability to repent or believe or ask for forgiveness. We find our Lord saying "No man can come unto me, except the Father who has sent me draws him."

Until the Father draws the heart of man by His grace, man will not believe. This is a sign of being one of the selected or not. The truth contained in these words is one that needs careful weighing. It is vain to deny that without the grace of God no one ever can become a true Christian. We are spiritually dead, and have no

power to give ourselves life. We need a new principle put in us from above.

But after all, of what does this inability of mankind consist? In what part of our inward nature does this impotence reside? Here is a point on which many mistakes arise. Forever let us remember that the will of humans is the part of him which is in fault. Their inability is not physical, but moral. It would not be true to say that a human has a real wish and desire to come to Christ, but no power to come. It would be far more true to say that a human has no power to come because they have no desire or wish. It is not true that they would come if he could. It is true that they could come if they would. The corrupt will—the secret disinclination—the lack of heart, are the real causes of unbelief. It is here the mischief lies. The power that we lack is a new will. It is precisely at this point that we need the "drawing" of the Father.

These things, no doubt, are deep and mysterious. By truths like these God proves the faith and patience of His people. Can they believe Him? Can they wait for a fuller explanation at the last day? What they see not now they shall see hereafter. One thing at any rate is abundantly clear, and that is—human's responsibility for their own soul. Their inability to come to Christ does not make an end of his accountableness. Both things are equally true. If lost at last, it will prove to have been their own fault. Their blood will be on their own head.

Christ would have saved them, but they would not be saved. They would not come to Christ, that they might have life. The quickening from the Holy Spirit. The spiritual rebirth.

John 9 - As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth. "Rabbi," his disciples asked him, "why was this man born blind? Was it because of his own sins or his parents' sins?" **"It was not because of his sins or his parents' sins,"** Jesus answered. **"This happened so the power of God could be seen in him. We must quickly carry out the tasks assigned us by the one who sent us."** **The night is coming, and then no one can work. But while I am here in the world, I am the light of the world.** Then he spit on the ground, made mud with the saliva, and spread the mud over the blind man's eyes. He told him, **"Go wash yourself in the pool of Siloam"** (Siloam means "sent"). So the man went and washed and came back seeing!

Jesus teaches us “The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is sound, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is evil, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You can’t serve both God and man.”

They asked Jesus “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?” When Jesus heard it, he said to them, “Those who are healthy have no need for a physician, but those who are sick do. But you go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,’ for I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

Ways to Succeed - Romans 8 - Sin Doesn't Control You Anymore

So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death. The law of Moses was unable to save us because of the weakness of our sinful nature. So God did what the law could not do. He sent his own Son in a body like the bodies we sinners have. And in that body God declared an end to sin's control over us by giving his Son as a sacrifice for our sins. He did this so that the just requirement of the law would be fully satisfied for us, who no longer follow our sinful nature but instead follow the Spirit.

Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit. So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace. For the sinful nature is always hostile to God. It never did obey God's laws, and it never will. That's why those who are still under the control of their sinful nature can never please God.

But you are not controlled by your sinful nature. You are controlled by the Spirit if you have the Spirit of God living in you. (And remember that those who do not have the Spirit of Christ living in them do not belong to him at all.) And Christ lives within you, so even though your body will die because of sin, the Spirit

gives you life because you have been made right with God. The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you.

Therefore, dear brothers and sisters you have no obligation to do what your sinful nature urges you to do. For if you live by its dictates, you will die. But if through the power of the Spirit you put to death the deeds of your sinful nature you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.

So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, "Abba, Father." For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God's children. And since we are his children, we are his heirs. In fact, together with Christ we are heirs of God's glory. But if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering.

What is more important asking God to forgive your sins even if it follows a certain religion customary procedure or method. I want to keep the LTN openness always must shed the bias of only one way to do something correct self-righteous way. Humans/neighbors (expect Jesus which is God) are made God like but are not Gods and can never understand Gods ways.

It would be easy for me to list certain religions and criticize them on their method towards dealing with sin but this is not my intent here. Jesus in MMLJ teaches the whole reason to come in human form was follow the God the father requirements so we can be forgiven of sin and have him as our intermediary. To keep LTG and LTN we must learn ways deal with sin, asking and pleading for forgiveness from God.

God already knows our sins. Judgement day will recall of those. Confession of these sins are made directly to God and not through humans; the only exception is when confessing to a person is a required step in recompensing for the damages done. It is taught that sins are to be kept to oneself to seek individual forgiveness from God.

LTN - Chapter 15 - Blocker - Thanatophobia (fear of death)

Then Jesus said to his disciples, “If anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, and whoever will lose his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life? Or what will a man give in exchange for his life? For the Son of Man will come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then he will render to everyone according to his deeds. Most certainly I tell you, there are some standing here who will in no way taste of death until they see the Son of Man coming in his Kingdom.”

Then the Jews said to him, “Now we know that you have a demon. Abraham died, as did the prophets; and you say, ‘If a man keeps my word, he will never taste of death.’”

Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will not be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. But I told you that you have seen me, and yet you don’t believe. All those whom the Father gives me will come to me. He who comes to me I will in no way throw out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. This is the will of my Father who sent me, that of all he has given to me I should lose nothing, but should raise him up at the last day. This is the will of the one who sent me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”

Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will still live, even if he dies. Whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?”

God works in mysterious way no doubt. Thanatophobia is a real issue especially for the non-believers in Jesus. It is a sign that faith in Jesus is not likely existent or acceptance of Gods sovereignty . Existential death anxiety stems from the basic knowledge that human life must end. One theorist states that religiosity can play a role in death anxiety through the concept of fear. There are two major claims concerning the interplay of fear and religion: that fear motivates religious belief, and that religious belief mitigates fear. Fear of death is a real an LTN blocker is this fear.

What country lives the longest? Monaco has a best life expectancy at birth of 89.4 years, the USA is ranked 54th at 78.8 years and lastly the worst is the country Chad with 50.6 years. Should you move to a country to have longer life expectancy?

What are the odds that I'll die today? Some smart person calculated on Quora if you're 20 it's 1 in 1.1 million; if you're 40 it's 1 in 310,000; if you're 60 it's 1 in 57,000 and if you're 80 it's 1 in 7,800. I don't think we change getting older so I guess we will have to live with this aspect.

For the US odds of death are below from selected cause:

- Heart Disease - 1 in 6
- Cancer - 1 in 7
- All preventable causes of death - 1 in 21
- Opioid Overdose - 1 in 28
- Motor-vehicle crash - 1 in 101
- Gun assault - 1 in 221
- Dying from Covid - 1 in 336
- Drowning - 1 in 2,024
- Choking on Food - 1 in 2,745

Of course we change our habits or life style likely live longer but the fact is that we all must die sooner or later. In Genesis 6:3 after the great flood the lord stated [“My Spirit will not put up with humans for such a long time, for they are only mortal flesh. In the future, their normal lifespan will be no more than 120 years.”](#)

Wikipedia shows the worlds known living person was a woman named Kane Tanaka from Japan that lived 119 years and 76 days. For myself I am believing the Bible guidances written about 3,500 years ago.

So by now I think we all now know sooner or later we will die. Does this mean you should you probably have some time to not worry about dying and committing to LNG/LTG. I hope not for

your sake but my purpose of discussing this is that one should realize the fear of dying is likely from an inner voice that something is wrong with my life. And don't get me wrong some fears don't mean you don't believe in God or Jesus. For example, I am afraid of heights and roller coasters type rides. I don't get it but I am okay flying in airplanes sitting next to the window until it hits some turbulence. I think I have more of a vertigo thing going which is more than just a fear of heights things going. But either we all have fears it is part being human.

What I am worried about is fear shouldn't drive you to Jesus. I believe it is possible to seek Christ in vain. Jesus says to the unbelieving Jews, "You shall seek Me, and shall die in your sins." He meant, by these words, that the Jews would one day seek Him in vain.

The lesson before us is a very painful one. That such a Savior as the Lord Jesus, so full of love, so willing to save, should ever be sought "in vain," is a sorrowful thought. Yet so it is! A person may have many religious feelings about Christ, without any saving religion. Sickness, sudden affliction, the fear of death, the failure of usual sources of comfort—all these causes may draw out of a person a good deal of "religiousness." Under the immediate pressure of these they may say prayers fervently, exhibit a strong spiritual feelings, and profess for a season to "seek Christ," and be a different person. And yet all this time his heart may never be touched at all! Take away the peculiar circumstances that affected him, and he may possibly return at once to his old ways. He sought Christ "in vain," because he sought Him from false motives, and not with his whole heart.

Unhappily this is not all. There is such a thing as a settled habit of resisting light and knowledge, until we seek Christ "in vain." Scripture and experience alike prove that people may reject God until God rejects them, and will not hear their prayer. They may go on stifling their convictions, quenching the light of conscience, fighting against their own better knowledge, until God is provoked to give them over and let them alone. It is not for nothing that these words are written—"Then shall they call upon Me, but I will not answer; they shall seek Me early, but they shall not find Me—for they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord." (Proverbs) Such cases may not be common; but they are possible especially people that have been visited people on their deathbeds who seem to seek Christ, and sadly they seek in vain. For the wrong reasons.

There is no safety but in seeking Christ while He may be found, and calling on Him while He is near—seeking Him with a true heart, and calling on Him with an honest spirit. Such seeking, we may be very sure, is never in vain. It will never be recorded of such seekers, that they "died in their sins."

We learn for another thing, how wide is the difference between Christ and the ungodly. Our Lord says to the unbelieving Jews "You are from beneath, I am from above—you are of this world, I am not of this world."

These words, no doubt, have a special application to our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. In the highest and most literal sense, there never was but One who could truly say, "I am from above—I am not of this world." That One is He who came forth from the Father, and was before the world— even the Son of God.

But there is a lower sense, in which these words are applicable to all Christ's living members. Compared to the thoughtless multitude around them, they are "from above," and "not of this world," like their Master. The thoughts of the ungodly are about things beneath; the true Christian's affections are set on things above. The ungodly person is full of this world; its cares, and pleasures, and profits, absorb his whole attention. The true Christian, though in the world, is not of it; his citizenship is in heaven, and his best things are yet to come.

The true Christian will do well never to forget this line of demarcation. If they love his soul, and desires to serve God, he must be content to find himself separated from many around them by a gulf that cannot be passed. They may not like to seem peculiar and unlike others; but it is the certain consequence of grace reigning within them. They may find it brings them hatred, ridicule, and hard speeches; but it is the cup which his Master drank, and of which his Master forewarned all His disciples. "If you were of the world the world would love His own, but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you."

We learn, lastly, how dreadful is the end to which unbelief can bring a person. Our Lord says to his enemies, "If you believe not that I am He, you shall die in your sins." These powerful words are invested with holy when we consider from whose lips they came. Who is this that speaks of men dying "in their sins," unpar-

doned, unforgiven, unfit to meet God—of people going into another world with all their sins upon them? He that says this is no other than the Savior of mankind, who laid down His life for His sheep—the loving, gracious, merciful, compassionate Friend of sinners. It is Christ Himself! Let this simple fact not be overlooked.

They are greatly mistaken who suppose that it is harsh and unkind to speak of hell and future punishment. How can such people get over such language as that which is before us? How can they account for many a like expression which our Lord used, and specially for such passages as those in which He speaks of the **"worm that dies not, and the fire that is not quenched"**? They cannot answer these questions. Misled by a false charity and a morbid amiability, they are condemning the plain teaching of the Scripture, and are wise above that which is written.

Let us settle it in our minds, as one of the great foundation truths of our faith, that there is a hell. Just as we believe firmly that there is an eternal heaven for the godly, so let us believe firmly that there is an eternal hell for the wicked.

Let us never forget that unbelief is the special sin that ruins men's souls. Had the Jews believed on our Lord, all manner of sin and blasphemy might have been forgiven them. But unbelief blocks the door in mercy's face, and cuts off hope. Let us watch and pray hard against it. One of the strongest sayings ever used by our Lord was this **"He that believes not shall be damned."**

Finally, why do you suppose fearing of death happens. For those who fear for their lives I see hope and opportunity for us believers to witness to them. Perhaps they have never heard of Jesus or read the gospel. We are to interface with them in the LTN way not in judging them. Jesus will be the judger of all humankind not for us to judge.

Like those wearing covid masks for the sake of fearing death not because they are sick. Riding in the car alone with their windows up wearing a mask hoping for an extra layer of avoiding death. I propose we instead wear these mask not in vain because if we are sick with covid we should be staying home protecting others of your infection. Instead take those masks off and open those car windows to witness you are not afraid of death. Let you light shine with a smile and a kind look on those who fear death. Pray for them in both that they gain the saving grace of Jesus and for their health. Only by physical death can we go to heaven.

Jesus teaches us “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God. Blessed are those who have been persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.”

“Blessed are you when people reproach you, persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven. For that is how they persecuted the prophets who were before you. “You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt has lost its flavor, with what will it be salted? It is then good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under the feet of men.”

“You are the light of the world. A city located on a hill can’t be hidden. Neither do you light a lamp and put it under a measuring basket, but on a stand; and it shines to all who are in the house. Even so, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”

LTN - Chapter 16 - Blocker - False Teachings

This chapter explores a difficult topic for which many of the readers will be offended but I am compelled by God to try to explain how man made non-gospel false teaching and beliefs prevent us Christians from fully observing the #1 and #2 commandments. At the end of this chapter I challenge you to think what basis Jesus might examines us on judgment day. Getting baptized or loving thy neighbor? Reading your horoscope or loving thy neighbor? Giving tidings or loving thy neighbor? Promoting mankind made rules and regulations or loving thy neighbor?

Jesus states "But when the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. Before him all the nations will be gathered, and he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the King will tell those on his right hand, 'Come, blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger and you took me in. I was naked and you clothed me. I was sick and you visited me. I was in prison and you came to me.' "Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you a drink? When did we see you as a stranger and take you in, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and come to you?' "The King will answer them, 'Most certainly I tell you, because you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.' Then he will say also to those on the left hand, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry, and you didn't give me food to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and you didn't take me in; naked, and you didn't clothe me; sick, and in prison, and you didn't visit me.' "Then they will also answer, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and didn't help you?' "Then he will answer them, saying, 'Most certainly I tell you, because you didn't do it to one of the least of these, you didn't do it to me.' These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

In 1973 Lawrence and Alice Parker went the church one Sunday morning with their 11 year old son, Wesley Parker, Wesley was diabetic, kept alive like thousands of others in our country by the miracle drug insulin. When the visiting preacher at the climax of the Sunday morning service invited people to come forward to be prayed for and to be healed. The Parkers took their son Wesley to the front of the church, the preacher ladies, hands on the boy and prayed publicly for him and then announced to the congregation, his belief that God had healed Wesley. Lawrence and Alice Parker went home rejoicing in faith that their son had been healed. The Parkers were not lukewarm believers and wanted to trust God alone without reservation. So they withheld the insulin from Westland. Believing that God had healed him. As the preacher told him, three days later, Wesley fell into a coma and died.



Maybe the Parkers were poor simple-minded people, but they listened to the preacher and they believe what he said. Even their pastor was quoted saying our church never meant to encourage people to gamble that much on their faith.

Jesus teaches us **“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves. By their fruits you will know them. Do you gather grapes from thorns or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree produces good fruit, but the corrupt tree produces evil fruit. A good tree can’t produce evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree produce good fruit. Every tree that doesn’t grow good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore, by their fruits you will know them.”**

There have been and will always be false preachers and false ministers who depart from the doctrine of Christ. The new Testament is full of warnings to the churches and to people who listen to preachers about false ministers, prophets and preachers. The Parkers were victims of false theology, bad theology can kill, it killed their son Wesley.

False preachers and bad ministers don't just only kill physically but will kill you spiritually. A bad preacher, a false prophet can murder your soul, not just your body. Do you feel sorry for Wesley. I feel sorry for

everybody naive and simple minded, trusting, listening to liars who represent God.

If you support these false efforts, you are sharing of their evil deeds. That's what the scriptures say. If you, if you support a false preacher, if you sit under the ministry of a false teachings and make their ministry possible or bless them or encourage them in their terrible errors you need to get away from them. This minister and group that did that to the Parkers is not to be pitied but to be blamed. A minister of the gospel is not going to make a statement like I never expected people to gamble that much on their faith. I'm telling you this. If we preach Christ, you can trust him completely. If we preach redemption by the blood, you can rest your soul welfare refuge. Hope completely.

When that minister invited his members to come up and be healed by him or other members putting hands on them it is false ministry. They are not Jesus whom healed the sick, deaf and blind. Who gave this minister authority to heal? This is no different than a doctor treating someone for cancer knowing the treatment has an 1% chance of working but telling the patient they will be healed. False wordy promises will lead you away from Jesus #1 and #2 commandments.

