

**THE
CHARACTER
OF THE
BELIEVER**



Jesus Encounter Ministries Publication

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About the author

Mark was born in Chile, where he migrated with his family to Sydney, growing up in the context of the great charismatic movement of the 1970s. He was converted as a boy and called by the Lord to pastor at the age of 17. He received the baptism in the Holy Spirit at that time and was healed of partial deafness.

In 1984, he received his B.A. in Biblical Studies from Wheaton College, Illinois, as well as his B.Th. and Diploma in Ministry from Ridley College, Melbourne. He entered the pastorate in 1989, serving in Melbourne. Afterwards, he left for missionary service in the outback of Paraguay, South America. In 1999, he became the pastor of River of Life Church in Liverpool, NSW.

In 2004, the Lord spoke to him in a dream, calling him to begin an itinerant ministry. He founded Jesus Encounter Ministries Ltd and has been travelling to the nations. The teaching of the word has been accompanied by awesome moves of God, deliverance, and miracles, which you watch on Youtube:

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A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

Luke 6:45.

PREFACE

I was walking on a farm, and noticed a shed that was collapsing. The roof was good but the posts were rotten. The roof sagged from the bad posts. As I looked at the shed I felt the Holy Spirit speak to me. You can have a good ministry, like a good roof. However it is character that holds up the ministry. Without sound character the ministry will eventually suffer or fail.

It is easy to focus on one's ministry whether it be the positive comments, crowds of people, finances, the anointing, or demonstration of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. However all this can be quickly undone if there are weaknesses of character, just like a rotten post.

My prayer is that this book will be used by the Holy Spirit to strengthen your character, bring true repentance, and a transformed heart and life. That your life would be lived in a way that glorifies the Lord, and is an example to others. Then your ministry will have the strong support of godly character.

The Spiritual Power of Correction

One of the most significant challenges facing pastors today is the widespread resistance to correction. Even when confronted or lovingly guided, many respond with offence, often claiming, “God spoke to me to move on.” But correction is not rejection - it is love in action. It is one of the primary ways God fosters spiritual growth in our lives.

In the context of prophecy, for example, God may reveal areas of your life that need change. He does this not to shame you, but because He loves you. True preaching of the Gospel includes a call to repentance. When John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus, his message was one of correction -

“...Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”
Matthew 3:2.

Those who accepted John's correction also accepted Christ; those who rejected it missed the Saviour.

Correction is essential preparation for spiritual blessing. It is not something to avoid, but something to seek. Ask those around you, “Is there anything in my life that needs to change?” Invite the Holy Spirit to work through pastors, leaders, and fellow believers to shape your character. Without correction, you may be cutting

yourself off from growth, promotion, and even your destiny in Christ.

Correction and Deliverance

Correction brings deliverance. Sometimes, deliverance comes not through casting out demons but simply through the humble acceptance of truth. When you admit your fault, the power of that sin loses its grip. The Bible exhorts us:

“Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.” **James 5:16.**

Repentance is not merely a personal decision; it is a grace from heaven.

Paul teaches us:

“And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.” **2 Timothy 2:24-26.**

Correction is God's way of leading people to truth, to self-awareness, and to freedom from the devil's snare. Correcting someone is an act of love. You endure

discomfort and possible backlash because you care about their soul. Just as God corrects us because He delights in us, so should we love others enough to help them see the truth.

A Culture of Humility

The fruit of righteousness grows through correction.

The Bible exhorts us:

“Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterwards it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.” **Hebrews 12:11.**

Even if the correction seems misguided, humility in your response allows God to work through it.

In our ministry, we often live and travel together, providing a unique environment for discipleship. Sometimes, I have corrected others only to realise later I was wrong. Yet those on our team still receive my guidance with humility. That posture invites grace.

The Bible exhorts us:

“He who keeps instruction is in the way of life, But he who refuses correction goes astray.” **Proverbs 10:17.**

Do you have someone in your life who corrects you? If not, seek one. God places us in community for mutual

growth, and without correction, we stagnate. The Bible exhorts us:

“My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, Nor detest His correction; For whom the Lord loves He corrects, just as a father the son in whom he delights.”

Proverbs 3:11-12.

I once read the story of a man on death row who wrote to his mother saying, “You should be here with me. You never corrected me.” A loving parent, pastor, or friend does not avoid giving correction - they embrace it for the sake of the other’s future.

The Bible says that those who hate correction are foolish. If you want to grow spiritually, don’t resist correction - pursue it. Ask, “How can I be more like Jesus?” God often uses a journey of correction and sanctification to shape us. It’s not always instant, but the process brings transformation.

In my younger years, I struggled with anger. I confessed, repented, and even studied anger management. Over time, God delivered me. At 63, I now look back and see the patient work of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes, the key to transformation is simply accepting the truth and allowing others to speak into your life.

Passing the Test

God has “classes” for us - seasons of learning and correction. Like school, you must pass one level to move to the next. If you refuse correction, you remain stuck, repeating the same lessons over and over. Whether it's pride, addiction, laziness, or immorality - anything that holds you back - must be faced with repentance and humility. Only then can you step into your promotion and destiny.

Respect those who try to correct you, even if they're wrong. The Bible exhorts us:

“Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live?”

Hebrews 12:9.

The Anointing in Correction

Correction can be anointed. A simple word spoken in love and guided by the Spirit can bring much-needed breakthrough. I recall ministering to a couple in Los Angeles. The woman couldn't commit to marriage. All I said was, “Just get on with it.” The Holy Spirit used those words, and months later, they were happily married.

To resist correction is to resist the Holy Spirit. If someone says you harbour unforgiveness, don't deflect - receive it. God is intently focused on your spiritual well-being. He

works through Scripture, others, and circumstances to sanctify you.

The Role of Scripture

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” 2 Timothy 3:16.

Don't read the Bible merely for knowledge. Read it as a mirror for correction. Let it expose sin and guide your steps so,

“that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” 2 Timothy 3:17.

Tragically, many reject correction and continue in cycles of failure. I knew a man who refused to change. Today, he's in prison - but he's also born again. God used severe discipline to save his soul. Likewise, people move from failed relationship to failed relationship, from job to job, or from church to church because they never accept responsibility or receive correction.

Refusing correction robs us of growth and delays our destiny. If you love others, correct them in humility. Speak truth, and let God work through it.

Break the Victim Mentality

Do not adopt a victim mentality. Taking responsibility is the path to healing. When we stand before God, He will not ask about what others did to us. He will ask about our own choices.

Many who've been hurt, naturally resist correction. They become defensive, putting up walls to avoid pain. But healing comes when we lay down those defences and receive God's love through correction.

My spiritual mentor once told me, "Preach repentance." Repentance opens the door to salvation, healing, and transformation. But a proud, resistant heart cannot receive correction. If God is using others to speak to you, listen. Stop defending, blaming, and resisting.

Whether your issue is anger, lust, gossip, or spiritual laziness, confess it. Find someone you trust. Open up. Humble yourself. God will break the chains in your life.

If resisting correction has been a stronghold in your life, let today be a turning point. Say, "Lord, I want to humble myself before others. I want to stop defending myself and start listening. I want to die to pride and allow Your Spirit to change me."

Confess your sin. Let go of bitterness. Release the love of money, the desire for control, or the need to always be right. God is your provider and your healer. When you yield to correction, you open the door to true spiritual joy and freedom.

Discussion Questions

1. How do we correct in love as a believer?
2. How is correction an expression of God's love rather than judgment?
3. Share a time when you either resisted or embraced correction. What was the outcome?
4. What are the benefits of being accountable? Do you have anyone in your life whom you can be accountable to?
5. What are some personal signs that you may be resisting correction (e.g., pride, blame-shifting, defensiveness, or avoiding confrontation)?
6. How has God used correction to prepare you for what he has next for you?

The Holy Spirit and the human heart

Let's delve into a discussion of the spiritual dimension - specifically, the heart and the realm of the Holy Spirit. As pastors and leaders, we often engage with people from a natural standpoint. We observe their behaviours, hear their words, and form judgments accordingly. But there is a spiritual reality that runs deeper than outward appearance.

Before leading our current ministry, I served as a missionary in Paraguay and pastored a church for 12 years. Today, our ministry, Jesus Encounter Ministries (JEM), comprises approximately 90 online volunteers and staff serving worldwide. In all this work, one principle has proven essential: spiritual discernment.

Ministry Beyond the Natural

When we rely solely on the natural, our emotions can become entangled - offence, hurt, false accusations. Our human understanding is minimal. But when the Holy Spirit teaches us, we are given a heavenly vantage point. We begin to see not just with eyes but with spiritual insight.

I recall a well-known ministry leader who appointed a president and CEO, only for things to fall apart. Though the man went through a "restoration process," it was

later revealed that he had been dishonest the entire time. The real issue was not procedural - it was the heart. Our goal must never be mere institutional restoration, but heart transformation.

We must ask: Do spiritual forces bind this person? Are there demons influencing their actions? Without this discernment, we risk elevating people who are not spiritually free.

It's tempting to choose leaders based on talent, charisma, or gifting. But this approach is unbiblical. Think of a shed in the countryside. The roof represents activity - what people do in ministry. The posts, however, are their character. If the posts are weak or compromised, the whole structure will eventually collapse, no matter how impressive the roof may seem.

In JEM, we always begin with character. Abilities can be developed, but if the heart is wrong, no amount of training will sustain the person in ministry.

During COVID, I asked two friends - both of whom I knew had demonic issues - to help with camera work. I just needed someone to stand behind a camera and turn it, but the demons in them interfered in unseen ways. Camera settings would change inexplicably. Eventually, I had to ask them to step aside. It taught me a powerful lesson: demons are real, and they actively resist the work of God.

Now, when we bring people onboard, we ask clear questions: Do you suffer demonic attacks? Do you have a spirit spouse? Do you struggle with rage? We once brought someone into the team on probation who seemed fine, but he had a spirit of anger. That spirit would erupt unexpectedly - and it was clear he could not continue in ministry.