I pray you don't ever but your faith for anything from a minister who promotes miracles or riches but only in God's will. In Wesley's case God has given him a burden of a sickness. In turn, false ministries will try to pull in the sick, weak, poor and unhappy to give them false hope in a miracle instead of accepting the burden God has placed on them. It is not wrong to pray with others for a person to be healed but only if it's God's will. God doesn't make mistakes and these burdens are given to you for God's will and purpose.

Most people are naive to think that Satan is only bad. That Satan only operates in the realm of the immoral and the evil, but that's false. Satan doesn't care whether you are a monk or a murderer, just so you don't know God, he's a crafty, subtle conniving liar. Christ said, he's a liar. He doesn't have a reputation to defend and uphold. He doesn't have a character of holiness to uphold. He is a shifty, subtle crafty liar. He doesn't care whether you are a preacher or whether you're a prisoner, just so you don't know Christ. As long as you don't know, the Lord he'll promote good or he'll promote evil. He will propose, promote immorality or he'll promote human righteousness. He will promote anything to accomplish his hand, whatever it takes to reach you, you promote every-

thing but Christ. Let me show you a few verses about that here that I just read.

Satan tempted Christ quoting the scripture. Jesus told satan **““Again, it is written, ‘You shall not test the Lord, your God.’” and “Get behind me, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and you shall serve him only.’ ”** When he tempted Adam and Eve to take the forbidden fruit, he proposed to them you will be like God, go ahead and take this fruit and eat it. He didn't tell them you'll be blinded and shamed and guilty and falling from God if you eat this fruit. He said, don't you want to be like God, yeah, we'll take that fruit and eat it. And you know what? God knows that. You'll be like, God, he use any and all methods to get you to sin. It doesn't matter to him. He's a liar. Jesus said in the father of liars.

Here's another way of a false preacher. They are not what they claim to be. False ministries almost invariably add content to the scriptures. The Bible is not enough. They've got to have a little more than the scripture. In other words, they got to have a book of Mormon to go along with the Bible or a Watchtower magazine (Jehovah's Witnesses) to go along with a Bible or a science and health with keys to the scripture, to go along with the Bible or catechism or creed or confession of faith or something for you to use in addition to the Bible, The Bible alone is not sufficient for them. It happens slowly and soon thereafter you don't realize but most the emphasized aspects of these ministries are not in the Bible but are human made adders.

This is why bringing these things forward to you are so difficult but necessary. I know Jesus taught us **“Every plant which my heavenly Father didn't plant will be uprooted. Leave them alone. They are blind guides of the blind. If the blind guide the blind, both will fall into a pit.”** I don't want anyone to fall into that pit but seek the son of God Jesus alone.

Most of the time these will introduce you to other writings, traditions and teachings to support their claim that more is needed or better. An example of this is for Catholics, they state:

The Sacrament of Baptism is steeped in history, dating back to the time of Jesus, when He was baptized by John the Baptist. This richly symbolic sacrament is one of the most important sacraments because without first receiving it, we cannot receive any of the six other sacraments. The word baptism comes from the Greek word, baptize, which means “to plunge” or

“immerse.” The water that’s poured onto our heads at baptism symbolizes the washing away of original sin. The act not only symbolizes our purification, but it also marks our rebirth or renewal. In the words of Pope Francis, baptism “gives us new birth in Christ, makes us sharers in the mystery of his death and resurrection, grants the forgiveness of sin and brings us new freedom as God’s children and members of his Church.” In a nutshell: baptism gives us salvation, granting us eternal life with God.

This baptism of babies as first steps is also done by Eastern and Oriental Orthodoxes, Protestants including: Anglicans, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Congregationalists and other Reformed denominations, Methodists, Nazarenes, Moravians, and United Protestants. I challenge you find anywhere in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation one example that an infant



was sprinkled with water to save their soul. Find God's word, just one, one command or one example. Find one example of when Jesus has words about this. You are probably asking why is he picking on this simple act that doesn't seem to hurt anything but I must warn that it does harm you. Little by little these type of made up aspects create doubt that Jesus teachings and the Bible alone are sufficient. People will believe that their baby will grow up forgiven of their sins.

Believe me this not enjoyable for me to publish this because I feel like I am hurting my brothers and sisters of Christ. I get uncomfortable pushing this idea because Jesus taught us “It is impossible that no occasions of stumbling should come, but woe to him through whom they come! It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, rather than that he should cause one of these little ones to stumble. Be careful. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him. If he repents, forgive him. If he sins against you seven times in the day, and seven times returns, saying, ‘I repent,’ you shall forgive him.” I was sprinkled a Catholic as a baby and followed along for many years of my life. I even had one of my daughters baptized a catholic but then I read the Bible more often and in depth and couldn't find this aspects which were the foundation of being catholic. I began a new grow-

ing period once I started to embrace Jesus alone is sufficient not the man made traditions of a church. The more false teachings you can let go of the closer you to Jesus commandments #1 and #2.

In continuing how about the Bible on immaculate conception. The immaculate conception is the Catholic Church teaching which states that Mary, mother of Jesus has been free of original sin from the moment of her conception. It was proclaimed as a dogma or religious truth by some religious leaders. You won't find that in God's word. Mary was a woman, highly favored of God, but a simple one. He was born of Adam. She was a daughter of Adam. She was a sinner just like us all. Why are they wasting their time thinking to much about things like this instead of true worship to Jesus only and following #1 and #2. Why do they pray to her like a God "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of our death."? Why not pray to God alone? Why would they promote this type of prayer? Please think and read MMLJ to awaken.



For example, MMLJ teaches "While he was yet speaking to the multitudes, behold, his mother and his brothers stood outside, seeking to speak to him. One said to him, "Behold, your mother and your brothers stand outside, seeking to speak to you." But he answered him who spoke to him, **"Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?"** He stretched out his hand toward his disciples, and said, **"Behold, my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother."**

And you won't find the mass. You won't find the priesthood. You won't find the various sacraments which are baptism, confirmation, Eucharist, penance, anointing of the sick, marriage and holy orders. You won't find abstaining from meat or marriage in this Bible anywhere. You'll have to get you another mankind made up book.

There's no way to find the sprinkling of an infant. There's no way to find being baptized for the dead. There's no way to find purgatory. There's no way to find observing Christmas, Easter, or Halloween, which is the day of the dead. You will not find that anywhere in God's word. You have to get you another mankind made up book. All of these false beliefs lead right into you slowly and surly judging others before you love them. Je-

sus #1 and #2 is about Loving God first and foremost and then loving our neighbors.

False ministries supplement the Bible with tradition and that is how you can tell a false teacher. If you do it any different than the way God teaches it, unfortunately you're accepting the antichrist a way to get inside your head/soul.. That's right. Why not the Bible alone is sufficient? They teach for doctrine, the commandments of men, traditions and customs. You look at the Catholics, Episcopalians and Methodists to find all of these wear uniforms with different meanings. This one for this ritual and different robes and head gear for other times. And you have to have a handbook or directions of worship or some kind of denominational literature to promote and truly understand why they wear these things. And that's a sign of error. The Bible is sufficient.



Jesus taught us “The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat. All things therefore whatever they tell you to observe, observe and do, but don’t do their works; for they say, and don’t do. For they bind heavy burdens that are grievous to be borne, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not lift a finger to help them. But they do all their works to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the fringes of their garments, and love the place of honor at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, the salutations in the market-places, and to be called ‘Rabbi, Rabbi by men. But you are not to be called ‘Rabbi’, for one is your teacher, the Christ, and all of you are brothers. Call no man on the earth your father, for one is your Father, he who is in heaven. Neither be called masters, for one is your master, the Christ. But he who is greatest among you will be your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted. “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows’ houses, and as a pretense you make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation.”

“But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you shut up the Kingdom of Heaven against men; for you don’t enter in yourselves, neither do you allow those who are entering in to enter. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel around by sea and land

to make one proselyte; and when he becomes “Woe to you, you blind guides, who say, ‘Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is obligated.’ You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that sanctifies the gold? And, ‘Whoever swears by the altar, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gift that is on it, he is obligated?’ You blind fools! For which is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifies the gift? He therefore who swears by the altar, swears by it and by everything on it. He who swears by the temple, swears by it and by him who has been living in it. He who swears by one, you make him twice as much a son of Gehenna as yourselves. heaven, swears by the throne of God and by him who sits on it.”

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint, dill, and cumin, and have left undone the weightier matters of the law: justice, mercy, and faith. But you ought to have done these, and not to have left the other undone. You blind guides, who strain out a gnat, and swallow a camel! “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and unrighteousness. You blind Pharisee, first clean the inside of the cup and of the platter, that its outside may become clean also. “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitened tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but inwardly are full of dead men’s bones and of all uncleanness. Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.”

There's no honest motivation. There's no sincere goal for the glory of God with these false ministers. This also goes for anything that impacts you loving God (LTG) and your neighbor (LTN). False teachings of race, astrology, lunar cycles, what time of day you are born, rolling of bones on the ground, flipping magical cards, doing personality tests, etc. These are all distractions to keep you away from Jesus by introducing other teachings. God is sovereign. Christ is a sufficient redeemer. And the holy spirit is an effectual caller. They do all within their power to discourage you from learning the gospel.

They always mix works and grace in there believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Yes, you do believe on Christ to be saved, but you also must be baptized. You don't need to belong to the right church and be a member of the right denomination. By the grace of God, with the power of God's spirit must be renewed born again. Yes Jesus taught ““Most cer-

tainly I tell you, unless one is born anew” but that is from the spirit when your sins are forgiven from truly worshipping Jesus.

In the book Titus chapter 3 the scripture states “Remind the believers to submit to the government and its officers. They should be obedient, always ready to do what is good. They must not slander anyone and must avoid quarreling. Instead, they should be gentle and show true humility to everyone. Once we, too, were foolish and disobedient. We were misled and became slaves to many lusts and pleasures. Our lives were full of evil and envy, and we hated each other. But - When God our Savior revealed his kindness and love, he saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He washed away our sins, giving us a new birth and new life through the Holy Spirit. He generously poured out the Spirit upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior. Because of his grace he made us right in his sight and gave us confidence that we will inherit eternal life...”

“...Do not get involved in foolish discussions about spiritual pedigrees or in quarrels and fights about obedience to Jewish laws. These things are useless and a waste of time. If people are causing divisions among you, give a first and second warning. After that, have nothing more to do with them. For people like that have turned away from the truth, and their own sins condemn them.”

In 1st Corinthians Paul writes “I appeal to you, dear brothers and sisters, by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, to live in harmony with each other. Let there be no divisions in the church. Rather, be of one mind, united in thought and purpose. For some members of Chloe’s household have told me about your quarrels, my dear brothers and sisters. Some of you are saying, “I am a follower of Paul.” Others are saying, “I follow Apollos,” or “I follow Peter,” or “I follow only Christ.” Has Christ been divided into factions? Was I, Paul, crucified for you? Were any of you baptized in the name of Paul? Of course not! I thank God that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius, for now no one can say they were baptized in my name. (Oh yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas, but I don’t remember baptizing anyone else.) For Christ didn’t send me to baptize, but to preach the Good News—and not with clever speech, for fear that the cross of Christ would lose its power.”

“Don’t be afraid, only believe.” Only believe and trust God. God wouldn’t put up with this anything that has nothing to do with Christ, the commercialization and the bad theology, these holy days or new moon or Sabbath day. Don’t put your glory into man made like worship-

ing of angels, worshiping of dead people like St. Jude, St. Christopher, Saint Patrick, Joseph Smith, etc...

Jesus asks a question to Pharisee's (religious leader) "A certain lender had two debtors. The one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. When they couldn't pay, he forgave them both. Which of them therefore will love him most?"

Simon (religious leader) answered, "I suppose, to whom he forgave the most." He said to him, "You have judged correctly." Turning to the woman, he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered into your house, and you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head. You gave me no kiss, but she, since the time I came in, has not ceased to kiss my feet. You didn't anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But one to whom little is forgiven, loves little." He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." Those who sat at the table with him began to say to themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."

Behold, a man named Jairus came. He was a ruler of the synagogue. He fell down at Jesus' feet and begged him to come into his house, for he had an only born daughter, about twelve years of age, and she was dying. While he still spoke, one from the ruler of the synagogue's house came, saying to him, "Your daughter is dead. Don't trouble the Teacher." But Jesus hearing it, answered him, "Don't be afraid. Only believe, and she will be healed." When he came to the house, he didn't allow anyone to enter in, except Peter, John, James, the father of the child, and her mother. All were weeping and mourning her, but he said, "Don't weep. She isn't dead, but sleeping." They were ridiculing him, knowing that she was dead. But he put them all outside, and taking her by the hand, he called, saying, "Child, arise!"

A woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years, who had spent all her living on physicians and could not be healed by any, came behind him and touched the fringe of his cloak. Immediately the flow of her blood stopped. Jesus said, "Who touched me?" When all denied it, Peter and those with him said, "Master, the multitudes press and jostle you, and you say, 'Who touched me?'" But Jesus said, "Someone did touch me, for I perceived that power has gone out of me." When the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling; and falling down before him declared to him in the presence of all the people the reason

why she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately. He said to her, “**Daughter, cheer up. Your faith has made you well. Go in peace.**”

Now those is an example of worshiping Jesus. Do you have that feeling when you leave your service or mass? The clean feeling that only Jesus can do for us.

John said to him, “Teacher, we saw someone who doesn’t follow us casting out demons in your name; and we forbade him, because he doesn’t follow us.” But Jesus said, “**Don’t forbid him, for there is no one who will do a mighty work in my name and be able quickly to speak evil of me. For whoever is not against us is on our side. For whoever will give you a cup of water to drink in my name because you are Christ’s, most certainly I tell you, he will in no way lose his reward. Whoever will cause one of these little ones who believe in me to stumble, it would be better for him if he were thrown into the sea with a millstone hung around his neck. If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having your two hands to go into Gehenna, into the unquenchable fire, ‘where their worm doesn’t die, and the fire is not quenched.’ If your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life lame, rather than having your two feet to be cast into Gehenna, into the fire that will never be quenched— ‘where their worm doesn’t die, and the fire is not quenched.’ If your eye causes you to stumble, throw it out. It is better for you to enter into God’s Kingdom with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into the Gehenna* of fire, ‘where their worm doesn’t die, and the fire is not quenched.’ For everyone will be salted with fire, and every sacrifice will be seasoned with salt. Salt is good, but if the salt has lost its saltiness, with what will you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.**”

In closing this chapter this last story teaches us not judge others who are doing working in the name of Jesus but to “**Love Thy Neighbor**” (LTN) that don’t follow certain man made rules or group. God in the name of Jesus is the source for casting out that demons not that person. That is the glory we need to give is to Jesus not a group or religion. Simply Jesus. I am not against worshiping Jesus in your own way but I’m against man made rules and not teaching the true Gospel (mmlj) ever time and always. For not trying to feed Jesus sheep.

The main purpose of this chapter is to strip off those excess religious burdens and beliefs many of us have. I personally went through this

cycle to loose these burdens and I feel it is so important. I don't want you to think going to church is a bad thing but please examine what and why you go to church. Ask your minister what are their 2 most important commandants to follow.

LTN - Chapter 17 - Christ our 1st Love

In the first chapter of 1 Corinthians. Now Paul preached in a city called Corinth for which the Lord told him to stay “because I have much people in this city. They will not hurt you. They will not lay hands on you. You stay there and preach because I have much people in this city.”

Paul stayed there about 18 months and after he sailed to Syria. After his departure some bad things happened to the Church of Corinth. False teachers and preachers crept into the church with false doctrine and unscriptural practices and led the people astray.

And then the church became divided over their preachers. Some of the people said, “Well, I like Paul better than Cephas.” And some said, “We like Peter than we like Paul.” Some said, “We like Apollos best.” And some of them said, “Well, we don’t like any of them. We like Christ.” And Paul said, “Is Christ divided? Were you baptized in the name of Peter or Paul or Apollos?”

So the church became divided over their preachers, but there was a misuse of gifts. And the people began to go to court with one another. They began to sue one another. And then they went to law with each other.

And then questions arose about marriage and divorce, conflict over that. And then some people even questioned the resurrection of the dead. Paul says, “If Christ be risen how say some among you there is no resurrection?” So some of them doubted the resurrection and some had some very, very bad conduct.

And they were abusing the Lord’s Table. They were making a feast out of the Lord’s Table and with some of them were getting drunk. And all of these things took place in the absence of the apostle.