Years ago, while pastoring, a young man came into our church. He was helpful, multi-talented, and volunteered enthusiastically. He even expressed interest in a young woman in the congregation. On the surface, everything looked good.

But as we spoke, the Holy Spirit allowed me to see into his heart. It was like peering down a well, and at the bottom, I saw a monster. That man had been a worship leader in witchcraft, the son of a practising witch, and had slept under her altar. Eventually, he lost his mind and was hospitalised. This experience taught me: we must not be deceived by appearances.

Trusting God with People

Trust in God is essential. We don't manipulate people or pressure them to give. God provides. When someone tries to control you by threatening to leave the church, let them go. Their departure may be God exposing what's in their heart.

One person resigned from our ministry in the morning, and by the afternoon, the Lord had provided a replacement. That's the freedom that comes from trust. You are free from manipulation and from needing to control others.

If someone slanders you and you leave it to God, He will act. I once preached at a church where the pastor later opposed me. That pastor was eventually imprisoned. I didn't lift a finger - God defended me. Leave vengeance to Him.

The same anointing that brings healing also brings judgment. If someone opposes God's move and refuses to repent, the consequences can be dire. Walk in the fear of the Lord.

Discerning the Character of a Person

The focus in ministry must not be gifting, but character and freedom from demonic influence. Without character, even the most gifted will fall.

Discernment comes through the Word of God. The Word is light. Without it, we are blind. Mature believers who meditate on the Word are filled with light and can see clearly. The Bible exhorts us:

"But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." **Hebrews 5:14.**

Human empathy often gets in the way of spiritual discernment. In South Africa, a young man wanted deliverance but was in a sexual relationship outside of marriage. He was willing to leave, but the girl wasn't. Until there's repentance, there can be no true freedom. The spiritual realm operates by righteousness, not sentiment.

Discernment is not just a gift - it is rooted in righteousness. The Word is a discerner of the thoughts and intentions of the heart. We must grow past spiritual infancy and into maturity, where our senses are trained to discern both good and evil.

I met an elderly lady once who asked for prayer for her family. As I prayed, I saw her for who she truly was: a spiritual general. She prayed all night and wept before the Lord. Some people are hidden in darkness; others are hidden in light. Discernment will find them.

Religious people may serve, preach, and look good - but be full of hidden sin. Hypocrites affirm the spiritual yet live in the natural. Discernment exposes hypocrisy and reveals what's truly in the heart.

When someone speaks or acts in ministry, always ask: Where is this coming from? Is it selfish ambition? Conceit? Are they motivated by love for Jesus or by a desire for position?

Jesus spoke of people making excuses for not attending the banquet. Possessions, relationships, and personal ambitions took precedence. The heart was revealed.

True ministry is motivated by love for Jesus, not a desire for a platform. Discernment - spiritual, biblical discernment - is the key to building the church the way Jesus intends.

I was ministering in a large church in New Zealand. Beautiful place. They had a young worship leader - energetic, full of passion, jumping and dancing on the stage. Very impressive on the outside. But the Holy Spirit led me to say something unusual. I told her, "Because of what happened to you as a child, you're trying to impress people with your worship." And she responded, "Yes, that's true. It's fake." She admitted it. She was trying to cover up her pain, her trauma, by creating a *persona* - an image that looked powerful, but was deeply wounded on the inside. The worship wasn't flowing from surrender; it was flowing from brokenness that hadn't been healed.

Let me tell you: What's false won't last in the presence of Jesus Christ. It may impress people. It may draw a crowd. But it will not endure the fire of His holiness. Only what is true, surrendered, and Spirit-born will remain.

God Tests the Heart Through Time

We often discuss spiritual gifts, but few consider time as a tool in God's hands. Time belongs to God. And God uses time to test the heart. Our meetings often last three to four hours. People say, "Why so long?" - but I've found the Holy Spirit usually waits - to see what's truly in people. Will they endure? Will they stay in faith—or walk out in frustration? I've had people jump up and storm out of meetings because they wanted instant prayer. But waiting exposes the heart. God is not McDonald's. He's not fast food. He is holy. He is eternal, and He will test us through the waiting.

I remember a man who was born with a deformed eardrum and couldn't hear. He asked for prayer, and I told him, "Can you wait?" He came back a while later, and I said again, "Can you wait?" Three hours passed. Eventually, he came back from the bathroom, cheerful, with no complaints and no entitlement. The power of God hit him; his ear opened, and he was healed!

Why? Because the waiting had *prepared* his heart.

Hidden Hearts Revealed in Small Groups

The best testing ground for the heart is not always on a stage—it's in small, Spirit-filled communities where people must relate, forgive, submit, and serve.

In our ministry, people often write in:

“We want to pray for the sick.”

“We want to cast out demons.”

“We want to be part of the team.”

We encourage them to join an online discipleship group first. Let's see how they relate to others. Let's see what's in their heart. After that, they may move to the ministry team, but no spotlight, no public prayer. Just intercession. Let's see what happens to their pride. Then they become junior prayer helpers, under someone else's covering. If they remain faithful, they may eventually become senior prayer helpers. The Bible exhorts us:

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

It's a process of the heart. You see, not everyone's ready to handle spiritual authority. Even on our travel team, we now have a probation period. We don't rush. We want to see the fruit of the Spirit—especially in humility and patience. Because, again, time doesn't reveal everything, but it reveals a lot.

Discussion Questions

1. How has waiting or enduring a season tested your own heart?
2. In this season, how can you be spiritually preparing your heart and character before stepping into the next season that God has?
3. How can we grow in discernment according to Hebrews 5:14 - 'But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.
4. What does it mean to leave vengeance to God, and how do we practice this in leadership?
5. Why is it dangerous to rely solely on outward appearances when evaluating someone for ministry or leadership?
6. How can leaders discern whether ministry activity is Spirit-born or self-driven?

The Sensual Christian

The sensual Christian is a phrase that might sound strange at first, but it speaks to a very real struggle in the Christian walk - being led by our senses instead of the Spirit.

As human beings, we have senses: we can see, hear, touch, taste, and smell. We also feel deeply - we hurt, we rejoice, we experience life. But as Christians, we are not meant to live our spiritual lives guided by these senses. We are called to live by the Spirit.

Jesus, even in the agony of the cross, demonstrated what it means to be led by the Spirit. He said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." Despite excruciating pain and betrayal, His spirit was in charge. That's love. That's the Spirit-filled life.

The Spirit-filled Christians forgive their enemies. They love those who hurt them. Even when wounded, they release grace because Jesus did the same for them. But sensual Christians live by their feelings. "You hurt me, so I'm done with you. But I'll still go to church." That is the mark of a Christian walking by the flesh.

The difference is stark. The Spirit-filled believer says, "I'm hurt, but I choose to forgive because Jesus forgave me." They release others from debt, choosing love. But the sensual Christian replays the pain like a movie - what was said, what was done. They dwell on the problem.

The Spirit-led believer, in contrast, lets go, asks for grace, and keeps walking with Jesus.

A sensual Christian is overly aware of circumstances: what the boss said, what the spouse did, what the bank manager decided. The Spirit-filled Christian is guided by love. The sensual Christian complains and moans about life. But God hasn't called us to that.

I've been travelling for ministry since 1995 - nearly 30 years. And when you travel with a team, things *will* go wrong. For example, people forget their passports. I once brought the wrong passport to the airport - my daughter Sarah's. She was two years old. When I handed it to the officer, it obviously didn't look like me!

Venues fall through. I remember one event in Croatia, where the venue manager promised we wouldn't hear anything through the walls. It turned out to be a wedding venue with the loudest subwoofers I've ever heard. But you learn to let it go and stay focused on the mission.

For years now, I've told our team to develop an attitude of gratitude. When you praise God, it attracts grace, power, and favour. Complaining, on the other hand, pulls you out of the Spirit. The Bible says it plainly - grumbling and complaining are signs of a sensual life.

Last weekend, we were in a place without gas for cooking. I called the host, and they said, "Oh, we don't provide gas." You learn to say to yourself, "Get over it." Why? Because your life is not your own. You belong to

Jesus. He bought you with His blood. His will is *love*. Always walk in love. Let things go. Walk with Jesus.

“These are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage.” **Jude 1:16.**

A sensual person lives life based on what they want and desire. They are also easily offended. At meetings, they come in with expectations: “I bought a plane ticket. I paid for accommodation. I came for healing - so God *has* to heal me.” And when it doesn’t happen, they turn against the ministry, calling it fake. They forget that the same anointing that heals can also judge. Jesus said,

“And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder.” **Matthew 21:44.**

Respect the anointing. Sensual Christians aren’t aware of what’s happening in the Spirit. They only know their pain. That’s dangerous. Instead, we must be led by the Holy Spirit.

“For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food.” **Hebrews 5:12.**

The Scripture further exhorts us:

“But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.” Hebrews 5:14.

That means applying the Word of God. Mature believers *use* the Word. They live it. Their senses are exercised by it. They see *through* the Word of God.

Sensual Christians lack discernment. They’re moved by circumstances, financial pressure, and societal opinions. They are swayed by media, by trends - even by movements like the redefinition of marriage. Why? Because they have not been trained in the Word of righteousness.

Spirit-led Christians see the world differently. Their senses are tuned to the Spirit. They see past the smile of a new friend and discern the spirit behind them. I’ve known people who seemed so kind at first - but time revealed betrayal, slander, and destruction. Why? Because I was moved by my senses, not by the Spirit. Love everyone. Trust no one - except God. He will guide you in your friendships and guard your life.

Being critical is another trap of the sensual Christian. In one meeting, while I was preaching, a woman arrived an hour and a half late. I was inwardly judging her - “You should’ve come on time.” But after the message, the Holy Spirit moved, and that same woman was instantly healed of food allergies. I had judged her by sight. Jesus saw her with compassion. He desires mercy, not

judgment. Even in our online meetings, people may join hours late, just for the breakout prayer groups. Love them. Treat them as if they've been there all along.

Jesus saw Zacchaeus in a tree and said, "Today, I must eat with you." The religious leaders complained, "He eats with sinners and tax collectors!" But Zacchaeus repented: "If I've stolen, I'll restore it fourfold." Jesus replied, "Today salvation has come to this house."

The critics were in a different spirit - one opposed to the mercy of God. Jesus came to seek and save the lost, not condemn them.

So I encourage you: live and move through the love of God. Meditate on the Word. Because the Word *is* Jesus. The Bible exhorts us:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." **John 1:1.**

As you meditate on Scripture, you surrender to Jesus. The Word shapes your heart and mind. It leads you. You begin to see by it.

Let us walk by the Spirit. Let the Word lead your life. If you have something against someone, forgive - just as Christ forgave you. Even while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. How can we hold on to bitterness?

Love. Forgive. Let it go.

Discussion Questions

1. What does it mean to be a “sensual Christian,” and how can we recognise this in ourselves or others?
2. The chapter highlights the importance of forgiving even when deeply hurt. Why is forgiveness such a defining mark of a Spirit-led life?
3. How does gratitude shift our spiritual posture, especially when things go wrong?
4. According to Hebrews 5:12, maturity is marked by the ability to *discern*. Why is discernment often lacking in Christians led by their natural senses, and how can we grow in it?
5. How can meditating on Scripture reshape our reactions when we are offended or disappointed?

The Call to Love

This message is simple yet deeply profound: give His love away.

God's love has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit - not just so we can be healed, feel good, or be free from depression or suicide - but so that rivers of living water might flow out from within us to others. His love is not meant to stagnate. It is intended to flow, to move, to be shared. It is more blessed to give than to receive. Christianity is about giving love away.

Christianity is not a religion or routine of simply attending church or reading the Bible. These practices are good and essential, but without the heart of God, the point is missed. Christianity is about love. Without love, you are nothing. You can appear to be a great Christian in the eyes of others, but if there is no love, you are spiritually bankrupt.

"What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?"

James 2:14.

Faith without works is dead. If a brother or sister is in need and you simply say, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without offering practical help, what good is your faith? God's love means action. The Bible exhorts us:

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." **John 3:16.**

Love moved Him to give.

"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." **Romans 5:8.**

Love without action is hollow. When God pours His love into your life, it's not meant to sit still - it is intended to pour out into the world. Faith works through love. You may believe all the right doctrines, but if there is no love, it is not true faith. Do you believe in God? Then believe in love - for God is love. If you call yourself a Christian but have no fruit of love in your life, what kind of Christian are you?

Jesus is the embodiment of love. He had compassion for the crowds because they were like sheep without a shepherd. He healed the sick, raised the dead, and wept at the tomb of Lazarus. If you are a follower of Jesus, you are to be a person of love. That love should not be passive. As the Holy Spirit leads you, you must act in love toward others. This is genuine Christianity.

I was recently reflecting on something I call "the comfort of selfishness." Let me be honest about myself for a moment. Sometimes, after a long day, when I'm hungry and sit down to eat, I find myself tempted to take more

than my share, forgetting that we have a team—people coming and going, and there may not be enough for everyone. In those moments, I realise I need to think of others and not just load my plate. Selfishness is comfortable. But that comfort is deceiving.

Last week, we were preparing for a mission trip to an Australian country town. Door knocking was on the agenda - something I honestly never felt drawn to. The day before, I tried to justify staying home to do other tasks. But I knew it wasn't right. I told myself, "Mark, you're not staying home. You're going out." So I did. And while it wasn't easy, it was a powerful experience.

Comfort, when rooted in selfishness, leads us away from love. It puts our needs above others. People walk into churches expecting warmth, and if an usher doesn't greet them - perhaps because they're struggling with personal issues - they label the church unloving and walk away offended. But it's not about you.

I saw a Facebook post from someone praising their new church - the dynamic sermons, the friendly people. I thought to myself: Will you last there? What happens when someone offends you, when the warm feelings fade? The comfort of selfishness is fragile. It takes offence easily. It hops from church to church, always seeking pleasure, never rooted in the commitment of love.

Scripture warns against selfish ambition and conceit. says,

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

Too often, ministries and churches are filled with people consumed with themselves. But God placed us in the body of Christ to serve one another. Let me be direct: it's not about you. Get over yourself. Crucify your flesh, your selfishness, your conceit. We are called to love God and to love others. That is the core of everything.

I'd like to share a story about a friend who serves the community in group homes. She heard that someone was dying in the hospital. Despite living far away in the outer suburbs of Sydney, she spent entire days at the hospital, praying for the person, telling the doctors, “This one's not going to die.” She did all of this voluntarily. Later, she told me, “So-and-so is up, talking, doing fine. The doctors want to send her home. They don't know what happened.”

That's love in action. She explained that in social work, they're often told not to speak about faith. But she said, “We have our ways. We pray, and when people ask how it happened, we tell them about Jesus.”

Be a vessel of love. Take a moment to ask God, ‘Who can I show love to in a practical way? Who can I help? Who can I serve in Jesus’ name?’

Some of you are very selfish. I'm not saying this to condemn but to awaken. Your life is self-centred. Die to it. Jesus came not to be served, but to serve - and to give His life as a ransom for many. He is our example. Get over the comfort of being selfish. Live your life in service to others.

The truth will set you free - not just theological truth, but the truth of holiness and righteousness expressed through the attitude of the heart. This truth brings you into the glory of God. Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand.

Repentance is one of the greatest blessings we can receive. We need preachers who speak holiness and repentance so God's people can be genuinely free. The devil tempts through sin - sexual immorality, pornography, hatred, envy, and greed. And unless someone speaks the truth of repentance, people remain in bondage. There is no redemption without repentance. The gospel has not changed. It's still good news. Repentance is the beginning of freedom.

One of the greatest blessings in my life was reading a list of sins and realising: I needed to repent. That realisation was the beginning of the transformation. Half the battle is repentance. The other half is grace. Your part is to repent, while God's part is to forgive. His part is grace.

Discussion Questions

1. How do you seek to show love to others in practical ways?
2. James 2:14 talks about faith without works being dead. Can you think of an example where your faith was expressed through actions?
3. In what areas of your life do you notice a tendency toward selfishness, and how might this be hindering your ability to love others as Jesus did?
4. John 3:16 emphasises God's love in giving His Son. How does this verse challenge you to think about your own capacity to give and serve others, especially when it's difficult?
5. In what ways do selfish attitudes damage the Christian community, and how can we actively cultivate genuine love among believers?
6. As Christians, what role does repentance play in experiencing freedom and transformation?

A Surrendered Mouth

A surrendered mouth reflects a surrendered heart. People often talk about whatever captivates their heart - whether it's the weather, sports, politics, or daily events. But what if our conversations were dominated by the Word of God instead? What if our mouths were fully surrendered to Jesus?

When the mouth is under the control of the Holy Spirit, there is power in your voice. What you speak can carry God's power across the world. This happens when your heart delights in God's Word. The Word becomes the joy of your heart, and as a result, you begin to confess it aloud. The Word that dominates your heart will also dominate your mouth because faith grows there.

The Bible instructs us how to speak the faith in our hearts unto salvation.

“that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.” **Romans 10:9.**

The Bible exhorts us:

“How sweet are your words to my taste, Sweeter than honey to my mouth!” **Psalms 119:103.**

When God's Word becomes sweet to you, it flows naturally from your lips.

Jesus taught us:

“A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.” **Luke 6:45.**

Like rivers of living water, the words from your heart flow out through your mouth, influencing your world.

God often allows difficulties to shape our hearts and deepen our faith.

The Bible exhorts us:

“And you shall remember that the Lord your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord.” **Deuteronomy 8:2-3.**

Similarly, God permits challenges in our lives so we depend more on His Word. When negativity surrounds you- when doctors give a grim prognosis or people declare defeat - faith in your heart rejects those words. Instead, from the overflow of your heart, you declare, “I believe Jesus Christ is my healer.” When you speak

faith, the Holy Spirit shifts the atmosphere, overcoming the enemy's accusations.

God places His Word not only in your heart but in your mouth. The Bible exhorts us:

“But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith which we preach).” **Romans 10:8.**

That is, the word of faith we proclaim. Faith-filled speech pleases God. It is more than religion; it is truth spoken from a believing heart. Religion without faith is hypocrisy - mouth service without heart conviction. True faith aligns heart and mouth.

There is *power* in your mouth when you believe what you say. Jesus said:

“For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says.” **Mark 11:23.**

Some prayers are ineffective because they lack faith. But the prayer of faith will heal the sick and move mountains.

Controlling the Mouth

Controlling our mouths is not easy. We all struggle with it. The Bible exhorts us:

“The heart of the righteous studies how to answer, But the mouth of the wicked pours forth evil.” Proverbs 15:28.

Knowing how to answer wisely is essential. Someone once told me they had a brain tumour and didn’t want to hear about God. I told them, “Do not believe the doctors; keep hope.” When you study how to answer, God gives you words of power. Jesus is the ultimate example. At His trial, He remained silent,

“But I, like a deaf man, do not hear; And I am like a mute who does not open his mouth.” Psalm 38:13.

He listened to the Father and only spoke what He heard. When tempted or confronted, Jesus didn’t respond hastily; He paused, reflecting the Father’s will. When anger arises, we should learn from Him: take a break, pause, and study how to answer. Do not allow evil spirits to provoke you into a fleshly response.

Idle chatter achieves nothing. The Bible warns us:

“In all labor there is profit, But idle chatter leads only to poverty.” Proverbs 14:23.

The Power of Life and Death

In many meetings, people talk endlessly without power, and sometimes they confess doubts or unbelief that rob them of their miracles. The power of God is present when you say, “Yes, Lord, I believe.” That simple confession pleases Him.