Now what is the solution? What did Paul do? Well, Paul by the power of the Holy Spirit wrote this book, this epistle to the Corinthian Church. He sent this epistle (letter) to them and it became a book in the bible. And in this book he deals with each of these problems. He deals with them fully and completely, each of these problems. But the real solution he deals with in chapter one. Chapter one is where he deals with it and

gives them the real solution. The only way to deal with situation was to put a church on the right course, the only way to give the frame of mind that ought to be the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. And that is to return to their first love, the Lord Jesus Christ (LTG). Make everything for Christ's sake, everything in the name of Christ, everything for the glory of Christ.

This what leads to all these problems, to leave your first love. You become involved in all manner of works and activities and relationships and programs and socials and sports and all of these other things. And you have left your first love which is the Lord Jesus Christ (LTG). He is our first love. And our relationship with him will make all other relationships secondary.

There is an old poem which states "Where is the blessedness I knew when first I saw the Lord? Where is that soul refreshing view of the Lord Jesus and his Word? Oh, what peaceful hours I once enjoyed, how sweet the memory still, but now there is an aching void that no one can ever fill."

What is the problem? Some people call this backsliding. They call it all these different things, but I will tell you the problem. It is in Revelation 2:4. "I have somewhat against you. You have left your first love. That is your whole problem. You have left your first love." Christ is our first love.

Our Lord said this. "If any many love father and mother, husband, wife, brother sister, yea, his own life also more than me he is not worthy of me." And then he said in John 15, "I am the vine. I am the vine. You are the branches. If you abide in me and I in you the same bringeth forth much fruit. Without me you can do nothing."

You see, this is what happened. This is what happens when we get divided and when we...people misbehave and the Church has divisions and conflicts and all of these other things. We have left our first love.

"Abide in me and I in you. You will ask what you will and it shall be done. I am the vine and you are the branches. He that abideth in me continues in me and I in him. The same bringeth forth much fruit. Without me you can do nothing."

And he said this. "If you abide not in me..." And that is what is happening here. Dwelling in Christ, abiding in Christ, loving Christ, Christ first and his glory first in all things. He said, "If you abide not in me you are cast forth as a branch withered, shrunk up, fit for the fire."

Oh, my. Cling to your first love. That's the solution. Go back to where you were when you fell in love with the Redeemer, back to where you were.

A young couple stands before the minister getting married. And they only have eyes for one another. They are in love. You just look at them. They don't know anybody is in the congregation or around them. They love each other. They are together.

And they start life that way together. They build their home together. Just enjoying every nail that goes in it and every carpet that is laid down. They do it together.

Then along comes the first child. The minister is invited to come to the hospital to see the baby. And there is the three of them. Oh, my goodness, how happy. In love with one another, first love, first love, first child, first love, happiness abounding, happiness and everything. Love of one another together, love of family.

Then a few years pass and they establish separate careers. That is what everybody has got to have his career, you know. And the wife has her career and he husband has his career and then the children have their careers, too, now. Separate friends, separate interests. They leave their first love.

And then one day they stand before a judge separated filing for divorce and shared custody. What happened? They left their first love. And now here they are dividing the spoils of their separate careers. What happened?

Well, you can name all the things. Somebody else is involved or this, that or the other, financial troubles and in law problems. Just name anything you want to. They got the same inlaws they had when they got married. All these things are the same, but they left their first...**they stopped loving each other.**

Now that is just the same for LTG. Christ said, **"If you abide in me and my words abide in you, you will bring forth fruit."** Fruit of the Spirit: love, grace, joy, peace, long- suffering, patience, gentleness, kindness, long suffering. It is all there, but it is based on one thing, because you love each other. As you have received Christ Jesus walk in him, continue in him.

Paul wrote to the Galatians that the key is Christ in you. That is the hope of glory.

Somebody may ask "Is Christ the most important thing in your life?" Not by any means. He is not a thing. He is not a part of my life. He is my life. Without him I have no life. If I don't abide in him, I am fit for the burning. I am a withered branch. I don't have any life.

You leave your first love and you have left life, truth, peace, rest, God. My friends, it is not the Church that saves. I pray you you know this. It is Christ. It is not even the cross that saves. No, It is Christ.

Let others who will praise the cross of the Christ. The Christ of the cross is my theme. And while I cherish the old rugged cross, it is the Christ of the cross that redeems. It is not the cross that saved me. It is Christ who hung on that cross. It is not the mother who saves me. It is not the mother who is my mediator. It is the master, Christ. It is not the brotherhood. The brotherhood can't help me if I don't have the bridegroom. Do you see that?

If I leave the bridegroom, the brotherhood is of no use to me. It is not the rosary. It is the Redeemer. Things don't help me. The person. It is the blood that make atonement for the soul.

You see, Christ...this hymn writer said, "Christ as our mediator stands between our souls and God. And upon both he lays his hand, upon God and me, presenting his precious blood. Christ is the rock. On him I build. He is my life, my love, my all. And his promise shall be fulfilled. He will never let me fall."

My friend, look to Christ. Continue in Christ. Cling to Christ. Learn of Christ. Don't allow anything or anyone or any circumstances or any promotion or any riches or poverty to turn you from the simplicity, the oneness, the singleness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Where is the blessedness that once I knew when first I met the Lord?

How did you meet him? How did you receive him? Well, I received him as my Savior. He is still my Savior. I received him as my Lord. He is still my Lord. I received him as my master. He is still my master. I received him as my life. He is still my life. I received him as my high priest. He is still my high priest. I received him as my hope and my only hope. And he is still my only hope.

The apostle Paul writing to the Corinthian Church expresses a great fear for these people. Paul didn't fear many things, but this he did. He feared this. He feared a distraction from Christ. He feared a departure from Christ.

He is all in all. He is everything to us. He is our wisdom. He is our righteousness. He is our sanctification. He is our redemption. And to depart from Christ is our only real fear because he is all and in all. And when we leave him we have left everything when we leave Christ.

And this is why Paul wrote to this troubled church and he deals with all these problems that they have. Christ is the answer right here, right here, the glory of Jesus Christ. Paul says, "I am called to be an apostle not of the Church, of Jesus Christ."

People who preach, are ambassadors of Christ. Messengers of Christ. Servants of our Lord Jesus Christ. We need to declare unto you the words of God, the words of Christ. They should preach not themselves. Don't preach our denomination or ourselves or our programs. We preach Christ. We preach Christ Jesus our Lord. Ourselves are your servants for Jesus' sake. But he is alpha and omega. That's beginning and end. He is the first and the last. He is the author and finisher of our faith. We are ambassadors of Christ. We need to preach Christ. A sermon that doesn't exalt Christ and magnify Christ and present Christ really ought not to have been preached. You are the apostles and ambassadors and messengers of Jesus Christ.

Paul states we are made holy in him. Not in our works, not in our righteousness. You are holy in him only. All spiritual blessings are in Christ. God has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus. You are clothed in the righteousness of Christ Jesus. We are accepted in the beloved, Christ Jesus. We are translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his Son Christ Jesus. Of God are you in Christ Jesus who is made unto you all things.

Paul states we are servants of Christ. We are apostles of Christ. Believers are justified in Christ. They are sanctified in Christ. Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. That is how we are saved, by calling on his name, Jehovah Jireh, Jehovah Tsidkenu, Jehovah Raphe, Jehovah my shepherd, Jehovah my banner. Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.

We pray in his name. If you ask the Father anything in my name he will give it you to you. Anything worth having, anything eternal, anything spiritual is yours in the name of Christ. We serve in his name. If you give a cup of cold water in his name you'll not lose your reward.

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord Jesus Christ. Peace comes through Christ. Peace with God, peace. Peace means to be reconciled. Peace means to be accepted. Peace means to be forgiven. Peace means the war is over. There is no judgment. And having made peace with God through the blood of his cross, having made peace with God.

That is how it is made. By Christ, "to reconcile all things to himself." Reconcile. You know when two people fall out and somebody hears they are back together they say, "Well, they are getting...well, they were reconciled." What do you mean? They are friends. And that is what Christ did. We were enemies by wicked works, enemies by birth and nature. And Christ came and on the cross of Calvary God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. And that is what this is saying. Having made peace with God through the blood of his cross by Christ to reconcile all things to himself, by Christ.

How long has it been since you heard a message on the blood of Christ, the all sufficient blood of Christ, the effectual, saving, cleansing, sanctifying blood of Christ Jesus? without the shedding of blood there is no remission. There is no salvation. We have today a bloodless religion. It is a religion of philosophy and psychology and ideology and all of these other things. We need to get back to the simplicity of the gospel, the simplicity of Christ, the blood.

There is a trail of blood throughout the whole Bible from Genesis when Adam and Eve stood naked before God. The first blood shed on this earth wasn't Cain killing Abel. The first blood shed was God slew an animal and clothed Adam and Eve with the skins of that animal. And from that blood all the way through the Bible till we meet in Revelation the Lamb slain on the throne there is a trail of blood, a trail of blood. It started in the Garden and it was consummated, fulfilled and finished on the cross of Calvary.

We need to study, we need to study the simplicity of Christ. Well, you know, education used to be summed up the three Rs: reading, writing and arithmetic. Well, there are three Rs to the Scripture. No sermon

ought to be preached that doesn't contain the three Rs. Do you know what they are?

First, ruined by the fall, what happened in the Garden, ruined by the fall. By one man sin entered this world and death by sin. So death passed upon all men, ruined by the fall.

Secondly is redemption, redemption by the blood, what happened on the cross. Christ by his blood cleansed us from all sin.

The third R is regeneration. What happens in a sinner's heart when the Holy Ghost takes the Word of God and gives him new life, makes him a new creature, reveals the Son of God to him and sheds abroad the love of God in his heart.

That is the three Rs: ruin, redemption and regeneration; what happened in the Garden, what happened on the cross, what happened when God saves a sinner.

Paul also states I thank God always on your behalf for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ.

What is the grace of God? It is the favor of God. Noah found favor with God. Mary found favor with God. It is the forgiveness of God. I remember this sin no more. It is the love of God, unchangeable. It is the electing grace, saving grace, daily grace, keeping grace, dying grace. It is the grace of God.

Where is it found? In Christ Jesus. It is given us by Jesus Christ. That's where it is. And you will not experience it unless you lay hold on Christ.

LTN - Chapter 18- Blocker - Temptation

Then Jesus said to him, “Get behind me, Satan! For it is written”

The LORD asked Cain. “Why do you look so dejected? You will be accepted if you do what is right. But if you refuse to do what is right, then watch out! Sin is crouching at the door, eager to control you. But you must subdue it and be its master.”

Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, “Far be it from you, Lord! This will never be done to you.” But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me, for you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of men.”

The seventy returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!” He said to them, “I saw Satan having fallen like lightning from heaven. Behold, I give you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy. Nothing will in any way hurt you. Nevertheless, don’t rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”

The Lord said, “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan asked to have all of you, that he might sift you as wheat, but I prayed for you, that your faith wouldn’t fail. You, when once you have turned again, establish your brothers.”

JC Ryle - MATTHEW 4:1-11

The first event in our Lord's ministry which Matthew records after His baptism, is His temptation. This is a deep and mysterious subject. There is much in the history of it which we cannot explain. But there lie on the face of the history plain practical lessons, to which we shall do well to take heed.

Let us learn in the first place, what a real and mighty enemy we have in the devil. He is not afraid to assault even the Lord Jesus Himself. Three times over he attacks God's own Son. Our Savior was "tempted by the devil." It was the devil who brought sin into the world at the beginning. This is he, who vexed Job, deceived David, and gave Peter a heavy fall. This is he, whom the Bible calls a "murderer," a "liar," and a "roaring lion." This is he, whose enmity to our souls never slumbers and never sleeps. This is he, who for nearly 6000 years has been working at one work—to ruin men and women, and draw them to hell. This is he, whose cunning and subtlety pass man's understanding, and who often appears as "an angel of light."

Let us all watch and pray daily against his devices. There is no enemy worse than an enemy who is never seen and never dies, who is near to us wherever we live, and goes with us wherever we go. Not least let us beware of that levity and jesting about the devil, which is so unhappily common. Let us remember every day, that if we would be saved, we must not only crucify the flesh, and overcome the world, but also "resist the devil."

Let us learn in the next place, that we must not count temptation a strange thing. "The disciple is not greater than his master, nor the servant than his lord." If Satan came to Christ, he will also come to Christians.

It would be well for all believers, if they would remember this. They are too apt to forget it. They often find evil thoughts arising within their minds, which they can truly say they hate. Doubts, questions, and sinful imaginings are suggested to them, against which their whole inward man revolts. But let not these things destroy their peace, and rob them of their comforts. Let them remember there is a devil, and not be surprised to find him near them. To be tempted is in itself no sin. It is the yielding to the temptation, and giving it a place in our hearts, which we must fear.

Let us learn in the next place, that the chief weapon we ought to use in resisting Satan is the Bible. Three times the great enemy offered temptations to our Lord. Three times his offer was refused, with a text of Scripture as the reason, "it is written."

Here is one among many reasons, why we ought to be diligent readers of our Bibles. The Word is the sword of the Spirit. We shall never fight a good fight, if we do not use it as our principal weapon. The Word is the

lamp for our feet. We shall never keep the king's highway to heaven, if we do not journey by its light. It may well be feared, that there is not enough Bible-reading among us. It is not sufficient to have the Book. We must actually read it, and pray over it ourselves. It will do us no good, if it only lies still in our houses. We must be actually familiar with its contents, and have its texts stored in our memories and minds. Knowledge of the Bible never comes by intuition. It can only be obtained by diligent, regular, daily, attentive, wakeful reading. Do we grudge the time and trouble this will cost us? If we do, we are not yet fit for the kingdom of God.

Let us learn in the last place, what a sympathizing Savior the Lord Jesus Christ is. "In that he himself has suffered being tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted." (Heb. 2:18.)

The sympathy of Jesus is a truth which ought to be peculiarly dear to all believers. They will find in it a mine of strong consolation. They should never forget, that they have a mighty Friend in heaven, who feels for them in all their temptations, and can enter into all their spiritual anxieties. Are they ever tempted by Satan to distrust God's care and goodness? So was Jesus. Are they ever tempted to presume on God's mercy, and run into danger without warrant? So also was Jesus. Are they ever tempted to commit some one great private sin for the sake of some great seeming advantage? So also was Jesus.

Are they ever tempted to listen to some misapplication of Scripture, as an excuse for doing wrong? So also was Jesus. He is just the Savior that a tempted people require. Let them flee to Him for help, and spread before Him all their troubles. They will find His ear ever ready to hear, and His heart ever ready to feel He can understand their sorrows.

May we all know the value of a sympathizing Savior by experience! There is nothing to be compared to it in this cold and deceitful world. Those who seek their happiness in this life only, and despise the religion of the Bible, have no idea what true comfort they are missing.

LTN - Chapter 19 - Blocker - Baptism

JC Ryle

HERE is perhaps no subject in Christianity about which such difference of opinion exists as the sacrament of baptism. The very name recalls to one's mind an endless list of strifes, disputes, heart-burnings, controversies, and divisions. It is a subject, moreover, on which even eminent Christians have long been greatly divided. Praying, Bible-reading, holy men, who can agree on all other points, find themselves hopelessly divided about baptism. The fall of man has affected the understanding as well as the will. Fallen indeed must human nature be, when millions who agree about sin, and Christ, and grace, are as the poles asunder about baptism. I propose in the following pages to offer a few remarks on this disputed subject. I am not vain enough to suppose that I can throw any light on a controversy which so many great and good men have handled in vain. But I know that every additional witness is useful in a disputed case. I wish to strengthen the hands of those I agree with, and to show them that we have no reason to be ashamed of our opinions. I wish to suggest a few things for the consideration of those I do not agree with, and to show them that the Scriptural argument in this matter is not, as some suppose, all on one side.

There are four points which I propose to examine in considering the subject:

What baptism is,—its nature.

In what manner baptism should be administered,—its mode.

Who ought to be baptized,—its subjects.

What place baptism ought to occupy in religion,—its true position.

If I can supply a satisfactory answer to these four questions, I feel that I shall have contributed something to the clearing of many minds.

Let us consider first the nature of baptism,—what is it?

Baptism is an ordinance appointed by our Lord Jesus Christ, for the continual admission of fresh members into His visible Church. In the army

every new soldier is formally added to the muster-roll of his regiment. In a school every new scholar is formally entered on the books of the school. And every Christian begins his Church-membership by being baptized.¹

Baptism is an ordinance of great simplicity. The outward part or sign is water, administered in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, or in the name of Christ. The inward part, or thing signified, is that washing in the blood of Christ, and inward cleansing of the heart by the Holy Ghost, without which no one can be saved. The Twenty-seventh Article of the Church of England says rightly,—“Baptism is not only a sign of profession and mark of difference, whereby Christian men are discerned from others that be not christened, but it is also a sign of regeneration or new birth.”