Your words have spiritual power. A lady once told me she was in a wheelchair because someone prophesied it. Even though she was physically able before, the power of that spoken word bound her. The Bible says:

“Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit.” **Proverbs 18:21.**

We practised this kind of speech as a congregation - speaking gratefulness and praise:

- “I thank God for His blessings.”
- “He’s brought me through trials.”
- “He healed my heart, my body, and even removed relationships I didn’t need.”

Each of these confessions was a declaration of God's goodness. It's not about faking it - it's about aligning your heart and mouth in gratitude and praise.

We must not be Christians only in church and secular outside. That's spiritual schizophrenia - living as two different people. Hypocrisy happens when our mouths say one thing and our hearts believe another.

We must be careful what we speak because words can build up or destroy. Christians should be cautious about claiming to speak God's words when they are not truly from Him. False words carry no anointing and can lead to destruction. Instead, let your mouth be focused on the Kingdom of Heaven. Many people talk endlessly about politics, sports, or worldly matters, but what truly matters is proclaiming the Kingdom of God.

The Bible exhorts us:

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

If your mouth is filled with praise and glory, there is no room for complaints or fears. Instead, speak of what the Lord has done.

"I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth." **Psalms 34:1.**

When your mouth is full of praise, your soul rejoices, and others around you are encouraged.

God's Word in Your Mouth

God can place His Word in your mouth through the Holy Spirit, and that Word will not return void.

“So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.” **Isaiah 55:11.**

It accomplishes the purpose He sends it for, striking the enemy like a swift arrow. Without the Spirit's power, quoting scripture can be empty, but with the Spirit, the Word flows with authority and impact. The Bible exhorts us:

“And I have put My words in your mouth; I have covered you with the shadow of My hand, That I may plant the heavens, Lay the foundations of the earth, And say to Zion, ‘You are My people.’” **Isaiah 51:16.**

Speaking under God's covering brings protection and authority. You reap what you sow. In ministry, despite financial challenges, I confess God's provision daily. Twenty years ago, the Lord called me to Indonesia with no money for a ticket. I simply said, “Lord, if You provide the ticket, I will go.” He did, and He has continued to provide every step of the way.

On one trip, God provided unexpectedly when a man handed me an envelope with \$1,000 for expenses. That money allowed me to rent a plane for a journey that

would have otherwise been painful due to a bad back. God provides when we speak His promises.

Speaking of 'poverty' or 'problems' brings poverty and problems. There's a difference between sharing your troubles for prayer and confessing them as your reality. Some people come entrenched in doubt, expecting nothing to change, making it impossible to help them. Others confess faith in healing, and they see a breakthrough.

"The mouth of the righteous is a well of life, But violence covers the mouth of the wicked." **Proverbs 10:11.**

It can be either a well of blessings or a source of curses. You decide what flows out. God wants us to surrender both heart and mouth to Him.

When people share negativity, I disagree with their words. Agreeing with complaints forms a spiritual agreement that cements problems. Instead, we must study how to answer with words that bring life and God's power into the situation.

Let Your Mouth Be a Flow of Grace

Grace is God's power flowing to the undeserving. When we speak with love, grace follows.

The Bible exhorts us:

“Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.” **Colossians 4:6.**

Encouragement, when paired with grace, often becomes prophecy. You don’t need to say “Thus saith the Lord.” Sometimes, just saying “It’s going to be okay” carries prophetic power.

I remember being prompted by God to greet someone at a Bible college reception with a simple “Hello.” That woman’s grandson had broken his back. With that greeting came healing. Why? Because it was prompted by grace.

The Need for Alignment and Deliverance

Some people speak well, but their hearts are far from God. The Psalmist enlightened us:

“The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, But war was in his heart; His words were softer than oil, Yet they were drawn swords.” **Psalm 55:21.**

In ministry, I’ve encountered people who offer generous gifts and sweet words, but their hearts are in another place. God desires that your mouth and heart come into alignment. That alignment brings freedom, healing, and power.

The Bible exhorts us:

“These people come near to me with their mouth and honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.” Isaiah 29:13.

God seeks authenticity. He desires a relationship rooted in love and truth.

Drawing from Heaven, Not Hell

James teaches that our words can come from two sources. Having listened to hundreds of hours of deliverance sessions, I can tell you how demons speak: with rage, arrogance, pride, and profanity.

What comes out of your mouth? Do your words resemble those of heaven or hell? Let the Word of God dwell in you richly. Let it fill your heart so that when you speak, your words are mixed with faith and truth. Let your mouth become a vessel of blessing, encouragement, and grace.

When you surrender your heart and mouth to God, His grace flows through you to others. It's not just about learning how to pray for the sick - it's about living a surrendered life so that when you speak, your words carry the power of heaven.

We've seen tumours disappear, blindness healed, broken hearts restored - not through shouting or eloquence, but through surrendered speech.

Let your mouth become a channel of life. Let it echo heaven's voice.

Sanctify Your Mouth

Close your eyes and ask the Lord to sanctify your mouth - to set it apart for holy purposes. Ask Him to fill you with the Holy Spirit, so your mouth may be used to speak in tongues, prophesy, and praise. Let your words reflect the Spirit within you.

Speak from a sanctified place. Let your heart believe, and let your mouth declare. When you speak from heaven's resource, mountains will move, hearts will heal, and lives will be transformed.

"for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.'" Acts 17:28.

Let your mouth testify to that truth, daily.

Discussion Questions

1. What do your everyday conversations reveal about what's filling your heart?
2. Can you recall a time when speaking words of faith - rather than fear or doubt - shifted a situation for you or someone else?
3. Can you think of a verse you want to speak out regularly this week?
4. What is the source of your speech?
5. Jesus sometimes stayed silent when confronted (Psalm 38:13). How can learning to pause before speaking help us in daily situations?
6. What role does the Holy Spirit play in sanctifying our mouths for God's purposes?

The Heart Attitude

The heart is central to everything in our walk with God. If we want to receive His presence, His blessings, His healing, or His guidance, we must begin by positioning our hearts correctly. God is always looking at the heart.

You may be praying for things - wanting, seeking, asking - but what matters most to God is the condition of your heart. He is not like men. He sees beyond makeup, beyond the words you say, beyond the way you dress or the car you drive. He sees past what others think of you. He peers into the innermost place - your heart.

The Truth About Yourself

Half the battle in receiving a breakthrough is acknowledging the truth about yourself. The world teaches denial. It justifies sin. It labels spiritual problems as trauma or victimhood and avoids accountability. But before God, denial is deception. The truth is this: without Christ, we are sinners under judgment. The heart must face this truth.

The victim mentality, though culturally familiar, is demonic in origin. It avoids responsibility, blames the past, and perpetuates resentment. On judgment day, those who hurt you won't be standing beside you. Only you will stand before God, accountable for your own heart - your own responses.

So ask yourself: Who are you before God? A sinner in need of grace? A carnal Christian - claiming the name of Christ while living in sin? The first step to transformation is this recognition. That is grace - when the Holy Spirit brings conviction and reveals your need for repentance. When you see your sin, you can confess, repent, and watch the windows of heaven open over your life.

“if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.” 2 Chronicles 7:14.

It starts with humility. The condition of your heart matters deeply to God.

The Bitterness That Blocks Healing

Some are praying for healing while harbouring bitterness. The heart is rotting the bones, and yet they ask for healing of the arthritis that bitterness fuels. Forgiveness is often the doorway to physical healing. When you stop blaming others, own your resentment, and ask for forgiveness, God's healing can flow.

“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” 1 John 1:8.

Confession is not weakness - it is power. Half the battle is confessing your sin. The other half is God's faithfulness to forgive and cleanse you.

Two Thieves, Two Hearts

There were two thieves crucified beside Jesus. Both were in the same situation - dying - but their hearts were not the same. One mocked Jesus; the other acknowledged his sin and turned to Christ in his final breath.

Jesus replied:

“And Jesus said to him, “Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.” **Luke 23:43.**

Same circumstance, different outcome - because of the heart.

God is not impressed by external conditions. He looks at the position of your heart.

Wrong Heart Positions

Let's talk about some of the wrong heart positions God is warning us about.

1. Pride

Some avoid church or accountability, believing they are spiritually superior. They think they hear God better than others and need no one. The Bible exhorts us:

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

Imagine asking God for help while your heart is filled with pride - He's not just ignoring the request. He's actively resisting you. But to the humble, He gives grace - power, anointing, and wisdom.

“When pride comes, then comes shame; But with the humble is wisdom.” Proverbs 11:2.

Wisdom is found in humility. Wisdom is Jesus. When you humble yourself and cry out for help, He answers.

2. Self-Righteousness

Some people think, “I’m better than others. I’m a good person.” Yet Jesus taught that the humble are justified. A man in the temple beat his chest and cried, *“Have mercy on me, a sinner.”* Another stood tall, boasting, *“Thank God I’m not like him.”* Jesus said the humble man went home justified:

“Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.’ And the tax

collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise 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, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." **Luke 18:9-14.**

God resists pride. He promotes the humble.

3. Unbelief

In His hometown, Jesus could not perform many miracles - why? Because of unbelief. Faith opens the door for God's power. Without it, you receive nothing.

Faith isn't head knowledge - it's heart posture. Some people know little about Christianity, but they simply believe, and God meets them in power. Faith pleases God.

4. Disappointment

Disappointment opens the door to resentment and bitterness. During my battle with cancer, I was told at one point that the tumour had grown. It was devastating. But I didn't accept it. I asked them to check again. Later, they called to say there was a mistake - the tumour had not grown. The devil was trying to use misinformation to destroy my faith.

Disappointment can derail your journey if you let it. Don't let it take root.

"I would have lost heart, unless I had believed. That I would see the goodness of the Lord In the land of the living. Wait on the Lord; Be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say, on the Lord!"
Psalm 27:13-14.

5. Worry and Anxiety

Jesus said clearly,

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

Worry is an affront to God's provision. If He can clothe the grass and feed the birds, He can take care of you. Trust God. Leave it in His hands.

Faith Is the Right Heart Position

Faith is like heavenly currency. Some people pass away in faith, still believing for healing - and they please God. Their death is not a failure; it's a testimony of faith. Believe, and you please God.

Faith is not religion. It's not a ceremony. It's not performance. It's heart. It's saying: *"I know my God will deliver me."* It's clinging to His Word, no matter what.

Think of Zacchaeus - a corrupt, wealthy man. He climbed a tree like a child just to see Jesus. And Jesus saw his heart. Others saw a crook. Jesus saw humility.

Zacchaeus repented, saying, *“If I’ve cheated anyone, I’ll repay them four times over.”*

The Bible exhorts us:

“And Jesus said to him, ‘Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham;’ **Luke 19:9.**

The people judged him by his past. Jesus saw his heart.

You may be asking for promotion, a new job, a blessing - but God sees the motives of your heart. Is it pride? Is it selfishness? Is it competition?

He prepared the world for Jesus by sending John the Baptist. What was his message? *“Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand.”* People confessed their sins and were baptised. God always prepares the heart through repentance before releasing His presence.

The Bible exhorts us:

“Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” **James 4:7.**

You cannot resist the devil while agreeing with him in your heart. Put your heart in alignment with Jesus.

A Time of Response

Jesus came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. He's here for your heart.

Where is your heart today?

- Are you jealous of someone else's blessing? Ask for forgiveness.
- Are you obsessed with outward appearance? God sees your heart, not your dress.
- Are you anxious about your child's future? Trust Him - He cares for you.
- Are you consumed by greed? Let it go. You can't take it with you.
- Do you wrestle with rage? Stop blaming others. Take responsibility and ask God for help.

Let's pray:

"Lord, wash my heart with the blood of Jesus. Change my heart. Give me a heart that pleases You. Sanctify my heart. I repent of unbelief, of pride, of resentment. Forgive me, Lord. Fill me with the Holy Spirit. Transform my heart from glory to glory.

Make me a blessing to others. I want to receive, because I want to give. I humble myself before You. In Jesus' name. Amen."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What area of your heart is God highlighting right now?
2. When have you experienced God's grace after humbling yourself?
3. Can you share an example where forgiveness opened the door to healing or freedom, either in your life or someone else's?
4. How does acknowledging the truth about ourselves open the door to transformation?
5. How does the prayer of repentance and surrender transform the heart over time?
6. What practical step will you take to align your heart with God this week?

The Standard of Righteousness

There is a deep sadness in my heart when I consider the state of unrighteousness in many parts of the modern church. In some places, it seems as though there's no longer any standard - no clear call to holiness, no firm stance on what it means to walk rightly with God. And yet, the Bible is clear: our God is holy, and He calls us to live lives set apart, consecrated, and rooted in His righteousness.

I was speaking with a friend, who shared openly about how a teaching known as "hyper-grace" once led him astray. He had been taught the idea of "once saved, always saved," and it laid a dangerous foundation in his life. He believed that because he had prayed and received his salvation, he could now live as he wanted. Drugs, alcohol, wild living - it didn't matter. He thought his ticket to heaven had already been stamped.

But decades later, the Lord, in His mercy, showed Steve the truth. Righteousness matters. Holiness matters. Walking with God isn't just about a moment of salvation - it's about a transformed life. Steve discovered that true grace isn't the license to sin but the power to live free from it. Grace, he realised, is when a sinner repents, humbles themselves before God, and receives forgiveness - not permission to continue in sin.

The Grief of God

One day, while in prayer, I was taken into the presence of the Holy Spirit, and I felt the sorrow of God. Did you know the Holy Spirit grieves? He sorrows over His children (sons and daughters) who are entangled in sin, caught up in the ways of the world, unaware of their consecration and identity in Christ.

Many people are unaware that they are beloved. They do not know that their Father is holy and jealous for their hearts. He paid the ultimate price - the blood of Jesus Christ. We are not our own. We belong to Him. And yet many continue to live like the world, indulging in fornication, hatred, materialism, bitterness, and unforgiveness. The Spirit grieves over His children who walk in bondage instead of freedom.

Scripture exhorts us:

“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.” **Ephesians 4:30-31.**

God wants us to be free - truly free. And when we walk in His righteousness, the heavens open over our lives.

Discovering the Blessing of Repentance

One of the greatest blessings I've ever received was reading a list of sins and realising - *I was in sin*. I had to repent. The truth is, many people are attending church every week, living in sin, and no one is telling them the truth. The Bible says that when you are in sin, you are a slave to it. But Jesus came to set us free. *Free!* Not bound, not just "managing" sin, but truly free.

Jesus said:

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled." **Matthew 5:6.**

Righteousness starts in the heart. It's not about outward behaviour alone - it begins with a holy hunger within. As we repent and humble ourselves, God begins to transform us from the inside out.

Religion says, "Just behave." Show up to church, give your offering, tick the boxes. But Jesus is after the heart. When your heart is set on Him, your life will change. You will no longer want to walk in compromise.

Healing Begins with the Heart

Some people come to meetings desiring healing, but they do not hunger for righteousness. The sin in their lives may have opened the door to demonic oppression and sickness, yet they want a Band-Aid solution without

repentance. But Jesus knew this would be the case, and He preached, *“Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.”* He healed the sick, raised the dead, and cleansed lepers - but He never stopped calling people to repentance and holiness.

The greatest sickness of man is not physical. It is the sickness of the heart. And no psychiatrist or counsellor can heal that. Only the blood of Jesus can heal a darkened, sinful heart. That's the deepest level of healing. And it starts with repentance.

God's grace is not just forgiveness - it is **power**. Power to live a holy life. Power to walk like Jesus. I remember a Hindu woman in Toronto. She sat in a meeting, and the power of Jesus came upon her. She began to weep and said, “I give my life to Jesus.” That's what grace looks like - it transforms.

The Power of the Holy Spirit and the Promises of God

You cannot be saved by simply saying a prayer. You must be born again by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit who transforms, who empowers, who sanctifies. Look at Saul: once a persecutor of Christians, he encountered Jesus, and in an instant, his life changed. That's the power of the Holy Spirit.

The reason many churches are in trouble is that they've pushed the Holy Spirit aside. They've made church into a

business, a motivational seminar, or an entertainment centre. But only the Holy Spirit can reveal righteousness. He comes to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment.

Where the Holy Spirit is, there is **holiness**. People get saved. They repent. They leave their sin behind. Lives change. Churches must return to the Spirit. When we rely on tradition, routine, or performance, there's no power - just empty words.

The Bible exhorts us:

“as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue,” 2 Peter 1:3.

He also gives us exceedingly great and precious promises - promises like forgiveness, justification, righteousness, and eternal life. The Holy Spirit shines a light on these promises so we can believe them and walk in them.

Tradition vs. Truth

Jesus said that religious traditions can render the Word of God ineffective. And these traditions aren't just old laws - they can be anything we cling to in place of the Spirit's leading. When people say, “We allow the Holy Spirit to move,” they reveal a heart that has

misunderstood who's in charge. We don't allow the Holy Spirit. He is **Lord**. We are not.

God looks beyond your outward appearance. You can have a form of godliness but deny its power. Scripture says, *"From such people turn away."* Some might say, "But all my friends are at that church." Then pick up your cross and follow Jesus.

Godliness with contentment is a significant gain. But the world we live in thrives on discontent. People chase more, more, more - and dig themselves into debt, trying to keep up. Marketing is fueled by your dissatisfaction. But Jesus calls us to be content with food, clothing, and Him.

Live With Eternity in Mind

This world will pass away. I remember thinking life would go on forever - until I got cancer in 2011 and almost died in 2014. Life is short. Temporary. Fleeting. Even degrees become obsolete. Everything in this world fades.

The Bible exhorts us:

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up."

Peter 3:10.

There are Christians who will enter heaven with no reward - everything they lived for will be burned away. But those who obey Christ lay up treasures in heaven. Their reward awaits.

So what kind of people ought we to be? Holy. Godly. Fixing our eyes on heaven, not the world. Don't live like everyone else. God has a higher standard. **Galatians 5** lists the sins that prevent people from inheriting the Kingdom: fornication, idolatry, hatred, heresy, and more. Those who **practice** these things will not enter. But the good news? God gives us the grace and power to live differently.

Walk the Walk

Your example matters. Your children and grandchildren are watching - not just listening to your words, but observing your life. They see how you treat others, how you handle anger, and what you say behind closed doors. Be an example in love, faith, purity, and conduct.

All of this will pass. Don't live for things. Don't live for approval. Live for Jesus.

To pastors and preachers: don't be afraid to tell people the truth. You don't need to please people. Just speak the Word in love, and let the Holy Spirit do the work. At JEM ministry, we often tell people plainly, "You're free to leave - but these are God's standards." And many come back, repent, and walk in freedom.

If you're convicted, don't run from it. That's the Holy Spirit calling you back. God loves you. But He hates sin. He's jealous for your heart. Repent now. Turn to Him. Say:

Jesus, be my Lord. Be my Saviour. I turn my back on the world, on my sin, on doubt and unbelief. I turn to Christ. I believe Your Word. I receive Your grace. I receive forgiveness. Cleanse me from all unrighteousness.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do you agree that some modern churches have lowered or blurred the standard of righteousness?
2. How can a Christian distinguish between healthy reliance on God's grace and using grace as an excuse for sin?
3. Have you ever experienced conviction by the Holy Spirit? How did you respond?
4. What practical steps can someone take to cultivate "hunger and thirst for righteousness"?
5. In what ways might focusing too much on outward behaviour without heart transformation fall short of true righteousness?
6. What dangers arise when churches prioritise tradition, routine, or performance over the presence of the Holy Spirit?

The Work of the Holy Spirit in Your Soul

“You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.” Psalm 16:11.