Baptism is an ordinance on which we may confidently expect the highest blessings, when it is rightly used. It is unreasonable to suppose that the Lord Jesus, the Great Head of the Church, would solemnly appoint an ordinance which was to be as useless to the soul as a mere human enrolment or an act of civil registration. The sacrament we are considering is not a mere man-made appointment, but an institution appointed by the King of kings. When faith and prayer accompany baptism, and a diligent use of Scriptural means follows it, we are justified in looking for much spiritual blessing. Without faith and prayer baptism becomes a mere form.

Baptism is an ordinance which is expressly named in the New Testament about eighty times. Almost the last words of our Lord Jesus Christ were a command to baptize: “Go ye, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” (Matt. xxviii. 19.) We find Peter saying on the day of Pentecost,—“Repent, and be baptized every one of you;”—and asking in the house of Cornelius,—“Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized?” (Acts ii. 38; x. 47.) We find St. Paul was not only baptized himself, but baptized disciples wherever he went. To say, as some do, in the face of these texts, that baptism is an institution of no importance, is to pour contempt on the Bible. To say, as others do, that baptism is only a thing of the heart, and not an outward ordinance at all, is to say that which seems flatly contradictory to the Bible.

Baptism is an ordinance which, according to Scripture, a man may receive, and yet get no good from it. Can anyone doubt that Judas Iscariot, Simon Magus, Ananias and Sapphira, Demas, Hymenaeus, Philetus, and

Nicolas, were all baptized people? Yet what benefit did they receive from baptism? Clearly, for anything that we can see, none at all! Their hearts were “not right in the sight of God.” (Acts viii. 21.) They remained “dead in trespasses and sins,” and were “dead while they lived.” (Ephes. ii. 1; 1 Tim. v. 6.)

Baptism is an ordinance which in apostolic times went together with the first beginnings of a man’s religion. In the very day that many of the early Christians repented and believed, in that very day they were baptized. Baptism was the expression of their new-born faith, and the starting-point in their Christianity. No wonder that in such cases it was regarded as the vehicle of all spiritual blessings. The Scriptural expressions, “buried with Christ in baptism” — “putting on Christ in baptism” — “baptism doth also save us” — would be full of deep meaning to such persons. (Rom. vi. 4; Col. ii. 12; Gal. iii. 27; 1 Pet. iii. 21.) They would exactly tally with their experience. But to apply such expressions indiscriminately to the baptism of infants in our own day is, in my judgment, unreasonable and unfair. It is an application of Scripture which, I believe, was never intended.

Baptism is an ordinance which a man may never receive, and yet be a true Christian and be saved. The case of the penitent thief is sufficient to prove this. Here was a man who repented, believed, was converted, and gave evidence of true grace, if any one ever did. We read of no one else to whom such marvelous words were addressed as the famous sentence, “Today shalt thou be with Me in paradise.” (Luke xxiii. 42.) And yet there is not the slightest proof that this man was ever baptized at all! Without baptism and the Lord’s Supper he received the highest spiritual blessings while he lived, and was with Christ in paradise when he died! To assert, in the face of such a case, that baptism is absolutely necessary to salvation is something monstrous. To say that baptism is the only means of regeneration, and that all who die unbaptized are lost forever, is to say that which cannot be proved by Scripture, and is revolting to common sense.

I leave this part of my subject here. I commend the seven propositions which I have laid down to the serious attention of all who wish to obtain clear views about baptism. In considering the two sacraments of the Christian religion, I hold it to be of primary importance to put away from us the vagueness and mysteriousness with which too many surround them. Above all, let us be careful that we believe neither more nor less about them than we can prove by plain texts of Scripture.

There is a baptism which is absolutely necessary to salvation, beyond all question. There is a baptism without which no one, whether old or young, has ever gone to heaven. But what baptism is this? It is not the baptism of water, but the inward baptism which the Holy Ghost gives to the heart. It is not a baptism which any man can offer, whether ordained or unordained. It is the baptism which it is the special privilege of the Lord Jesus Christ to give to all His mystical members. It is not a baptism which man's eye can see, but an invisible operation on the inward nature. "Baptism," says St. Peter, "saves us." But what baptism does he tell us he means? Not the washing of water, "not the putting away the filth of the flesh." (1 Peter iii. 21.) "By one spirit are we all baptized into one body?" (1 Cor. xii. 13.) It is the peculiar prerogative of the Lord Jesus to give this inward and spiritual baptism. "He it is," said John the Baptist, "which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." (John I. 33.)

Let us take heed that we know something of this saving baptism, the inward baptism of the Holy Ghost. Without this it signifies little what we think about the baptism of water. No man, whether High Churchman or Low Churchman, Baptist or Episcopalian, no man was ever yet saved without the baptism of the Holy Ghost. It is a weighty and true saying of the Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, in the reign of Edward VI.,—"By the baptism of water we are received into the outward Church of God: by the baptism of the Spirit into the inward." (Bucer, on John I. 33.)

Let us now consider the mode of Baptism. In what way ought it to be administered?

This is a point on which a wide difference of opinion prevails. Some Christians maintain strongly that complete immersion in water is absolutely necessary and essential to make a valid baptism. They hold that no person is really baptized unless he is entirely "dipped," and covered over with water. Others, on the contrary, maintain with equal decision that immersion is not necessary at all, and that sprinkling, or pouring a small quantity of water on the person baptized, fulfils all the requirements of Christ.

My own opinion is distinct and decided, that Scripture leaves the point an open question. I can find nothing in the Bible to warrant the assertion that either dipping, or pouring, or sprinkling, is essential to baptism. I believe it would be impossible to prove that either way of baptizing is exclusively right, or that either is downright wrong. So long as water is used in the name of the Trinity, the precise mode of administering the ordinance is left an open question.

This is the view adopted by the Church of England. The Baptismal Service expressly sanctions “dipping” in the most plain terms.³ To say, as many Baptists do, that the Church of England is opposed to baptism by immersion, is a melancholy proof of the ignorance in which many Dissenters live. Thousands, I am afraid, find fault with the Prayer-book without having ever examined its contents! If any one wishes to be baptized by “dipping” in the Church of England, let him understand that the parish clergyman is just as ready to dip him as the Baptist minister, and that he may be baptized by “immersion” in church as well as in chapel.

There is a large body of Christians, however, who are not satisfied with this moderate view of the question. They will have it that baptism by dipping or immersion is the only Scriptural baptism. They say that all the persons whose baptism we read of in the Bible were “dipped.” They hold, in short, that where there is no immersion there is no baptism.

I fear it is almost waste of time to attempt to say anything on this much disputed question. So much has been written on both sides without effect, during the last two hundred years that I cannot hope to throw any new light on the subject. The utmost that I shall try to do is to suggest a few considerations to any whose minds are in doubt. I only ask them to remember that I do not say that baptism by “dipping” is positively wrong. All I say is, that it is not absolutely necessary, and is not absolutely commanded in Scripture.

I ask, then, any doubting mind to consider whether it is in the least probable that all the cases of baptism described in Scripture were cases of complete immersion? The three thousand baptized in one day at the feast of Pentecost (Acts ii. 41),—the jailor at Philippi suddenly baptized at midnight in prison (Acts xvi. 33)—is it at all likely or probable that they were all “dipped”? To my own mind, trying to take an impartial view, it seems in the highest degree improbable. Let those believe it who can.

I ask anyone to consider, furthermore, whether it is at all probable that a mode of baptism would have been enjoined as necessary, which in some climates is impracticable? At the North and South Poles, for example, the temperature, for many months, is many degrees below freezing point. In tropical countries, on the other hand, water is often so extremely scarce that it is almost impossible to find enough for common drinking purposes. Now will any maintain that in such climates there can be no baptism without “immersion”? Will any one tell us that in such

climates it is really necessary that every candidate for baptism should be completely dipped"? Let those believe it who can.

I ask anyone to consider, further, whether it is at all probable that a mode of baptism would have been enjoined which, in some conditions of health, is simply impossible. There are thousands of persons whose lungs and general constitution are in so delicate a state that total immersion in water, and especially in cold water, would be certain death to them. Now will any maintain that such persons ought to be debarred from baptism unless they are "dipped"? Let those believe it who can.

I ask anyone to consider, further, whether it is probable that a mode of baptizing would be enjoined, which in many countries would practically exclude women from baptism. The sensitiveness and strictness of Eastern nations about the treatment of their wives and daughters are notorious facts. There are many parts of the world in which women are so completely separated and secluded from the other sex, that there is the greatest difficulty in even speaking to them about religion. To talk of such an ordinance as baptizing them by "immersion" would, in hundreds of cases, be perfectly absurd. The feelings of fathers, husbands, and brothers, however personally disposed to Christian teaching, would be revolted by the mention of it. And will anyone maintain that such women are to be left unbaptized altogether because they cannot be "dipped"? Let those believe it who can.

I believe I might well leave the subject of the mode of baptism at this point. But there are two favorite arguments which the advocates of immersion are constantly bringing forward, about which I think it right to say something.

(a) One of these favorite arguments is based on the meaning of the Greek word in the New Testament, which we translate "to baptize." It is constantly asserted that this word can mean nothing else but dipping, or complete "immersion." The reply to this argument is short and simple. The assertion is utterly destitute of foundation. Those who are best acquainted with New Testament Greek are decidedly of opinion that to baptize means "to wash or cleanse with water," but whether by immersion or not must be entirely decided by the context. We read in St. Luke (xi. 38) that when our Lord dined with a certain Pharisee, "the Pharisee marvelled that He had not first washed before dinner." It may surprise some readers, perhaps, to hear that these words would have been rendered more literally, "that He had not first been baptized before dinner." —Yet it is evident to common sense that the Pharisee could not have

expected our Lord to immerse or dip Himself over head in water before dining! It simply means that he expected Him to perform some ablution, or to pour water over His hands, before the meal. But if this is so, what becomes of the argument that to baptize always means complete "immersion"? It is cut from under the feet of the advocate of "dipping," and to reason further about it is mere waste of time.

(b) Another favorite argument in favor of baptism by immersion is drawn from the expression "buried with Christ in baptism," which St. Paul uses on two occasions. (Rom. vi. 4; Col. ii. 12.) It is asserted that going down into the water of baptism, and being completely "dipped" under it, is an exact figure of Christ's burial and coming up out of the grave, and represents our union with Christ and participation in all the benefits of His death and resurrection. But unfortunately for this argument there is no proof whatever that Christ's burial was a going down into a hole dug in the ground. On the contrary, it is far more probable that His grave was a cave cut out of the side of a rock, like that of Lazarus, and on a level with the surrounding ground. Such, at least, was the common mode of burying round Jerusalem. At this rate there is no resemblance whatever between going down into a bath, or baptistry, and the burial of our Lord. The actions are not like one another. That by profession of a lively faith in Christ at baptism a believer declares his union with Christ, both in His death and resurrection, is undoubtedly true. But to say that in "going down into the water" he is burying his body just as His Master's body was buried in the grave, is to say what cannot be proved.

In saying all this I should be very sorry to be mistaken. God forbid that I should wound the feelings of any brother who has conscientious scruples on this subject, and prefers baptism by dipping to baptism by sprinkling. I condemn him not. To his own Master he stands or falls. He that conscientiously prefers dipping may be dipped in the Church of England, and have all his children dipped if he pleases. What I contend for is liberty. I find no certain law laid down as to the mode in which baptism is to be administered, so long as water is used in the name of the Trinity. Let every man be persuaded in his own mind. He that sprinkles or simply pours water in baptism has no right to excommunicate him that dips;—and he that dips has no right to excommunicate him that sprinkles or pours water. Neither of them can possibly prove that the other is entirely wrong.

I leave this part of my subject here. Whatever some may think, I am content to regard the precise mode of baptizing as a thing indifferent, as a

thing on which every one may use his liberty. I firmly believe that this liberty was intended of God. It is in keeping with many other things in the Christian dispensation. I find nothing precise laid down in the New Testament about ceremonies, or vestments, or liturgies, or church music, or the shape of churches, or the hours of service, or the quantity of bread and wine to be used at the Lord's Supper, or the position and attitude of communicants. On all these points I see a liberal discretion allowed to the Church of Christ. So long as things are "done to edifying," the principle of the New Testament is to allow a wide liberty.

I hold firmly, myself that the validity and benefit of baptism do not depend on the quantity of water employed, but on the state of heart in which the sacrament is used. Those who insist on every grown-up person being plunged over head in a baptistry, and those who insist on splashing an immense handful of water in the face of every tender infant they receive into the Church at the font, are both alike, in my judgment, greatly mistaken. Both are attaching far more importance to the quantity of water used than I can find warranted in Scripture. It has been well said by a great divine,—“A little drop of water may serve to seal the fullness of divine grace in baptizing as well as a small piece of bread and the least tasting of wine in the Holy Supper.” (Witsius, Econ. Fed. I. 4, ch. xvi. 30.) To that opinion I entirely subscribe.

Let us next consider the subjects of baptism. To whom ought baptism to be administered?

It is impossible to handle this branch of the question without coming into direct collision with the opinions of others. But I hope it is possible to handle it in a kindly and temperate spirit. At any rate it is no use to avoid discussion for fear of offending Baptists. Disputed points in theology are never likely to be settled unless men on both sides will say out plainly what they think, and give their reasons for their opinions. To avoid the subject, because it is a controversial one, is neither honest nor wise. A clergyman has no right to complain that his parishioners become Baptists, if he never instructs them about infant baptism.

I begin by laying it down as a point almost undisputed, that all grown-up converts at missionary stations among the heathen ought to be baptized. As soon as they embrace the Gospel and make a credible profession of repentance and faith in Christ, they ought at once to receive baptism. This is the doctrine and practice of Episcopal, Presbyterian, Wes-

leyan, and Independent missionaries, just as much as it is the doctrine of Baptists. Let there be no mistake on this point. To talk, as some Baptists do, of "believer's baptism," as if it was a kind of baptism peculiar to their own body, is simply nonsense! Believer's baptism is known and practiced in every successful Protestant mission throughout the world.

But I now go a step further. I lay it down as a Christian truth that the children of all professing Christians have a right to baptism, if their parents require it, as well as their parents. Of course the children of professed unbelievers and heathen have no title to baptism, so long as they are under the charge of their parents. But the children of professing Christians are in an entirely different position. If their fathers and mothers offer them to be baptized, the Church ought to receive them in baptism, and has no right to refuse them.

It is precisely at this point that the grave division of opinion exists between the body of Christians called Baptists and the greater part of Christians throughout the world. The Baptist asserts that no one ought to be baptized who does not make a personal profession of repentance and faith, and that as children cannot do this they ought not to be baptized. I think that this assertion is not borne out by Scripture, and I shall proceed to give the reasons why I think so. I believe it can be shown that the children of professing Christians have a right to baptism, and that it is a complete mistake not to baptize them.

Let me remind the reader at the outset, that the question under consideration is not the Baptismal Service of the Church of England. Whether that service is right or wrong,—whether it is useful to have godfathers and godmothers,—are not the points in dispute. It is mere waste of time to say anything about them. 4 The question before us is simply whether infant baptism is right in principle. That it is right is held by Presbyterians, Independents, and Methodists, who use no Prayer-book, just as stoutly as it is by Churchmen. To the consideration of this one question I shall strictly confine myself. There is not the slightest necessary connection between the Liturgy and infant baptism. I heartily wish that some people would remember this. To insist on dragging in the Liturgy, and mixing it up with the abstract question of infant baptism, is not a sign of good logic, fairness, or common sense.

Let me clear the way, furthermore, by observing that I will not be drawn away from the real point at issue by the ludicrous descriptions which Baptists often give of the abuse of infant baptism. No doubt it is easy for popular writers and preachers among the Baptists, to draw a vivid pic-

ture of an ignorant, prayer-less couple of peasants, bringing an unconscious infant to be sprinkled at the font by a careless sporting parson! It is easy to finish off the picture by saying, "What good can infant baptism do?" Such pictures are very amusing, perhaps, but they are no argument against the principle of infant baptism. The abuse of a thing is no proof that it ought to be disused and is wrong. Moreover, those who live in glass-houses had better not throw stones. Strange pictures might be drawn of what happens sometimes in chapels at adult baptisms! But I forbear. I want the reader to look not at pictures but at Scriptural principles.

Let me now supply a few simple reasons why I hold, in common with all Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists, and Independents throughout the world that infant baptism is a right thing, and that in denying baptism to children the Baptists are mistaken. The reasons are as follows.