This is the gospel: life in Christ. Without Him, our souls are spiritually dead. But when the Holy Spirit comes, He breathes life into what was lifeless. He drives out darkness, fills us with joy, and leads us into pleasures far greater than anything this world offers. In His presence, peace and divine satisfaction overflow.

The Anointing Brings Transformation

People often say after encountering the Spirit, “I can’t explain it.” What they’re experiencing are divine pleasures - joy unspeakable, peace that surpasses understanding, and the tangible presence of God.

A powerful testimony comes from a Cook Islander family who attended a meeting in Brisbane. None of them were believers. The mother struggled with alcoholism. But

when the Holy Spirit touched them, they were instantly born again, filled with the Spirit, and began speaking in tongues. Without any formal discipleship, they went out preaching the gospel and witnessed miracles, including the healing of broken bones. That is the transforming power of the anointing.

Did You Receive the Holy Spirit?

Some believe that Christianity is about accepting doctrines or belonging to a denomination. Others say, “I was born a Christian.” But in the book of Acts, the apostles asked a vital question:

“he said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” So they said to him, “We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.” Acts 19:2.

Receiving the Spirit isn't optional - it is essential. He applies the blood of Christ, brings us into a relationship with Jesus, and performs the miracle of the new birth. He turns sorrow into joy, heals sickness, and delivers the soul from darkness into light.

Born of the Spirit

Jesus declared:

“Jesus answered, “most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, He cannot enter the kingdom of God.” **John 3:5.**

Being born again isn't about religious tradition. It's not about being sprinkled with water as a baby. It's a spiritual rebirth - a miracle performed by the Holy Spirit when we repent and believe in Jesus.

Jesus compared it to the wind - you don't know where it comes from or where it's going, but you see its effects. So, it is with those born of the Spirit. You become like a sailboat powered by the wind of God, guided by Jesus as your Captain.

The Character of the Spirit

The Holy Spirit is not a force - He is a Person with a divine personality. His character is seen in the fruit of the Spirit:

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

To be filled with the Spirit is to allow His nature to shape yours. He brings divine peace, removes spiritual blindness, and opens your heart to see Jesus clearly.

The scripture exhorts us,

“Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.” 2 Corinthians 3:17.

Trusting the Spirit's Work

Only the Spirit can transform a life. Our role is not to control, condemn, or manipulate others, but to trust the Spirit to disciple them.

A woman named Regina shared how, while watching a cooking show online, the video suddenly changed without her touching her device, and a video of mine appeared instead. As she watched, the Holy Spirit fell upon her, and she began to weep as God spoke to her. That is discipleship led by the Spirit - not human effort, but divine power.

We must trust the Holy Spirit to change others - from glory to glory. Otherwise, we risk creating people who look like us, instead of people who look like Jesus.

Joy in the Father's House

The kingdom of God is joy, not dryness. Jesus illustrated the heart of God in the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15). When the lost son returned, the father ran to him, clothed him with honour, and called for a celebration - music, dancing, and feasting. But the older son, full of religious pride, refused to rejoice. Yet the father said,

"It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found." **Luke 15:32.**

Heaven celebrates repentance with joy. So should we. The Father delights in lifting the broken, restoring the fallen, and rejoicing over the least expected.

From Glory to Glory

"But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord." **2 Corinthians 3:18.**

The Holy Spirit removes the veil from our hearts. We begin to see Jesus clearly, and we are changed into His likeness.

Sanctification is not achieved by human striving but by the Spirit's power. We repent, we believe, but it is God's grace that changes us. Our part is to yield; His part is to transform.

An Invitation to New Life

Maybe you've grown up in church. Perhaps, you've heard sermons all your life. But if you've never been born of the Spirit, you're missing the Kingdom. Jesus says, *"You must be born again."* The Spirit of God brings freedom, peace, and joy that religion cannot offer.

If you desire this new life, open your heart to Christ. Repent of sin - immorality, unforgiveness, idolatry, occult practices, lies, resentment. Ask Jesus to cleanse your heart and receive the Spirit of God. In that moment, the old life will pass away, and the new life in Christ will be born within you.

Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. Receive Him, and enter into righteousness, peace, and the fullness of joy.

"Therefore with joy you will draw water From the wells of salvation." **Isaiah 12:3.**

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you personally experienced the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in your life?
2. Are there areas in your life where you've tried to change others instead of trusting the Spirit to transform them?
3. What may still be hindering your heart from seeing Jesus clearly?
4. What step can you take today to surrender fully to the Holy Spirit?
5. Why is receiving the Holy Spirit essential rather than optional in the Christian life?
6. Which fruits of the Spirit do you find challenging to cultivate in your daily life?

Words Acceptable to God

From sunrise to sunset, our words matter. The way we use our mouths reveals much about our hearts and our faith. Previously, I spoke about a sound mind; now, I want to talk about a sound mouth.

The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable, but the mouth of the wicked speaks perversity. Before we speak, do we ever pause to ask whether our words are acceptable to God? Pleasing Him is the greatest thing we can do in life. And what pleases God most is faith.

Jesus marvelled at great faith. He said to one,

“How great is your faith! I have not seen such faith in all of Israel.”

Words spoken in faith are the words that please God most. When we talk out of trust in Him, our speech reaches heaven.

The psalmist prayed:

“Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer.” **Psalm 19:14.**

But too often, our words fall short. Perhaps this very week you argued, shouted, swore, or spoke in anger. Such words are not acceptable to God. Scripture teaches us there are two sources of speech - hell and heaven. Which one did your words flow from?

The Mouth as a Source of Life

Our mouths can be rivers of divine life. Jesus only spoke what He heard from the Father. His mouth was the Father's mouthpiece. Can yours be the mouthpiece of heaven? With it, you can talk about encouragement, blessing, and love.

Jesus taught us:

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust." **Matthew 5:43-45.**

God puts His Word in our hearts and in our mouths so that when we walk in the Spirit, His Word flows through us.

Paul writes:

“But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith which we preach):” **Romans 10:8.**

Faith pleases God, and faith-filled speech moves mountains.

Religion without faith is hypocrisy. Confession without belief is empty.

“that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.” **Romans 10:9.**

There is power in your mouth when you believe what you say.

Faith That Speaks

Jesus declared:

“For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says.” **Mark 11:23.**

This is why some prayers are ineffective - they lack faith. The prayer of faith heals the sick. When God called me into ministry in 2004, He gave me a dream. In it, He said, “Go to Borneo to pray.” I didn’t even know where Borneo

was. In the dream, I asked, “Lord, what shall I pray?” and He replied, “Pray the prayer of faith for revival.”

Later, in Indonesia, we witnessed how thousands were touched through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The prayer of faith releases God’s power.

Grace on the Lips

The scripture instructs us:

“Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.” **Colossians 4:6.**

Grace is God’s power flowing to the undeserving. When you speak with love, your words become vessels of grace, encouragement, and even prophecy.

Encouragement, when combined with grace, often carries a prophetic edge. Sometimes all it takes is a simple, Spirit-inspired word - “It’s going to be okay” - and healing power is released. I once greeted a receptionist at a Bible college with nothing more than “Hello.” At that moment, her grandson, who had a broken back, was healed. Grace flowed through encouragement.

Learning to Wait Before Speaking

A wise mouth begins with a wise heart.

The scripture exhorts us:

“My mouth shall speak wisdom, And the meditation of my heart shall give understanding.” Psalm 49:3.

If you want a mouth that speaks wisdom, meditate on God’s Word and wait on the Holy Spirit before speaking.

“The heart of the righteous studies how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours forth evil.” Proverbs 15:28.

Let your mouth become a vehicle of praise. Instead of complaining, let gratitude and worship fill your speech. Imagine responding to “How are you today?” with “I’m blessed, highly favoured, and grateful to God.” That kind of speech glorifies Him and edifies others.

Heart and Mouth in Alignment

Hypocrisy occurs when the mouth and heart are out of alignment. People may speak smooth words, but war is in their hearts. God desires authenticity. He warned Israel through Isaiah:

“Therefore the Lord said: “Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths And honor Me with their lips, But have removed their hearts far from Me, And their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men,”
Isaiah 29:13.

Much of the modern church suffers from this very problem - words without heart, religion without Spirit. Only the Holy Spirit brings truth, conviction, and

transformation. Without Him, faith and speech are hollow.

Two Sources of Speech

Having dealt with hundreds of deliverance cases, I've often heard demons speak through people. Their language is full of swearing, pride, intimidation, and rage. Sadly, many people's words sound no different. So, which source fuels your speech - heaven or hell?

Scripture urges us:

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." **Colossians 3:16.**

When His Word fills your heart, your mouth will overflow with faith, gratitude, encouragement, and life.

Sanctifying the Mouth

To pray effectively, to minister with power, to speak words that move mountains - you must surrender your mouth to Jesus. I encourage you to ask God to sanctify your mouth, making it holy and available for His use.

When filled with the Holy Spirit, your mouth will overflow in new languages, prophecy, worship, and praise. I once saw a young woman in Hong Kong fall under the Spirit's power; she danced like a ballerina while lying on the

floor. When lifted, she continued twirling under the anointing of God. That's what happens when heaven fills your mouth.

So, let there be less of us and more of Him. May our mouths be sanctified, our words acceptable, and our faith spoken. For when heart and mouth align in Christ, mountains move, the sick are healed, and lives are transformed.

Amen.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think God cares so much about the words we speak?
2. How do our words reflect the condition of our hearts?
3. What ways can we take to ensure that our daily speech is acceptable to God?
4. How do we guard our hearts and mouths against hypocritical words?
5. Have you ever experienced the power of encouragement or a simple word spoken in grace?
6. In what ways can we allow the Holy Spirit to sanctify our mouths?

A LIFE THAT GLORIFIES GOD

The primary purpose of life is to glorify God. The greatest thing you can do is to please Him - with your life, in your marriage, as a parent, and in your work. God has not called us to be people-pleasers, but to be God-pleasers.

This calling is not always easy. Sometimes a spouse may pressure you into doing things that do not honour God. At other times, an employer may ask you to falsify records or act unethically, and saying no might cost you your job. Living to please God always involves sacrifice. Jesus said,

“Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.” **Matthew 16:24.**

To be a God-pleaser means setting Christ before you and keeping your focus on Him.

We live in the world, but we are not of it. An unseen hand rules our lives by the Holy Spirit. As children of God, we are called to obey our heavenly Father above every earthly authority. When the commands of man contradict God’s Word, we must remember that our higher allegiance is to Him.

Living by Faith, Not by Sight

Paul wrote, “Make it your aim to please God.” While we are in the body, we are away from the Lord; but one day, we will be at home with Him. On this side of eternity, we walk by faith, not by sight. But in heaven, faith will no longer be necessary, for we will see the King of kings face to face. Until that day, we must live by faith, confident that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.

One day, every one of us will stand before the judgment seat of Christ and give an account for our lives - our words, our actions, and even our thoughts. This is why we cannot glorify God while walking in sinful attitudes and behaviours. The carnal mind is at war with God. Those who live according to the flesh set their minds on worldly things - lust, anger, pride - but those who live by the Spirit set their minds on things that bring life and peace.

A Testimony of Transformation

I recall a testimony of a man who was once addicted to pornography, computer games, and anger. As he encountered the Word of God, his life was transformed. He no longer spent hours gaming or feeding his addictions. Instead, he now sits at his computer, reading Scripture, devouring the Word that once had no place in his life. This is what it means to set your mind on the Spirit.

When you watch violence, gossip, witchcraft, or sexual immorality on television or the internet, can you genuinely say your life is pleasing to God? Would you invite Jesus to sit with you while you watch? If we belong to Christ, we have no choice but to please Him, for we no longer belong to ourselves. Scripture says,

“Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have received from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.” **1 Corinthians 6:19-20.**

Christ purchased us with His blood. He redeemed us from darkness, from sin, and from Satan’s power. Our citizenship has changed; we are now citizens of heaven. The life of sin is no longer an option. He is not only our Saviour but also our Master and Lord. The greatest joy in life is to obey Him.

The Word of God as a Sword

The Word of God is living and active, sharper than any double-edged sword. When you open your Bible, allow it to cut away everything in your life that resists Him. Submit to its correction, let it sanctify you, and you will live a life pleasing to God. Do not waste your life on gossip, endless television, or worldly distractions. Live it for Jesus.

Years ago, I had a vision. I saw my life as a hallway lined with gift boxes. As I walked down the hallway with Jesus, the gifts opened up - gifts of grace, healing, miracles, and transformed lives. These were gifts prepared before the foundation of the world, destined to be revealed as I walked with Him. Your life, too, has such gifts prepared. Why waste it on trivial pursuits when God has called you to bless others?

Each of us has been given work in the Kingdom of God. Your work is precious. My work is precious. Do not allow anyone to steal it from you. Even if you do not know precisely what to do, do something for the Lord. Offer Him something rather than nothing.

Often, life presents us with traps - arguments, offences, unnecessary conflicts - that distract us from God's will. Do not step into them. If someone is angry or offended at you, bless them and keep moving. Stay focused on the pathway Christ has laid before you.

What Pleases God

God is not impressed by religious performance or outward strength. He looks at the condition of your heart. The Scripture exhorts us:

“The Lord takes pleasure in those who fear Him, In those who hope in His mercy.” Psalm 147:11.

Micah reminds us that what God requires is simple: to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with Him.

Religious pride is like a stench in His presence. What pleases God is humility, justice, mercy, and faith.

Faith is essential. Without it, it is impossible to please God. When my father died while I was still a teenager, I prayed, *“I do not understand, but I trust You.”* Trusting God when life makes no sense pleases Him deeply. Even when a believer dies in faith, their trust in God at the point of death glorifies Him.

The Privilege of Serving the Master

The greatest privilege in life is to be given work by the Master. Nothing compares to pleasing Jesus and glorifying Him through obedience. Your task may seem small, but if you are faithful in little, He will entrust you with much.

Do not despise what God has placed in your hands. He is not asking you to perform miracles or draw crowds - only to obey. He is responsible for the outcome; your responsibility is to trust and obey.

So live with this aim: to glorify God. Trust Him in your struggles, in your family, in your work, in your studies. Trust Him even in suffering, and keep obeying Him. In the end, may you hear the words, *“Well done, good and faithful servant.”*

There is no greater joy, no greater calling, than to live a life that glorifies God.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How does your life glorify God as a Christian?
2. How can you live a godly life as a Christian always?
3. In what areas of your life do you feel most challenged to please God rather than people?
4. Have you ever faced a situation where pleasing God cost you something significant?
5. How do the things you watch, listen to, or think about shape whether your life pleases God or not?
6. How can we encourage each other as believers to remain focused on the work God has given us, without being distracted by arguments, offences, or worldly pursuits?

A Simple Devotion to Christ

Devotion to Christ is the awareness that He is here: *“Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”* Wherever two or three are gathered in His name, He is present.

Scripture says,

“For David says concerning Him: ‘I foresaw the LORD always before my face, For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken.’” **Act 2:25.**

This devotion is not mere religion - it is the spiritual awareness of His reality, the recognition that Jesus indwells your heart through His word. Many Christians go through the motions: attending church, joining Bible studies, fulfilling duties. Yet without spiritual awareness, how can there be true devotion to Christ? When the inner man awakens to His presence - Christ within, Christ around - then the fear of God takes root.

Devotion is spiritual. The inner man must come alive in Christ. The Scripture exhorts us:

“But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.” **Romans 8:11.**

When you are aware that Jesus is with you, how can you walk in sin? How can you chase after the world when you know He is watching? He is the Good Shepherd, watching over us.

Yet Satan uses the world to distract the inner man. Distractions can arise from family, work, financial concerns, material possessions, and personal problems. If we live in the flesh, we become anxious and worried. But when we choose an undistracted focus on Christ, our vision becomes clear. We can declare: *“You are not going to steal my vision. My vision is Christ.”*

A Heavenly Perspective

Consider the story of Lazarus in John 11. Jesus received word that Lazarus was very sick, but instead of rushing, He said, *“He is sleeping. Let us go and wake him.”* Lazarus died, was buried, and mourned for days before Jesus arrived. From a human perspective, the situation was hopeless. But Jesus saw with heavenly eyes. Standing at the tomb, He wept out of love - then called, *“Lazarus, come out!”* and life returned.

When you look at your problems, whose perspective do you hold? If your outlook is shaped by fear, anxiety, or others' opinions, your vision of Christ will be clouded. But if you can see from above, you will discern God's will. Even trials serve a purpose.

The Bible exhorts us:

“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.” **Romans 8:28.**

Problems become tools of character, promotion, and blessing. Do not let them steal your gaze from Jesus.

Paul wrote:

“Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” **Philippians 3:13-14.**

This means letting go of past failures, betrayals, and losses. Life will present situations we don't understand, but sometimes the best response is simply: *Just let it go.*

Learning to Let Go

In ministry, unexpected challenges are a constant presence. I remember preaching in Croatia, where our venue was next to a wedding reception, complete with blaring music and subwoofers shaking the walls. It was a nightmare. But we learned to let it go and move forward. This has been one of the greatest lessons in walking with Christ: don't let setbacks, people's offences, or disappointments steal your joy or vision.

The Spirit must quicken your inner man. As Paul prayed:

“That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love.” Ephesians 3:16-17.

Devotion is not about achievements; it is about Christ living in you. His indwelling brings peace, joy, and love.

Joyful Devotion

True devotion is not obligation - it is joy. Jesus compared it to a man who finds treasure in a field and sells everything to buy it, or a merchant who discovers a pearl of great price and gives all he has to obtain it. Devotion flows from discovering Christ as treasure. Religion says, *“I should do this, I should do that.”* Devotion says, *“I love Him; I want to give Him everything.”*

To be devoted means surrender. Jesus said, *“If you love me, keep my commands.”* A life dedicated to Him involves surrendering money, career, time, friendships, entertainment, and desires to His will. He does not accept lukewarmness. He calls for a wholehearted flame that burns away worldly distractions.

When you are devoted, your life becomes an instrument of righteousness. The Scripture exhorts us:

“And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as

being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.” Romans 6:13.

Your eyes, hands, words, and time become vessels through which His Spirit flows - bringing healing, light, and power.

The Meditation of the Heart

Devotion also shows in meditation. *“Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord.”* What fills your mind when you are alone? If it is ungodly entertainment, pornography, occult stories, or profanity-filled music, your meditation grieves the Spirit. But when the word of God fills your heart, your devotion becomes sweet to the Lord.

The world constantly competes for our attention - money, relationships, desires. Many justify sin, even premarital sex, under the guise of personal choice. Yet devotion means allowing the word to rule your heart and thoughts. You do not stand over the word; the word stands over you. When the word rules you, Jesus Christ is truly Lord.

Choosing Whom You Will Serve

Simple devotion to Christ is choosing to see Him before you and follow Him. Jesus warned that no one can serve two masters. You cannot serve both God and money. In the coming days, I believe the divide between worldly Christians and those on fire for God will widen. The

worldly will grow dry, while the devoted will burn with His presence. Many will realise that cultural Christianity is not enough - they will hunger for the real thing.

Joshua once declared, “*Choose this day whom you will serve.*” The same choice lies before us. Will we please the world or please the Lord? Will we surrender to His word or compromise for the season?

A Call to Come Alive

Today the Spirit calls: *Come alive*. Let your eyes, ears, mind, and heart be quickened by the power that raised Jesus from the dead. Let the Kingdom of Heaven dominate your life. Be more aware of His presence than of the world’s distractions. Receive revelation from the word. Let His truth grow deep in your heart until you are strong in Him.

A simple devotion to Christ is not complicated. It is keeping your eyes on Him, surrendering your life to His will, and allowing His Spirit to make you alive. From this place, you walk in joy, love, and power. You discover Christ as treasure, and you give everything for Him.