(a) Children were admitted into the Old Testament Church by a formal ordinance, from the time of Abraham downwards. That ordinance was circumcision. It was an ordinance which God Himself appointed, and the neglect of which was denounced as a great sin. It was an ordinance about which the highest language is used in the New Testament. St. Paul calls it "a seal of the righteousness of faith." (Rom. ii. 4.) Now, if children were considered to be capable of admission into the Church by an ordinance in the Old Testament, it is difficult to see why they cannot be admitted in the New. The general tendency of the Gospel is to increase men's spiritual privileges and not to diminish them. Nothing, I believe, would astonish a Jewish convert so much as to tell him his children could not be baptized! "If they are fit to receive circumcision," he would reply, "why are they not fit to receive baptism?" And my own firm conviction has long been that no Baptist could give him an answer. In fact I never heard of a converted Jew becoming a Baptist, and I never saw an argument against infant baptism that might not have been equally directed against infant circumcision. No man, I suppose, in his sober senses, would presume to say that infant circumcision was wrong.

(b) The baptism of children is nowhere forbidden in the New Testament. There is not a single text, from Matthew to Revelation, which either directly or indirectly hints that infants should not be baptized. Some, perhaps, may see little in this silence. To my mind it is a silence full of meaning and instruction. The first Christians, be it remembered, were many of them by birth Jews. They had been accustomed in the Jewish Church, before their conversion, to have their children admitted into church-

membership by a solemn ordinance, as a matter of course. Without a distinct prohibition from our Lord Jesus Christ, they would naturally go on with the same system of proceeding, and bring their children to be baptized. But we find no such prohibition! That absence of a prohibition, to my mind, speaks volumes. It satisfies me that no change was intended by Christ about children. If He had intended a change He would have said something to teach it. But He says not a word! That very silence is, to my mind, a most powerful and convincing argument. As God commanded Old Testament children to be circumcised, so God intends New Testament children to be baptized.

(c) The baptism of households is specially mentioned in the New Testament. We read in the Acts that Lydia was baptized “and her household,” and that the jailer of Philippi “was baptized: he and all his.” (Acts xvi. 15, 33.) We read in the Epistle to the Corinthians that St. Paul baptized “the household of Stephanas.” (1 Cor. I. 16.) Now what meaning would any one attach to these expressions, if he had no theory to maintain, and could view them dispassionately? Would he not explain the “household” to include young as well as old, children as well as grown-up people? Who doubts when he reads the words of Joseph in Genesis, — “take food for the famine of your households” (Gen. xlii. 33);—or, “take your father and your households and come unto me” (Gen. xlv. 18), that children are included? Who can possibly deny that when God said to Noah, “Come thou and all thy house into the ark,” He meant Noah’s sons? (Gen. vii. 1.) For my own part I cannot see how these questions can be answered without establishing the principle of infant baptism. Admitting most fully that it is not directly said that St. Paul baptized little children, it seems to my mind the highest probability that the “households” he baptized comprised children as well as grown-up people.

(d) The behaviour of our Lord Jesus Christ to little children, as recorded in the Gospels, is very peculiar and full of meaning. The well-known passage in St. Mark is an instance of what I mean. “They brought young children⁵ to Him, that He should touch them: and His disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, He was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And He took them up in His arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them.” (Mark x. 13-16.)

Now I do not pretend for a moment to say that this passage is a direct proof of infant baptism. It is nothing of the kind. But I do say that it supplies a curious answer to some of the arguments in common use among those who object to infant baptism. That infants are capable of receiving some benefit from our Lord, that the conduct of those who would have kept them from Him was wrong in our Lord's eyes, that He was ready and willing to bless them, even when they were too young to understand what He said or did,—all these things stand out as clearly as if written with a sunbeam! A direct argument in favour of infant baptism the passage certainly is not. But a stronger indirect testimony it seems to me impossible to conceive.

I might easily add to these arguments. I might strengthen the position I have taken up by several considerations which seem to me to deserve very serious attention. I might show, from the writings of old Dr. Lightfoot, that the baptism of little children was a practice with which the Jews were perfectly familiar. When proselytes were received into the Jewish Church by baptism, before our Lord Jesus Christ came, their infants were received, and baptized with them, as a matter of course.

I might show that infant baptism was uniformly practiced by all the early Christians. Every Christian writer of any repute during the first 1500 years after Christ, with the single exception of perhaps Tertullian, speaks of infant baptism as a custom which the Church has always maintained.

I might show that the vast majority of eminent Christians from the period of the Protestant Reformation down to the present day, have maintained the rights of infants to be baptized. Luther, Calvin, Melancthon, and all the Continental Reformers,—Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, and all the English Reformers,— the great body of all the English Puritans,—the whole of the Episcopal, Presbyterian, Independent, and Methodist Churches of the present day,—are all of one mind on this point. They all hold infant baptism!

But I will not weary the reader by going over this ground. I will proceed to notice two arguments which are commonly used against infant baptism, and are thought by some to be unanswerable. Whether they really are so I will leave the reader to judge.

The first favourite argument against infant baptism is the entire absence of any direct text or precept in its favour in the New Testament. "Show me a plain text," says many a Baptist, "commanding me to baptize little children. Without a plain text the thing ought not to be done." I reply,

for one thing, that the absence of any text about infant baptism is, to my mind, one of the strongest evidences in its favour. That infants were formally admitted into the Church by an outward ordinance, for 1800 years before Christ came, is a fact that cannot be denied. Now, if he had meant to change the practice, and exclude infants from baptism, I should expect to find some plain text about it. But I find none, and therefore I conclude that there was to be no alteration and no change. The very absence of any direct command, on which the Baptists lay such stress, is, in reality, one of the strongest arguments against them! No change and therefore no text! But I reply, for another thing, that the absence of some plain text or command is not a sufficient argument against infant baptism. There are not a few things which can be proved and inferred from Scripture, though they are not plainly and directly taught. Let the Baptist show us a single plain text which directly warrants the admission of women to the Lord's Supper.—Let him show us one which directly teaches the keeping of the Sabbath on the first day of the week instead of the seventh.—Let him show us one which directly forbids gambling. Any well instructed Baptist knows that it cannot be done. But surely, if this is the case, there is an end of this famous argument against infant baptism! It falls to the ground.

The second favourite argument against infant baptism is the inability of infants to repent and believe. "What can be more monstrous," says many a Baptist, "than to administer an ordinance to an unconscious babe? It cannot possibly know anything of repentance and faith, and therefore it ought not to be baptized. The Scripture says, 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved;' and, 'Repent, and be baptized.'" (Mark xvi. 16; Acts ii. 38.) In reply to this argument, I ask to be shown a single text which says that nobody ought to be baptized until he repents and believes. I shall ask in vain. The texts just quoted prove conclusively that grown-up people who repent and believe when missionaries preach the Gospel to them, ought at once to be baptized. But they do not prove that their children ought not to be baptized together with them, even though they are too young to believe. I find St. Paul baptized "the household of Stephanas" (1 Cor. i. 16); but I do not find a word about their believing at the time of their baptism. The truth is that the often-quoted texts, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved,"—and "Repent ye, and be baptized," will never carry the weight that Baptists lay upon them. To assert that they forbid any one to be baptized unless he repents and believes, is to put a meaning on the words which they were never meant to bear. They leave the whole question of infants entirely out of sight. The text "nobody shall be baptized except he repents

and believes," would no doubt have been a very conclusive one. But such a text cannot be found! After all, will anyone tell us that an intelligent profession of repentance and faith is absolutely necessary to salvation? Would even the most rigid Baptist say that because infants cannot believe, all infants must be damned? Yet our Lord said plainly, "He that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark xvi. 16.)—Will any man pretend to say that infants cannot receive grace and the Holy Ghost? John the Baptist, we know, was filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb. (Luke I. 15.)—Will anyone dare to tell us that infants cannot be elect,—cannot be in the covenant,—cannot be members of Christ,—cannot be children of God,—cannot have new hearts,—cannot be born again,—cannot go to heaven when they die?— These are solemn and serious questions. I cannot believe that any well-informed Baptist would give them any but one answer. Yet surely those who may be members of the glorious Church above, may be admitted to the Church below! Those who are washed with the blood of Christ, may surely be washed with the water of baptism! Those who can be capable of being baptized with the Holy Ghost, may surely be baptized with water! Let these things be calmly weighed. I have seen many arguments against infant baptism, which, traced to their logical conclusion, are arguments against infant salvation, and condemn all infants to eternal ruin!

I leave this part of my subject here. I am almost ashamed of having said so much about it. But the times in which we live are my plea and justification. I do not write so much to convince Baptists, as to establish and confirm Churchmen. I have often been surprised to see how ignorant some Churchmen are of the grounds on which infant baptism may be defended. If I have done anything to show Churchmen the strength of their own position, I feel that I shall not have written in vain.

Let us now consider, in the last place, what position baptism ought to hold in our religion.

This is a point of great importance. In matters of opinion man is ever liable to go into extremes. In nothing does this tendency appear so strongly as in the matter of religion. In no part of religion is man in so much danger of erring, either on the right hand or the left, as about the sacraments. In order to arrive at a settled judgment about baptism, we must beware both of the error of defect, and of the error of excess.

We must beware, for one thing, of despising baptism. This is the error of defect. Many in the present day seem to regard it with perfect indifference. They pass it by, and give it no place or position in their religion.

Because, in many cases, it seems to confer no benefit, they appear to jump to the conclusion that it can confer none. They care nothing if baptism is never named in the sermon. They dislike to have it publicly administered in the congregation. In short, they seem to regard the whole subject of baptism as a troublesome question, which they are determined to let alone. They are neither satisfied with it, nor without it.

Now, I only ask such persons to consider gravely, whether their attitude of mind is justified by Scripture. Let them remember our Lord's distinct and precise command to "baptize," when He left His disciples alone in the world. Let them remember the invariable practice of the Apostles, wherever they went preaching the Gospel. Let them mark the language used about baptism in several places in the Epistles. Now, is it likely,—is it probable,—is it agreeable to reason and common sense,—that baptism can be safely regarded as a dropped subject, and quietly laid on the shelf? Surely, I think these questions can only receive one answer.

It is simply unreasonable to suppose that the Great Head of the Church would burden His people in all ages with an empty, powerless, unprofitable institution. It is ridiculous to suppose His Apostles would speak as they do about baptism, if, in no case, and under no circumstances, could it be of any use or help to man's soul. Let these things be calmly weighed. Let us take heed, lest in fleeing from blind superstition, we are found equally blind in another way, and pour contempt on an appointment of Christ.

We must beware, for another thing, of making an idol of baptism. This is the error of excess. Many in the present day exalt baptism to a position which nothing in Scripture can possibly justify. If they hold infant baptism, they will tell you that the grace of the Holy Ghost invariably accompanies the administration of the ordinance,—that in every case, a seed of Divine life is implanted in the heart, to which all subsequent religious movement must be traced,—and that all baptized children are, as a matter of course, born again, and made partakers of the Holy Ghost!—If they do not hold infant baptism, they will tell you that to go down into the water with a profession of faith and repentance is the very turning-point in a man's religion,—that until we have gone down into the water we are nothing,—and that when we have gone down into the water, we have taken the first step toward heaven! It is notorious that many High Churchmen and Baptists hold these opinions, though not all. And I say that although they may not mean it, they are practically making an idol of baptism.

I ask all persons who hold these exceedingly high and lofty views of baptism, to consider seriously what warrant they have in the Bible for their opinions. To quote texts in which the greatest privileges and blessings are connected with baptism, is not enough. What we want are plain texts which show that these blessings and privileges are always and invariably conferred. The question to be settled is not whether a child may be born again and receive grace in baptism, but whether all children are born again, and receive grace when they are baptized.—The question is not whether an adult may “put on Christ” when he goes down into the water, but whether all do as a matter of course. Surely these things demand grave and calm consideration!—It is positively wearisome to read the sweeping and illogical assertions which are often made upon this subject. To tell us, for example, that our Lord’s famous words to Nicodemus (John iii. 5), teach anything more than the general necessity of being “born of water and the spirit,” is an insult to common sense. Whether all persons baptized are “born of water and the Spirit” is another question altogether, and one which the text never touches at all. To assert that it is taught in the text, is just as illogical as the common assertion of the Baptist, when he tells you that because Jesus said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved,”—therefore nobody ought to be baptized until he believes!

The right position of baptism can only be decided by a careful observation of the language of Scripture about it. Let a man read the New Testament honestly and impartially for himself. Let him come to the reading of it with an unprejudiced, fair, and unbiased mind. Let him not bring with him pre-conceived ideas, and a blind reverence for the opinion of any uninspired writing, of any man, or of any set of men. Let him simply ask the question,—“What does Scripture teach about baptism, and its place in Christian theology?”—and I have little doubt as to the conclusion he will come to. He will neither trample baptism under his feet, nor exalt it over his head.

(a) He will find that baptism is frequently mentioned, and yet not so frequently as to lead us to think that it is the very first, chief, and foremost thing in Christianity. In fourteen out of twenty-one Epistles, baptism is not even named. In five out of the remaining seven, it is only mentioned once. In one of the remaining two, it is only mentioned twice. In the two pastoral Epistles to Timothy it is not mentioned at all. There is, in short, only one Epistle, viz., the first to the Corinthians, in which baptism is even named on more than two occasions. And, singularly enough, this is the very Epistle in which St. Paul says, “I thank God that I baptized none

of you,”—and “Christ sent me not be baptize, but to preach the Gospel.” (1 Cor. I. 14, 17.)

(b) He will find that baptism is spoken of with deep reverence, and in close connection with the highest privileges and blessings. Baptized people are said to be “buried with Christ,”—to have “put on Christ,”—to have “risen again,”—and even (by straining a doubtful text) to have the “washing of regeneration.” But he will also find that Judas Iscariot, Ananias and Sapphira, Simon Magus, and others, were baptized, and yet gave no evidence of having been born again. He will also see that in the first Epistle of John, people “born of God” are said to have certain marks and characteristics which myriads of baptized persons never possess at any period of their lives. (1 John ii. 29; iii. 9; v. 1, 4, 18.) And not least, he will find St. Peter declaring that the baptism which saves is “not the putting away the filth of the flesh,” the mere washing of the body, but the “answer of a good conscience.” (1 Peter iii. 21.)

(c) Finally, he will discover that while baptism is frequently spoken of in the New Testament, there are other subjects which are spoken of much more frequently. Faith, hope, charity, God’s grace, Christ’s offices, the work of the Holy Ghost, redemption, justification, the nature of Christian holiness,—all these are points about which he will find far more than about baptism. Above all, he will find, if he marks the language of Scripture about the Old Testament sacrament of circumcision, that the value of God’s ordinances depends entirely on the spirit in which they are received, and the heart of the receiver. “In Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love,—but a new creature.” (Gal. v. 6; vi. 15.) “He is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is out-ward in the flesh: but he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.” (Rom. ii. 28, 29.) It only remains for me now to say a few words by way of practical conclusion to the whole paper. The nature, manner, subjects, and position of baptism have been severally considered.

Let me now show the reader the special lessons to which I think attention ought to be directed.

For one thing, I wish to urge on all who study the much-disputed subject of baptism, the importance of aiming at simple views of this sacrament. The dim, hazy, swelling words, which are often used by writers about baptism, have been fruitful sources of strange and unscriptural views of

the ordinance. Poets, and hymn-composers, and Romish theologians, have flooded the world with so much high-flown and rhapsodical language on the point, that the minds of many have been thoroughly swamped and confounded. Thousands have imbibed notions about baptism from poetry, without knowing it, for which they can show no warrant in God's Word. Milton's *Paradise Lost* is the sole parent of many a current view of Satan's agency; and uninspired poetry is the sole parent of many a man's views of baptism in the present day. Once for all, let me entreat every reader of this paper to hold no doctrine about baptism which is not plainly taught in God's Word. Let him beware of maintaining any theory, however plausible, which cannot be supported by Scripture. In religion, it matters nothing who says a thing, or how beautifully he says it. The only question we ought to ask is this,—“Is it written in the Bible? what saith the Lord?”

For another thing, I wish to urge on many of my fellow Churchmen the dangerous tendency of extravagantly high views of the efficacy of baptism. I have no wish to conceal my meaning. I refer to those Churchmen who maintain that grace invariably accompanies baptism, and that all baptized infants are in baptism born again. I ask such persons, in all courtesy and brotherly kindness, to consider seriously the dangerous tendency of their views, and the consequences which logically result from them. They seem to me, and to many others, to degrade a holy ordinance appointed by Christ into a mere charm, which is to act mechanically, like a medicine acting on the body, without any movement of a man's heart or soul. Surely this is dangerous! They encourage the notion that it matters nothing in what manner of spirit people bring their children to be baptized. It signifies nothing whether they come with faith, and prayer, and solemn feelings, or whether they come careless, prayer less, godless, and ignorant as heathens! The effect, we are told, is always the same in all cases! In all cases, we are told, the infant is born again the moment it is baptized, although it has no right to baptism at all, except as the child of Christian parents. Surely this is dangerous! They help forward the perilous and soul-ruining delusion that a man may have grace in his heart, while it cannot be seen in his life. Multitudes of our worshippers have not a spark of religious life or grace about them. And yet we are told that they must all be addressed as regenerate, or possessors of grace, because they have been baptized! Surely this is dangerous! Now I firmly believe that hundreds of excellent Churchmen have never fully considered the points which I have just brought forward. I ask them to do so. For the honour of the Holy Ghost, for the honour of Christ's holy sacraments, I invite them to consider seriously

the tendency of their views. Sure am I that there is only one safe ground to take up in stating the effects of baptism, and that is the old ground stated by our Lord: "Every tree is known by his own fruit." (Luke vi. 44.) When baptism is used profanely and carelessly, we have no right to expect a blessing to follow it, any more than we expect it for a careless recipient of the Lord's Supper. When no grace can be seen in a man's life, we have no right to say that he is regenerate and received grace in baptism.

For another thing, I wish to urge on all Baptists who may happen to read this paper, the duty of moderation in stating their views of baptism, and of those who disagree with them. I say this with sorrow. I respect many members of the Baptist community, and I believe they are men and women whom I shall meet in heaven. But when I mark the extravagantly violent language which some Baptists use against infant baptism, I cannot help feeling that they may be justly requested to judge more moderately of those with whom they disagree. Does the Baptist mean to say that his peculiar views of baptism are needful to salvation, and that nobody will be saved who holds that infants ought to be baptized? I cannot think that any intelligent Baptist in his senses would assert this. At this rate he would shut out of heaven the whole Church of England, all the Methodists, all the Presbyterians, and all the Independents! At this rate, Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, Luther, Calvin, Knox, Baxter, Owen, Wesley, Whitfield, and Chalmers, are all lost! They all firmly maintained infant baptism, and therefore they are all in hell! I cannot believe that any Baptist would say anything so monstrous and absurd. Does the Baptist mean to say that his peculiar views of baptism are necessary to a high degree of grace and holiness? Will he undertake to assert that Baptists have always been the most eminent Christians in the world, and are so at this day? If he does make this assertion, he may be fairly asked to give some proof of it. But he cannot do so. He may show us, no doubt, many Baptists who are excellent Christians. But he will find it hard to prove that they are one bit better than some of the Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Independents, and Methodists, who all hold that infants ought to be baptized. Now, surely, if the peculiar opinions of the Baptists are neither necessary to salvation nor to eminent holiness, we may fairly ask Baptists to be moderate in their language about those who disagree with them. Let them, by all means, maintain their own peculiar views, if they think they have discovered a "more excellent way." Let them use their liberty and be fully persuaded in their own minds. The narrow way to heaven is wide enough for believers of every name and denomination.

But for the sake of peace and charity, let me entreat Baptists to exercise moderation in their judgment of others.

In the last place, I wish to urge on all Christians the immense importance of giving to each part of Christianity its proper proportion and value, but nothing more. Let us beware of wresting things from their right places, and putting that which is second first, and that which is first second. Let us give all due honour to baptism and the Lord's Supper, as sacraments ordained by Christ Himself. But let us never forget that, like every outward ordinance, their benefit depends entirely on the manner in which they are received. Above all, let us never forget that while a man may be baptized, like Judas, and yet never be saved, so also a man may never be baptized, like the penitent thief, and yet may be saved.—The things needful to salvation are an interest in Christ's atoning blood, and the presence of the Holy Ghost in the heart and life. He that is wrong on these two points will get no benefit from his baptism, whether he is baptized as an infant or grown up. He will find at the last day that he is wrong for evermore.

LTN - Chapter 20 - The Current Crisis of Race Relations

MLK Jr. article written for a Christian publication in 1958. This article is from generations before mine but it is so inspiring the faith and practice of keeping Jesus first. I know discrimination still exists but this help put context as we are today versus ~65 years ago.

In America life there is today a real crisis in race relations. This crisis has been precipitated, on the one hand, by the determined resistance of reactionary elements in the South to the Supreme Court's momentous decision against segregation in the public schools. Many states have risen in open defiance. Legislative halls of the South ring loud with such words as "interposition" and "nullification." The Ku Klux Klan is on the march again, determined to preserve segregation at any cost. Then there are the White Citizens Councils. All of these forces have conjoined to make for massive resistance.

The crisis has been precipitated, other the other hand, by the radical change in the Negro's evaluation of himself. There would probably be no crisis in race relations if the Negro continued to think of himself in inferior terms and patiently accepted injustice and exploitation. But is at this very point the the change has come. For many years the Negro tacitly accepted segregation. He was the victim of stagnant passivity and deadening complacency. The system of slavery and segregation cause many Negroes to feel that perhaps they were inferior. This is the ultimate tragedy of segregation. It not only harms one physically, but it inflicts the segregator with a false sense of superiority while inflicting the segregated with a false sense of inferiority. But through the forces of history something happened to the Negro. He came to feel that he was somebody. He came to feel the important thing about a man is not the color of his skin or the texture of his hair, but the texture and quality of his soul. With this new sense of dignity and new self-respect a new Negro emerged. So there has been a revolutionary change in the Negro's evaluation of his nature and destiny, and a determination to achieve freedom and human dignity.

This determination springs from the same longing for freedom that motivates oppressed people all over the world.

The deep rumblings of discontent from Asia and Africa are at bottom a quest for freedom and human dignity on the part of the people who have long been the victims of colonialism and imperialism. The struggle for freedom on the part of oppressed people in general and the American Negro in particular is not suddenly going to disappear. It is sociologically true that privilege classes really every give up they privileges without strong resistance. It is also true that once oppressed people rise up against their oppression there is not stopping point short of full freedom. So realism impetus us to admit that the struggle will continue until freedom is a reality for all of the oppressed peoples of the world.

STRUGGLE

Since the struggle will continue, the basis question which confronts the oppressed peoples of the world is this: How will the struggle against the forces of injustice be waged?

There are two possible answers, Once is to resort to the all too prevalent method of physical violence and corroding hatred. Violence nevertheless solves no social problem; it merely creates new and more complicated ones. Occasionally violence is temporarily successful, but never permanently so. It often brings temporary victory, but never permanent peace. If the American Negro and other victims of oppression succumb to the temptation of using violence in the struggle for justice, unborn generations will be the recipients of a long and desolate night of bitterness, and their chief legacy to the future will be an endless reign of meaningless chaos.

NONVIOLENCE

The alternative to violence is the month of nonviolent resistance.

This method is not more and nothing less than Christianity in action. It seems to me to be the Christian way of life in solving problems of human relations. This method was made famous in our generation by Mohandas K. Gandhi, who used it to free his country from the domination of the British Empire. This method has also been used in Montgomery, Alabama, under the leadership of the ministers of all denominations, to

free fifty thousand Negroes from the long night of bus segregation. Several basic things can be said about nonviolence as a method in bring about better race relations.

First, this is not a method of cowardice or stagnant passivity; it does resist. The nonviolent resister is just as opposed to the evil against which he is protesting as the person who used violence. It is true that this method is passive or aggressive in the sense the the nonviolent resister is not aggressive physically toward his opponent, but his mind and emotions are always active, constantly seeking to persuade the opponent that his is mistaken. This method is passive physically, but it is strongly active spiritually; it is nonaggressive physically, but dynamically aggressive spiritually.

A second basis fact about this method is that it does not seek to defeat or humiliate the opponent, but to win his friendship and understanding. The nonviolent resister must often voice his protest through noncooperation or boycotts, but he realizes that noncooperation and boycotts are not ends within themselves; they are means to awaken a sense of moral shame with the opponent. The end is redemption and reconciliation.

The aftermath of nonviolence is the creation of the beloved community, while the aftermath of violence is tragic bitterness.

AGAINST EVIL

A third fact that characterizes the method of nonviolence is the that the attack is directed to forces of evil, rather than persons caught in the forces. It is evil that we are seeking to defeat, not the persons victimized with evil. This of us who struggle against racial injustice must come to see that the basic tension is not between races. As I like to say to the people in Montgomery, Alabama: "The tension in this city is not between white people and Negro people. The tension is at bottom between justice and injustice, between the forces of light and the forces of darkness. And if there is a victory it will be a victory, not merely for fifty thousand Negroes, but a victory for justice and the forces of life. We are out to defeat injustice and not the white persons who may happen to be unjust."

INTERNAL VIOLENCE

A fourth point that must be brought out concerning the method of nonviolence is that this method not only avoids external physical violence, but also internal violence of spirit. At the center of nonviolence stands the principle of love. In struggling for human dignity the oppressed people of the world must not succumb to the temptation of becoming bitter or indulging in hate campaigns. To retaliate with hate and bitterness would do nothing but intensify the existence of hate in our world. We have learned through the grim realities of life and history that hate and violence solve nothing. They only serve to push us deeper and deeper into the mire. Violence begets violence; hate begets hate; and toughness begets a greater toughness. It is all a descending spiral, and the end is destruction - for everybody. Along the way of life, someone must have enough sense and morality to cut off the chain of hate by projecting the ethics of love into the center of our lives.

In speaking of love, I am not referring to some sentimental and affectionate emotion. It would be nonsense to urge men to love their oppressors in an affectionate sense. Love is the connection means understanding good will as expressed in the Greek word *agape*. This means nothing sentimental or basically affectionate; it means understanding, redeeming good will for all men, an ever-owing love which seeks nothing in return. It is spontaneous, unmotivated, groundless, and creative. It is the love of God operating in the human heart. When we rise to love on the *agape* level, we rise to the position of loving the person who does the evil deed, while hating the deed that the person does.

A fifth basic fact about the method of nonviolent resistance is that it is based on the condition that the universe is on the side of justice/. It is this deep faith in the future that causes the nonviolent resister to accept suffering without retaliation. He knows that in his struggle for justice he has cosmic companionship. Now I am aware of the fact that there are devout believers in nonviolence who find it difficult to believe in a personal God. But even these persons believe in the existence of some creative force that works for togetherness, a creative force in this universe that works to being disconnected aspects of reality into harmonious whole. There is a create power in the universe that works to bring low gigantic mountains of evil and pull down prodigious hilltops of injustice.

FAITH

This is faith that keeps the nonviolent resister going through all the tensions and suffering that he. Must inevitably confront.

This of us who the name of Jesus Christ find something at the center of our faith which forever reminds us that God is on the side of truth and justice. Good Friday may occupy the throne for a day, but ultimately it must give way to the triumph of Easter. Evil may so shape events that Caesar will occupy a palace and Christ a cross, but that same events that Christ arose and split history into A.D. and B.C., so that even the life of Caesar must be dated by his name. Yes, "the arch of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice." There is something in this universe which justifies William Cullen Bryant in saying, "Truth crushed to earth will rise again." So in Montgomery, Alabama, we can walk and never get weary, because we know that there will be a great camp meeting in the promised land of freedom and justice.

MORAL DILEMMA

I cannot close this article without saying that the problem of arc is indeed America's greatest moral dilemma.

The churches are called upon to recognize the urgent necessity of taking a forthright stand on this crucial issue. If we are to remain true the gospel of Jesus Christ, we cannot rest until segregation and discrimination are banished from every area of American life. Many churches have taken a stand. The National Council of Churches has condemned segregation over and over agin, and has requested its constituent denominations to do likewise. Most of the major denominations have endorsed that action. Many individual ministers, even in the South, have stood up with dauntless courage. High tribute and appreciation is due the ninety ministers of Atlanta, Georgia, who so courageously signed the noble statement calling for compliance with the law and a reopening of the channels of communication between the races.

All of these thing are admirable and deserve our highest praise. But we must admit that these courageous stands from the church are still far too few. The sublime statements of the major denominations on the question of human relations move all too slowly to the local churches in actual practice. All too many ministers are

still silent. It may well be that the greatest tragedy of this period of social transition is not the glaring noisiness of the so-called bad people, but the appalling silence of the so-called good people. It may be that our generation will have to repent not only for the diabolical actions and vitriolic words of the children of darkness, but also for the crippling fears and tragic apathy of the children of light.

What we need is a restless determination to make the ideal of brotherhood a reality in this nation and all over the world.

There are certain technical words which tend to become stereotypes and cliches after a certain period of time. Psychologists have a word which is probably used more frequently than other any other word in modern psychology. It is the word "mal-adjusted." In a sense of all of us must live the well-adjusted life in order to avoid neurotic and schizophrenic personalities. But there are some things in our social system to which all of us ought to be maladjusted. I never intend to adjust myself to the viciousness of mob rule. I never intend to adjust myself to the evils of segregation and the crippling effects of discrimination. I never intend to adjust myself to the inequalities of an economic systems which takes necessities from the masses to give luxuries to the classes. I never intend to become adjusted to the madness of militarism and the self-defeating method of physical violence.

It may be that the salvation of the world lies in the hands of the maladjusted. The challenge to us is to be maladjusted - as maladjusted as the prophet Amos, who in the midst of the injustices of his day, could cry out in words that echo across the centuries, "Let judgement run down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream:: as maladjusted as Lincoln, who had the vision to see that this nation could not survive half slave and half free; as maladjusted as Jefferson, who in the midst of an age amazingly adjusted to slavery could cry out in words lifted to cosmic proportions, "All men are created equal, and are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and

the pursuit of Happiness”; as maladjusted as Jesus who could say to the men and women of his generation, “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you.”

The world is in desperate need of such maladjustment. Through such courageous maladjustment we will be able to emerge from the bleak and desolate midnight of man’s inhumanity to man into the bright and flittering daybreak of freedom and justice.

LTN - Chapter 21 - Alert - Narcissism

There is evil out there. This chapter is another exceptionally difficult one to approach but I am committed to documenting this because this book is created to help myself implement commandment #2 LTN. Early in the book I identified those LNT Love attributes as showing Affection + Mercy + Truthful + Peaceful.

- Affection = a gentle feeling of fondness or liking
- Truthful = telling or expressing the truth; honest
- Mercy = a blessing that is act of favor or compassion
- Peaceful = devoid of violence or force

My goal is LTN but be aware some people you must learn to LTN differently.

Jesus instructed his disciples “Behold, I send you out as sheep among wolves. Therefore, be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils, and in their synagogues they will scourge you. Yes, and you will be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony to them and to the nations. But when they deliver you up, don’t be anxious how or what you will say, for it will be given you in that hour what you will say. For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.”

I don’t want to be an judger but implementing those 4 Love attributes will be difficult for certain situations. In modern medical terms there are certain type of humans that currently get classified with personality disorders and mental illness. Jesus taught us “Don’t give that which is holy to the dogs, neither throw your pearls before the pigs, lest perhaps they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.” As followers of Jesus and born anew our earthly bodies become holy (pearls) instruments of God. As Jesus taught us with God all is possible but with mankind

we need to always remember our purpose. To Love thy God first and foremost and then LTN. Then the rest...

Jesus taught us also “But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what watch of the night the thief was coming, he would have watched, and would not have allowed his house to be broken into.” This chapter of LTN is meant to help me have attempt understanding to spot these type of people. Jesus taught his disciples people are going to try to rob them of their Gods spirit/light. So this chapter is an attempt to provide a Jesus based and physiological strategy in dealing with our various types of neighbors. As Christians our LTN and kindness what we strive for and but beware careful of this type of neighbor....

I believe we all have watched some Dr. Phil McGraw (DP) now and then but recently he has posted a mind opening podcast/YouTube series. In this series Dr. Phil explains how to identify a Narcissist and with the series called. “Phil in the Blanks: Toxic Personalities in the Real World.”. With the blessing of the Holy Spirt and a little DP I pray this chapter of LTN can help be a resource as we grow in our Christian lives.

As we start to explore this aspect reading all these traits and characteristics beware that we all have them within us to a certain extent. I don't want you to get anxiety, neurosis thinking, I'm an anxiety neurotic or do I have a personality disorder. It is very common to start taking inventory and start thinking I have a tendency to do this or that so I am bad. We all are on the behavior continuum from when we're completely comatose asleep to all the way to when we're our most animated heart racing. I have moments where I'm maybe full of myself, but the fact that you have moments where you lapse into that, doesn't make you a narcissist. This is why Jesus came to earth and his sheep are attracted to him and by continuous pray and reading mmlj we have a the best defense system ever. As you eyes open up with this knowledge remember that only God is perfect and use this information carefully.

Upon exploring this topic and if you have concerns about any danger or domestic abuse please contact someone professional that could help such as your local church, state and/or <https://www.whengeorgiasmiled.org>. Remember the LTN is Love Thy Neighbor as Thyself meaning you're allowed to take care of yourself if being abused or in danger. Always pray and knock on the door of help when needed.

Here we go...

In psychology, there is a concept called the dark triad which comprises the personality traits of Narcissism, Machiavellianism, and Psychopathy. Basically a point at which things go beyond mental illness and just become pure evil. All three dark triad traits are conceptually distinct although empirical evidence shows them to be overlapping.

Narcissism - characterized by grandiosity, pride, egotism, and a lack of empathy

Machiavellianism - characterized by manipulation and exploitation of others, an absence of morality, unemotional callousness, and a higher level of self interest

Psychopathy - characterized by continuous antisocial behavior, impulsivity, selfishness, callous and unemotional traits (CU), and remorselessness.

Let's focus initially on Narcissism and Dr P explains to us there is 4 types of Narcissists: Classic, Malignant, Convert and Communal. The DSM-5 is short for the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (5th ed.) reference handbook that the American Psychiatric Association (APA) publishes. It states the presence of at least 5 of the following 9 criteria is required to be classified with a potential narcissistic personality disorder (NPD):

6. Lacks empathy and is unwilling to identify with the needs of others - They seem to have no desire for real connection. They don't feel empathy for people in trouble.
7. Has an overblown sense of self-importance - They might mentally check out when you start talking, even when you're trying to relate to something they just said.
8. Behaves as if they are exceptionally "special" and can only be understood by or associate with other special people (or institutions) - They might be indifferent or even rude to people they think are "below" them. They may care more about making a good impression than anything else.
9. Needs to be admired - They may go to great lengths to make sure everyone is aware of their successes and accomplishments. They may get unreasonably angry if they feel humiliated or criticized.
10. Has an unrealistic sense of entitlement and expects others to give them special treatment - They may come undone when corrected, put out, or treated as if they are "common."

11. Exploits and takes advantage of others to achieve their own goals - They may frequently use other people for their own gain. They might add others on social media for the sole purpose of getting more “likes” but never return the favor.
12. Is often envious of others or believes that others are envious of them - They may disparage people they are envious of and point out reasons why those people shouldn't be admired. They can't seem to accept that others are genuinely more successful.
13. Displays arrogant behaviors and attitudes - They may constantly talk about their success, influence, or attractiveness. For instance, they might brag about how much they get hit on but then “complain” about it.
14. Regularly talks about their fantasies of success, power, or recognition for their brilliance - Conversations may primarily revolve around the kind of luxury car they want or other material or shallow desires.

Jesus taught us about a list of 13 items stating “Are you also without understanding? Don't you perceive that whatever goes into the people from outside can't defile him, because it doesn't go into their heart, but into their stomach, then into the latrine, making all foods clean? That which proceeds out of the man, that defiles the a person. For from within, out of the hearts of people, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, sexual sins, murders, thefts, covetings, wickedness, deceit, lustful desires, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, and foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile the person.”

DP enforces that that there's a difference between being a narcissist and having a narcissistic personality disorder, a narcissistic personality disorder is a specific diagnosis that you find in the DSM-5. And that means that you have to fit into certain criteria, says you have to have it for so long. You have to check certain boxes. A lot of people might not meet all the criteria for that diagnosis, but that doesn't mean that they aren't narcissist. If you're dealing with a narcissist in your life, you don't care where they check all the boxes for the diagnosis or not. You care how they impact your life. I think all human behavior is on a continuum. And then subsets of human behavior are on a continuum. Narcissism is on a continuum. It ranges from maybe being a little narcissistic to be-

ing woefully narcissistic. It's not like being a little bit pregnant. It's not like either you are or aren't.

But you know, they're grandiose. They have big egos. They have to be the center of attention. They are people that just don't take well to criticism. They always have to be the center of attention.

Domestic Abusers

Dr. Phil states narcissistic traits are way overrepresented in the population of domestic abusers.

He goes on to tell a story about when he did internship anger management volunteer work for people going into court, family court or criminal court. These anger management classes are because they've induced violence on others (wife & children) due to anger aspects. Basically, people who have slapped or punched a family member and/or someone else. He was doing a session with about 20 people which have been assigned by the court to go through this group therapy because they're abusers. He describes these are the people who fly into rages and abuse, their spouse and/or child.

Being young and naive at the time he thought these people are going to come in on such a shame trip. They're going to be embarrassed to show their face. They're going to sit there like I cannot believe I did this. I can't believe I'm here. I can't believe I have to sit in front of these people and talk about this. He thought it was going to be like pulling teeth, to get anybody to talk to anybody, participate. Man did this naive young student get the wake up call of his life he stated. He found these to be the most arrogant belligerent unapologetic group of people he had ever seen in my life. They were bragging about what they did. They were blaming the victim. They didn't deny it. They said, oh, she exaggerated all of this. She made all this up. But before they finished the paragraph, they were saying that they were provoked into doing this and that the judge didn't understand, or they wouldn't be there. This wasn't their fault. This was pushed on them. They were the most unapologetic belligerent people he ever seen in his life. That's what you're dealing with when talking about a malignant narcissism, no empathy whatsoever.

He would pull their file out and say, okay, Bob, let's see exactly what we're talking about here. So just exactly. Why are you here? Well, you'll have to ask the judge that. Well, no, I'm asking you that. Why are you here? Well, you know, we fight like everybody else. Oh really? Well, let's see here on six different occasions,

you've choked your wife to unconsciousness. You put her head through a plate glass window and she had 142 stitches. Oh, by the way, you did this in front of your three children. You broken four over ribs and knocked out nine of her teeth. I think that would have anything to do with why the judge sent you down here.

Well, look, uh, a lot of that's blown out of proportion and uh, you know, you can only take so much. Somebody gets in your face. What are you going to do when they, I mean, just argumentative in your face. And he looks around the room to see if people are appalled and there are a few, but for the most part, they're just waiting their turn. And he looks at him to see if he's reading the room. Is he embarrassed about this? No, no, no. He wants to talk about it. He's like 142 stitches. She should add 242 of you to heard the crap she was telling me. And let me tell you something else. I mean, unbelievable. That's what I'm trying to get across to you with a malignant narcissist.

And why am I telling you all of this? Because he want to get across to you. You ain't going to change these people. There's nothing going to do that is going to cause these people to get better or improve their attitude, their conduct, their behavior. It's not going to happen. This is way above your pay grade. You're not qualified. You don't have the skill. You don't have the ability, you're not going to improve these people. And that's the problem with personality disorders. People with personality disorders in large part may not recognize that it isn't working for them. So they just may think this is the way they go through life. This is just who they are. This is their personality. This is how they do what they do.

Road Rage and Aggressive Driving.

Are you a person or do you know a person whom has Road Rage or Aggressive Driving behavior. How I am suppose to LTN who has this behavior? Remember the purpose of this chapter is open our viewpoint to see what type of neighbor we are dealing with. DP states narcissistic traits are way overrepresented also in this population of Road Rage and Aggressive Drivers.

I thought the below descriptions from a company called Zebra was useful. They are one of the USA leading insurance comparison site and an independent source for auto insurance quotes, consumer education, and original research.

Road Rage - takes aggressive driving behaviors to the extreme and can include making obscene gestures or actually touching another car (ramming, sideswiping). Other examples of road rage:

- Displaying angry or obscene gestures (middle finger)
- Yelling or cursing at another driver
- Throwing objects
- Purposely bumping or ramming another vehicle
- Sideswiping another vehicle
- Forcing another driver off the road
- Getting out of their vehicle to confront another driver
- Getting in a physical altercation with another driver

Aggressive Driving - is any deliberate, unsafe driving behavior — like changing lanes without a turn signal or tailgating. Aggressive driving can include:

- Speeding in heavy traffic
- Tailgating
- Intentionally cutting off another driver
- Weaving in and out of traffic
- Changing lanes without signaling
- Blocking cars from passing or changing lanes
- Driving while distracted by a phone or device
- Running a red light or disobeying a traffic signal on purpose
- Honking to show anger or frustration

Heck I know that I have hit on the horn, gave the bird and uttered offensive words in anger or annoyance several times. We have breaking points or stressful moments in our lives that come out when we interface with our neighbors driving. The difference is these non-LTN behavior occurs several times over the years vs. as a status quo most every time trait. As a person trying to LTN it is important to understand there is more than just a bad day at the office vibe but realizing I need to examine this person a little more before throwing my pearls to them and given away my Gods light. If your getting in a new relationship with someone driving with several times might be a good way to see if any underlying narcissistic traits exist (aka - warning signs).

Mmlj - “The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.”

mmLj - “Two men went up into the temple to pray; one was a Pharisee, and the other was a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed by himself like this: God, I thank you that I am not like the rest of men: extortionists, unrighteous, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week. I give tithes of all that I get. But the tax collector, standing far away, wouldn’t even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, God, be merciful to me, a sinner! I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

Mmlj - “For there is no good tree that produces rotten fruit, nor again a rotten tree that produces good fruit. For each tree is known by its own fruit. For people don’t gather figs from thorns, nor do they gather grapes from a bramble bush. The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings out that which is good, and the evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings out that which is evil, for out of the abundance of the heart, his mouth speaks.”

Mmlj - “But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what watch of the night the thief was coming, he would have watched, and would not have allowed his house to be broken into.”

LTN - Chapter 22 - 3 Tips from the Bible on Dealing with Narcissists

<https://www.changingus.org/blog/bible-tips-to-deal-with-narcissists>

The term “narcissist” is definitely a buzz word these days.

What was once limited to a professional’s diagnosis (and a rare one, at that) is now being “diagnosed” by spouses, siblings, parents, children, and paraprofessionals like pastors, coaches, and bloggers. Because of this, there are more people being labeled as narcissists than ever before.

As Christians, how should we think about this phenomenon – is it OK to label someone like that? What would Jesus do?

Let’s start by explaining what narcissism is.

According to psychologists, narcissism is a disorder in which someone has an inflated sense of self-importance. Symptoms include an excessive need for admiration, disregard for others’ feelings, an inability to handle criticism, and a sense of entitlement. Diagnosis is rare – fewer than 200,000 US cases per year – but the condition is chronic (lifelong) and cannot be cured.

To label someone as a narcissist is a serious claim.

Lifelong. Incurable. Those are definitive words. But, even with those strong designations, maybe narcissism isn’t as rare as psychologists say it is.

The Bible speaks of our inherently selfish nature. Ephesians 2: 3 says that all of us at one time lived to gratify the cravings of the flesh, and we were, by nature, deserving of wrath. This dates all the way back to the beginning of the human race. When Adam and Eve ate the fruit from the forbidden tree, it was the lure of their selfish desires – their desire for pleasure, popularity, and power – that drew them. The same things that drive narcissists.

James says that it’s selfish desires that start quarrels (James 4: 1) and that selfish desires give birth to sin and sin to death (James 1: 14, 15). And he also knows that where you have selfish ambition,

you have disorder and every evil practice (James 3: 16). [Click [here](#) to access the list of evil practices/tactics that create disorder]

But does the fact that it's our nature, in and of itself, presuppose that it is incurable? Not at all. In his letter to the Romans, Paul talks about his selfish and evil desires and desperately cries "What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me?" His answer: God, who delivers us through Jesus (Romans 7: 24, 25).

"What a wretched man I am."

That is the difference between a narcissist and someone who isn't.

Someone whose selfish condition is not defined as "lifelong and incurable" is able to recognize that they are wretched and need help for their condition. Someone who is truly a narcissist would never admit that. It would be devastating to their identity. It would mean having to surrender and give up control. Like Satan, control is something a narcissist must have. 1 John 5: 19-21 says that the whole world is under the control of the evil one. Satan has minions everywhere – people who are feeding his narcissism and who are codependent on him – not believing that he is evil and falling for his lies.

Like Satan, a narcissist without minions in their control to support their worth would be reduced to nothing – an unbearable situation for them. That is why a narcissist will steal, kill, and destroy to maintain control. And it is why the book of 1 John ends by letting us know that Jesus has come and given us understanding so that we are no longer under Satan's control. And then it goes on to give us a strong warning to keep ourselves from idols so that we stay away from those who could get us to believe lies and worship them.

Does that mean that a narcissist is beyond salvation?

We want to believe that no one is beyond salvation. After all, nothing is impossible for God. And Acts 2: 21 says that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. But therein lies the problem. Remember Paul's cry of "what a wretched man I am"? A narcissist cannot utter that cry or call on the name of the Lord. It isn't that God doesn't want to save them – it's that they don't want to be saved because they don't see the need to be saved. And God will not force someone to come to him who is not willing.

(As a side note, narcissists are able to learn what to say and what not to say in order to blend in with society. So a narcissist might

say that they know they are wretched and need a savior - and they might even say so convincingly, but that doesn't mean they're feeling that on the inside or showing it on the outside.)

1 John 5: 16 says that there is a sin that leads to death – a sin so egregious that we are told to not even bother praying for it. Matthew 12: 31, 32 tells us that this unforgivable sin is a rejection of the Holy Spirit. That rejection of the Holy Spirit defines the very nature of a narcissist. [Read my article on how people become narcissists]

Does the Bible give us any hint as to how to handle narcissists?

1. Don't waste your time or energy on them

In 1 John 5: 16 (quoted in the previous paragraph), there's a hint: Don't even bother praying about the sin that leads to death. Too often, codependents (those who stay in relationships with narcissists, feeding their egos and giving them "narcissistic supply") spend a lot of time and emotional energy doing things (including praying) to try to get their narcissist to change, to love, to be kind, and to be happy. The Bible says that we shouldn't even bother praying for that. They can't change, because change requires surrender, and they can't surrender. So don't waste your time and energy on them.

That's not to say that we shouldn't pray for them at all - we can still pray for the circumstances of their lives; but when it comes to their salvation, we should do as 1 Corinthians 5: 5 says: "Hand this man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit might be saved on the day of the Lord." [This article may help you resolve any issues of bitterness you might have so that you can pray rightly for him]

2. Don't yield to them

When you know the truth and are able to set boundaries and stand up for yourself, a narcissist will oppose you. Galatians 4: 16 says, "Have I now become your enemy by telling you the truth?" That does happen. Tell the truth anyway. Philippians 1: 28 says to not be afraid of those who oppose you, because your lack of fear will be a sign to them that they will be destroyed but that you will be saved. When they see how confident you are in the truth, it will be a sign to them that you are right and they are wrong.

3. Live in peace

1 Corinthians 7: 15 tells us that if an unbeliever (this includes a narcissist [you can read my article about whether someone is a believer here]) can't live with you in peace, then let them live without you. You aren't required to stay with someone who, by all intents and purposes, clearly doesn't have any interest in having a peaceful, healthy relationship with you.

[Click here to read about what the Bible says about divorce]

And when you allow the relationship to go its own way, it could end up being a good thing. 1 Corinthians 7: 16 says "how do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband?" by your willingness to let go. (Hey, we could always be wrong about them being a narcissist.)

What if there's a chance that they aren't a narcissist?

As was implied earlier, there's a chance that anyone could wrongly "diagnose" someone as a narcissist. Then what? Would all of this prove to be a moot point for you? The consequences of misdiagnosing someone you love could be catastrophic. It could mean the end of relationship for which you'd given up hope under wrong presumptions!

No one wants that. That's why, in the end, it truly doesn't matter whether you are accurate about whether someone is a narcissist. Once we understand the truth, know what love is, establish boundaries, and confidently enforce them, we develop a consistency in the way we treat people, regardless of their spiritual, mental, or emotional state. What I mean is that, when someone treats you poorly, crosses a boundary, or opposes you, a healthy person (you) has a response that is consistent regardless of who the offending person is. Here's an example.

Let's say that someone gets upset with you and makes an assumption about your reason for doing something. You know the TRUTH, so you

T – Trust your gut

R – Recognize that your feelings give you information

U – Undo what you've learned about affirmation, respect, love, submission

T – Tell yourself and others the truth

H – Hold tight to the Word of God [Read my article on God's will]

And you say, “I can understand why you would think that, but the truth is, here is what my reasoning actually was,” and you explain yourself.

If it’s your boss at work who is upset with you, he might respond with, “Oh, I hadn’t thought about the possibility that you were thinking about it that way. OK. Let’s think about other ways to get this done.”

That’s a healthy response:

1. You had freedom to express your thoughts without fear of retaliation
2. Your perspective was heard and valued
3. The response indicated an acceptance of reality without any indication that you “shouldn’t” have thought about it the way you did
4. He took responsibility for the fact that he hadn’t thought about it that way
5. The result was an ability to move forward amicably

Now, let’s say that, instead, when you say “I can understand why you would think that, but the truth is, here is what my reasoning actually was,” and you explain yourself, the response back is: “You can’t think about it that way. That’s the most twisted way of thinking I’ve ever heard, and it’s just an excuse for your poor performance.” And you bristle at whatever might be coming next.

That is an unhealthy response:

You were retaliated against (belittled) for expressing your thoughts. Your perspective was invalidated. The person’s response deviated from reality in that there was a demand that reality adapt to him when he said that it “can’t” be like that. He took no responsibility for his part in the problem. And the result was bad feelings and a roadblock to moving forward.

Your next response is now based on what you know about how he responds, and you will use the 3 C’s [see the step-by-step guide to healthy confrontation]

- 1) Stay Calm and don’t READ (Reason, Explain, Argue, or Defend)

2) Control only what you can

3) Minimize Contact

And you will respond with the 3 S's in mind:

- Safety – guard your heart, protect yourself emotionally and physically
- Security – consider your ability to provide for yourself financially
- Sanity – do what it takes to keep yourself clear-headed and calm

You didn't need to label anyone as a narcissist in order to know how to respond. In fact, your first response is the same regardless of whether someone is emotionally healthy or unhealthy. Then, you tweak your responses from there based on the information that you get about the other person from the way they are responding.

What this boils down to is that the way you interact with people isn't dependent upon whether they have a chronic mental health condition, whether they have authority over you, or even whether you're married to them. Your response to them is based upon who you are and the boundaries that you have and the truth that you cling to from God's word. Because you know that

hope isn't found in our situation changing; it is found in our situation . .

LTN - Chapter 23 - 40+ tactics **that are unhealthy, dysfunctional,** **and destructive**

<https://www.changingus.org/40-unhealthy-tactics>

Being able to put a name to the behavior that is making you wonder who's the one in the wrong can bring a sense of confidence in your intuition and let you know that you are not the only one experiencing this in your relationship.

What follows are more than 40 tactics that may be used by those who do not have healthy and mature ways of dealing with conflict.

1. Projection – They accuse you of character traits and behaviors that THEY have (being greedy, suspicious, angry, unforgiving, arrogant, irrational, etc.).
2. Bullying – They use verbal or nonverbal language to let you know that you aren't a match for them.
3. Word Salads or Rabbit Trails – Unending arguments that have no logical progression but, instead, have a series of reasons why you can't do things your way or have your own opinion. You can't win.
4. Creating Chaos and Conflict – Every holiday and special day is sabotaged. No good deed goes unpunished. The rules are always changing. Everything is up for discussion. There is never just a "yes" (but there is a lot of "no")
5. Nitpicking – They are impossible to please because, just when you feel like you're doing something exactly the way they want you to, you're told that you're not doing it right.
6. Game Changing – There are always more rules and you never know which ones apply.
7. Begging – They act like they need to talk, or they need you to do something for them, or they need something from you, etc.

8. Misrepresenting your thoughts, words, or actions – You did something with good intentions and they accuse you of doing it for the wrong reasons

9. Taking everything personally – Everything becomes an offense to them (even things that have nothing to do with them – e.g. you get a raise, they think it's not fair)

10. Black and white thinking – There's a "right" and "wrong" to everything – and you better get it right

11. Flipping the script – If you express concern about their behavior toward you, they'll turn it back on you, making it so that you never address their behavior.

12. Smearing/slandering – Telling others about how bad you are, the terrible things you do to them, and how abusive you are (taking projection one step further by telling others that you are guilty of the behaviors that are actually their own)

13. Stalking – Trying to find out information about you in order to smear or slander you – or following you around either physically or virtually via social media to remind you that they are still there and can still affect you

14. Triangulating - Also known as building allies, they use smearing, accusations, and misrepresentations as techniques to get people to side with them and to believe that you are the bad guy

15. Pre-emptive defense posturing – They set themselves up as the good guy who just wants what's best for everyone. They use this set-up as a reason that you need to trust them and believe that they have good intentions.

16. Baiting – Doing something subtle to get you to react and, when you do react, acting surprised that you're reacting or accusing you of being irrational or taking it the wrong way.

17. Setting you up for failure – Asking you to do something, then criticizing you for how you do it. Everything is a no-win situation for you.

18. Sugarcoating – Pretending to compromise, making things sound innocent when they are not, giving "choices" that aren't really choices (e.g. "you can eat what's on your plate or go to your room – what are you going to choose?" – to be clear: giving someone two negative options is not giving someone a choice).

19. Silent treatment – ‘nuff said

20. Ghosting - taking the silent treatment to the next level and pretending you don't even exist

21. Guilt-tripping – Trying to make you feel bad about your opinions or feelings or trying to make you feel like you are in the wrong

22. Invalidating your thoughts, feelings, and opinions – Telling you that you shouldn't feel the way you do, that your opinion is misguided, or that your ideas aren't accepted

23. Double standards – They make the rules that you have to follow, but THEY don't follow them themselves.

24. Name-calling/Belittling – Saying that you are “ungodly” or “rebellious” or “irrational” is name-calling, too

25. No good deed goes unpunished – You try to do something nice for them and later they use it to get something that they want from you or to punish you in some way

26. Give an inch and he takes a mile – Trying to compromise feels more like getting reeled in by a fisherman's hook until they have everything they want

27. Avoiding responsibility – Acting like there's nothing they could have done differently to produce a different outcome

28. Demanding respect, change, or exclusive attention – Reminding you that the Bible says you have to respect, accusing you of not being available when they are ready for you, telling you that you need to change some aspect of yourself

29. Empty promises – Saying they'll do something for you, acting like they want to, but then not doing it

30. Appealing to authority – Quoting (or misquoting) authors, pastors, statistics, or the Bible to make it sound like they are right and the authorities agree with them

31. Using emotions to get his way – Chronic anger, mood swings, and words like “disappointed” or “sad” that are used to get you to do what they want

32. Jealous of you, your talents, your goals – They get upset when you or someone else succeeds, does something well, gets recognized, or experiences personal growth

33. Hypersensitivity – You feel like you have to walk on eggshells so that they don't get upset with you, so you don't stress them out or hurt their feelings, or so they don't accuse you of doing something on purpose against them
34. Blaming/Accusations - Saying things aren't their fault, and if only you did something differently then they wouldn't have behaved that way, assigning negative intent to your actions
35. Playing the victim – Making it sound as though they are the innocent recipient of your unreasonable behavior and they have no control over what happens
36. Flattery – Using insincere compliments to get what they want from you
37. Piggybacking – Using everything that you say as though it is their original thought or opinion
38. Threatening behavior - Stomping their feet, throwing things, displaying weapons, slamming doors
39. Gaslighting - Trying to make you feel like your perception of reality is not accurate and that you don't see or hear or remember or interpret things correctly. This tactic gets you to doubt yourself and judgement so that they can be your source of authority.
40. Appealing to your conscience – Throwing Bible darts (accusations that you aren't in line with the Bible), using Scripture to try to modify your behavior, trying to get you to feel like you are in the wrong
41. Telling you what to think and feel – Telling you that boundaries are not biblical, that you have to agree with him/her, that you can't say "no" to them, and that you need to prove your love
42. Changing the subject—"We'll talk about it later" or "I don't want to decide right now" so that they never have to address it
43. Condemning/Shaming – Telling you how wrong you are to do what you're doing, that you should be ashamed of yourself, or that they don't know how you can sleep at night

LTN - Chapter 24 - What It's Like to Live With a Narcissist

How Did I Just Describe Your Relationship? (What It's Like to Live With a Narcissist)

<https://www.changingus.org/blog/describe-my-relationship>

- I want you to know that you are right.
- Maybe that's not something that you hear very often, but I want you to hear it from someone who has been where you are.
- What are you right about?
- You're right about that feeling you have that says that your spouse should have figured out how to have good relationships by now.
- You're right that your spouse isn't putting in the effort that you are.
- You're right about him needing to see his faults and take some responsibility for them.
- You're right about the fact that you are doing all the right things and your relationship still isn't getting better.
- You're right about how it seems like the relationship is all about him.
- Because it is.
- The relationship is all about your spouse.
- But it shouldn't be all about him.
- If you are feeling exhausted from trying to be a better spouse and you're wondering why it feels as though you're giving and giving and giving and your spouse is just taking, I want you to know that your sense about what your relationship is like is probably right.
- And here's the result of that:
- He's only considerate of you if it benefits him

- Every special day or time together is ruined
- Mutuality and compromise don't exist in your relationship
- Your expectations have been reduced to being grateful if he isn't mad at you or cheating on you
- You never win
- He expects that it's your job to make sure that he is held in high esteem by other people
- If he isn't respected, successful, or happy it's your fault
- Shame is a tactic used to keep you in line
- Simple decisions are up for discussion as though they are a matter of life and death
- You're walking on eggshells as you try not to do anything that would displease him
- You spend all your emotional energy focusing on how he feels and trying to manage his feelings
- You wake up every day wondering if he's mad at you for something
- You find yourself questioning whether you're right or he's right and wondering "what is truth?"
- You feel like you have to help him have "normal" relationships because he can't seem to figure it out on his own
- You forgive him a hundred times a day (for something different each time)
- You believe that if you could just be a better person then your relationship would be better
- Your weaknesses (perceived or real) are used against you
- You try to follow the "rules of engagement" but they are always changing
- The rules apply to you and everyone else, but not to him
- If you try to help him make an improvement or adjustments to his life or relationships, he gets angry and offended
- Saying "no" or setting a boundary results in fury

- The answer to a simple question is never a simple answer
- He won't make what's important to you important to him
- Your day is consumed with thinking about how to please him (or influence him)
- You believe he has good intentions, and he believes you have bad intentions
- If you pull away from him you get accused of being crazy, cold-hearted, disrespectful, or rebellious
- When you try to tell other people what's happening, they seem confused and give you advice about how to be a better person
- You don't do the things you used to enjoy
- You work on your communication, but somehow that doesn't make things better
- He somehow desensitizes you so that unacceptable behavior feels acceptable to you
- You find yourself making excuses for his bad behavior
- You think he can learn and grow like you do, but that doesn't seem to be the case
- He has a limited repertoire of responses to frustration and none of them are productive: anger, sex, substance use, etc.
- He resorts to character defamation and slander if you start making sense but it isn't what he wants to hear
- You have to keep readjusting your perception of reality so that it matches his if you want to keep the peace
- When you disagree with him, you're accused of being disrespectful
- When you have a reason for wanting to do something your way, he has a thousand reasons for doing it his way
- You think that if you could just find the one thing that could provide him with insight, then what makes sense to you (and other "normal" people) will make sense to him, too

If I just described your relationship, I want you to know that these statements describe a relationship that is not emotionally healthy.

And that means that the people in it are not emotionally healthy, either.

Now I know you might feel like the healthy one, the mature one, the one who knows how to hold the relationship together, but here's how I know you aren't completely healthy, either: healthy people don't stay in relationships with people who treat them the way you are being treated. As you start taking steps to get healthy, you'll see what I mean.

Get emotionally healthy

It only takes one person changing the dance steps to change the way the dance goes. What I mean is that, by getting emotionally healthier yourself, the relationship will change and have a chance to get healthy, too. [If you think your spouse might be a narcissist, read my article on how to deal with narcissists]

Here's what you can do:

1. Admit the truth - Know that continuing to do what you are doing is only making things worse. He will continue to get more self-ish, and you will continue to lose yourself as you become more absorbed into him. Admit that.
2. Get a reality check - Link up with someone who affirms you, who tells you that you are right, and who confirms reality for you.
3. Know where you're wrong - Allow the person who affirms that you are right to help you see where you are wrong in the way that you are responding to him - wrong in that your response to him is making things worse for him, for you, and for the relationship.
4. Learn new ways to interact - Learn how to respond in a way that is healthy. This will take a huge shift in the way you think about your relationships, so be sure you have someone to support and guide you.

If you need that support and guidance, schedule a Breakthrough Session with me so that you have someone who can walk this journey with you. Because . . . hope isn't found in our situation changing; it is found in our situation . .

LTN - Chapter 25 - Ending the Drought with Living Water

Why is water such a wonder picture of salvation?

- 1) Water is a gift of God. Nobody can create water but we can produce it from groundwater well, damn it, desalinated seawater and now they are finalizing the technology to have Solar-powered 'hyper-dehumidifiers' taking water from the air. God has made this planet for humans to live on as well as the sun, stars, clouds, fish, trees, birds and the air we need to live. Jesus is the light (sun/son) of this world.

Jesus spoke to them, saying, **"I am the light of the world. He who follows me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the light of life."**

- 2) Water comes from Heaven. Every single drop of water comes down from above. From streams to rivers to the ocean. You could walk across the missing in Minnesota but not at the end of it. The Mississippi River begins as a trickle flowing out of Lake Itasca in northern Minnesota. From there the river flows 2,348 miles until it pours into the Gulf of Mexico below New Orleans. The Mississippi River drains 33 states and its watershed covers one-half of the nation. The water goes up and comes back down from above. Salvation comes from Heaven above.

Jesus spoke **"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who mistreat you and persecute you, that you may be children of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Don't even the tax collectors do the same? If you only greet your friends, what more do you do than others? Don't even the tax collectors do the same? Therefore, you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect."**

- 3) Water meets the need of every human. Rich, poor, old or young. On average an adult male needs about 3 liters (3.2 quarts) per day while an adult female needs about 2.2 liters (2.3 quarts) per day. All living things, from tiny cyanobacteria to giant blue whales need water to survive. Without water, life as we know it would not exist.

Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.”

- 4) Water is free. It is free from above and pooled in the rivers, lakes and oceans. It is right there. Now that the planets population population and density is much higher the need to pipe and condition it. Sometimes it is right in front of someones eyes and the are not smart enough to harvest it properly (aka California). The Jebel Ali plant in the United Arab Emirates can produce 564 million gallons (2.13 billion L) of water a day from the sea. What do you think it more important water or global carbon footprint? Photosynthesis removes carbon dioxide naturally and trees/plants need water to perform that God made process for cleaning the air. What do you think is most important LTN or global carbon footprint? Just like humans who deny Jesus saving powers California Newsome is so stubborn to embrace modern technology on a real scale to produce fresh water from the ocean that could water the trees, prevent forrest fires, reduce carbon footprints. You can lead a horse to water but you can't make him drink' is a proverb which means that you can give someone an opportunity but not force them to take it. Jesus is free...

Jesus stood and cried out, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink! He who believes in me, as the Scripture has said, from within him will flow rivers of living water.”

- 5) Water is indispensable. We have to have it. Most of the human body is water, with an average of roughly 60%. The amount of water in the body changes slightly with age, sex, and hydration levels. We have to have it. It is the only thing we can't do without for a long period of time. We will physically die from dehy-

dration if we don't have it. I can do without most things but not without water.

Jesus stated "Most certainly I tell you, he who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life, and doesn't come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life."

- 6) It cleans us and refreshes us. Jesus showed over and over again he came to heal and forgive our sins by his perfect sinless life. Anyone who thinks they will live forever in this human body is seriously in denial of reality. Just as anyone who refuses Jesus as God the savior and acknowledgement that we are all sinners has deemed themselves healthy.

Jesus stated "Those who are healthy have no need for a physician, but those who are sick do. But you go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,' for I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

LTN - Chapter 99 - Commitment Card

Inspired by MLK - Wednesday, 3 April 1963

Not all who volunteered could pass our strict tests for service as demonstrators. But there was much to be done, over and above the dramatic act of presenting one's body in the marches. There were errands to be run, phones calls to be made, typing, so many things. If a volunteer wasn't suited to march, he was utilized in one of a dozen other ways to help the cause. Every volunteer was required to sign a commitment card that read:

I HEREBY PLEDGE MYSELF - MY PERSON AND BODY - TO THE NON-VIOLENT MOVEMENT. THEREFORE I WILL KEEP THE FOLLOWING TEN COMMANDMENTS:

- 1) MEDITATE daily on the teachings and life of Jesus
- 2) REMEMBER always that nonviolent moment in Birmingham sees justice and reconciliation - not victory
- 3) WALK and TALK in the manner of love, for God is love
- 4) PRAY daily to be used by God in order that all men might be free
- 5) SACRIFICE personal wishes in order that all men might be free
- 6) OBSERVE with both friend and foe the ordinary rules of courtesy
- 7) SEEK to perform regular services for others and for the world
- 8) REFRAIN from the violence of fist, tongue, or heart
- 9) STRIVE to be in good spiritual and bodily health
- 10) FOLLOW the directions of the movement and of the captain of a demonstration
- 11) LTN love thy neighbor (added my MJ Smith 2022)

I sign this pledge, having seriously considered what I do and with the determination and will to persevere.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Nearest Relative _____

Address _____