Hallelujah.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How do we live each day with the awareness that Christ is present?
2. What are the most common distractions that pull believers away from devotion today?
3. As believers, how can we guard our vision so that Christ remains our focus despite life's pressures?
4. How can we learn to trust God's timing when situations seem hopeless?
5. Why does satan target our thoughts so aggressively?
6. Why is it difficult for us to let go of past hurts, failures, or disappointments?

Strength on the Inside

Living in a Spiritual World

Jesus Christ, dwelling within you by the power of the Holy Spirit, gives you strength on the inside. We do not live in a physical world only. We live in a spiritual world - a realm where angels exist and where demons also operate. Because of this, we need God's power on the inside. The battles of life are not merely natural but spiritual, and only spiritual strength can withstand them.

Paul reminds us:

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. 11Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Ephesians 6:10-12.

The Need for Inner Strength

Problems may manifest outwardly - someone may criticise you, gossip about you, slander you, or even steal from you - but at their root, these are spiritual battles. And so, Paul concludes: "Having done all, stand." To remain standing, you need power on the inside.

Have you ever felt hurt deep within, where no one else can see? That is when you need to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in your inner being - that Christ may dwell in your heart by faith. The Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ are one, and we need His living presence manifested within us.

Natural strength is not enough. Your intellect, your skills, or even human help cannot fully sustain you in life's most challenging moments. A doctor may say there is nothing more to be done. A bank manager may refuse to grant you a loan. A marriage counsellor may tell you there is no hope. But above the natural realm, there is One greater - Jesus Christ.

The Gift of the Holy Spirit

He gives you power to overcome this world. He makes you an overcomer. He has given us the gift of the Holy Spirit, our Helper. So, when life's problems threaten to overwhelm you, go to the Saviour, the Deliverer, the Healer, and be filled with His Spirit.

When Jesus left the earth, He instructed His disciples to wait in Jerusalem until they were clothed with power from on high. In Acts 1, we read how they stayed in prayer for ten days. On the day of Pentecost, a mighty rushing wind filled the house, tongues of fire rested on each one, and they spoke in other tongues. People from many nations heard them declaring God's wonders in

their own languages. The power of God had come upon the church.

This is the pattern for us, too. Many churches rely on human strategies - programs for growth, fundraising campaigns, clever plans - but Jesus' model was different. His plan was simple: "Wait. Receive power. Be filled with the Spirit. Then go." Do not rush ahead in your own strength. Wait for the baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire. That is where true strength lies.

Spiritual Problems Need Spiritual Power

Sometimes people come with heavy problems - even oppressed by demons - and we attempt to deal with them using natural means. But spiritual issues require spiritual weapons. Jesus is our source of power in every circumstance.

How then do we receive His strength within? Scripture shows us that His power is perfected in weakness. The natural mind says, "Be strong. Be confident. Think positively. Try harder." But in doing so, we diminish the power of God in our lives. The true confession of the believer is: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

The Power of Weakness

Jesus said,

“Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.” **Matthew 16:24.**

This means dying to your natural strength, laying aside confidence in yourself, and humbling yourself before Him. As Paul wrote:

“And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” **2 Corinthians 12:9.**

Paul could even boast in his infirmities, because through them the power of Christ rested upon him. When we make ourselves weak, He shows His power. When we humble ourselves, He exalts us, and all the glory belongs to Him.

If you buy a car or a house and people say, “Congratulations,” don’t steal the glory; give it to God. He is the source of every blessing. Pride pushes His power away, but humility invites it in. Faith acknowledges that He is the doer, and so His power is revealed in our weakness.

Consider Christ Himself:

“For though He was crucified in weakness, yet He lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God toward you.” **2 Corinthians 13:4.**

Through the cross, what looked like shame and defeat became the most significant victory. Jesus descended into hell, preached to the captives, and brought many into glory. The devil never understood that the weakness of the cross would bring glory to God.

From Shame to Testimony

As Christians, we sometimes face shame in this world, but our true glory is hidden in Christ. I once spoke to a man who had been involved in growing drugs. He was ashamed of his past and quickly silenced me when I mentioned it. But in Christ, our sins become our testimony. We can say, "I was in sin, but Jesus saved me. Look at what I was - and look at me now." Our weakness becomes the backdrop for His redeeming power.

Renewed Like Eagles

Isaiah declares:

"He gives power to the weak, And to those who have no might He increases strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, And the young men shall utterly fall, But those who wait on the Lord Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint."
Isaiah 40:29-31.

Prayer leads to power. Waiting leads to renewal. In the Spirit, you see life from a higher perspective, just as an eagle looks down from the heights.

Paul lived this reality. He was stoned and left for dead, yet when the disciples gathered around him, he rose, walked to the next city, and began preaching again. That was not natural endurance - it was the power of God within him.

You, too, can live in that strength. Cry out: "Lord, I need You. I cannot do this without You. Help me." And He will come in your weakness to perfect His power.

The prophet Isaiah also says:

"Strengthen the weak hands, And make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are fearful-hearted, "Be strong, do not fear! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, With the recompense of God; He will come and save you." Isaiah 35:3-4.

This is the message for you: Do not fear. Be strong in the Lord. God is with you, and He will come to save you. Trust Him, lean on Him, and His strength will carry you through.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In what ways have you experienced weakness that later became a channel for God's strength?
2. Why do you think God chooses to perfect His power in our weakness instead of our strength?
3. How do you usually respond when you feel spiritually or emotionally drained - do you lean on natural means, or turn to Christ?
4. Have you ever faced a situation that seemed purely "natural," but later you realised it was a spiritual battle?
5. Can you share a time when you waited on God and saw His power released in your situation?
6. How can sharing our past weaknesses or sins actually bring glory to God?

Keep Going!

On a particular event night, we faced one technical problem after another. We went through four different internet connections in an attempt to find something stable. My microphone didn't work, one of the sound cables failed, and the Zoom sound clashed with our system. It was, without exaggeration, the worst technological mess I have ever seen.

But the message that came out of that chaos for me, was: "Keep going."

Sometimes, the obstacles we face carry prophetic significance. They remind us of the spiritual truth, that we are on a journey with God, and on this journey, we must remain intentionally focused on His upward call. No matter what comes our way, we must not let anything distract us from His will.

A Distraction and a Miracle

I remember once holding an outreach meeting in Macquarie Fields, a rough part of Sydney. In that community hall, we gathered a small group, but one man was drunk. He staggered forward, crying for prayer, slobbering, and pleading; yet, the Lord did not permit me to pray for him.

Soon, things escalated. He was taken outside, and a full-blown fight broke out - an Islander brawl right outside

the meeting. As fists flew outdoors, the Spirit of God moved indoors.

A young woman in the back stood up. She had fallen from a second-story balcony and smashed her hip and shoulder, leaving her in years of pain. In that moment, the power of Jesus Christ came upon her. Her bones healed instantly, and she began to dance in the Spirit. While chaos raged outside, that night, she surrendered her life to Jesus.

The lesson? Keep going. Don't let distractions - whether outside brawls or inner turmoil - turn your eyes away from Christ.

Fixing Our Gaze

Life is full of distractions. Some are inconveniences; others are attacks from the enemy. But home - our true home - is Heaven. Our destiny is to meet the Master. Each day should be lived in such a way that it pleases Him, with our gaze fixed upward.

Problems, sickness, and pressure from people do not mean God has abandoned you. Even the friend of God may fall sick. Even the beloved may go through trials. But His call is simple: keep faith, obey, and keep walking with Him.

Disappointment, though common in life, is not an option in the Kingdom. Faith rejects disappointment. Faith chooses to keep moving forward.

Choosing the One Thing

Jesus reminded Martha of this truth:

“And Jesus answered and said to her, ‘Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things.’” **Luke 10:41.**

Even good things—serving, providing, organising—can become distractions if they take us away from the will of God. The key is to find that ‘one thing’ He has called you to do and to stay faithful to it.

When we stop trying to please everyone, we will discover that there is a cross to bear. People may be angry, offended, or even walk away, but following Jesus means we obey His call above all else.

Follow Me

As Jesus walked by the Sea of Galilee, He called fishermen at work. They were doing good, honest tasks - mending nets, providing for families, when He said, “Follow Me,” yet, they left everything and obeyed.

What a radical step! What a life—to follow Jesus.

Your call may not look exactly like theirs, but it is just as real. You may be in business, ministry, or family responsibilities, but when Christ calls, His authority is above all others.

I remember leaving my job as a chaplain in the mining industry. The Lord said to me, “Look after your elderly parents financially, and help poor children.” That was my financial advice from heaven. I committed to providing monthly support to my mother and began sponsoring children through the Christian charity, Compassion. By God’s grace, our ministry now cares for thirty children.

I gave up my job and followed Jesus—and He has blessed me ever since.

Don’t Let Blessings Distract You

The rich young ruler came to Jesus seeking eternal life. But when told to sell his possessions and follow, he walked away sorrowful. His blessings became his bondage.

God will bless you, but blessings must never become idols. All that we have belongs to Him. Our lives, our resources, our time - it is all His. Only when we die to self can we truly live in Christ.

Storms on the Journey

When Jesus commanded His disciples to cross to the other side of Galilee, a great storm arose. Many would have thought, “Surely we missed God’s will; otherwise, why this storm?” But storms are normal when you obey God’s call.

The enemy will oppose you with temptation, crisis, financial lack, or even sickness, but Jesus is with you in the boat. He asked His disciples, "Where is your faith?" Then He rebuked the storm, and peace came instantly.

The storm is not a sign to turn back, but a test of perseverance to keep going.

Letting Go of Distractions

On this journey, people will offend you, betray you, or criticise you. Don't let it derail your calling. Jesus Himself faced rejection from the Samaritans, but rather than retaliate, He simply moved on to the next village.

Sometimes the most spiritual thing you can do is simply 'let it go.'

Some carry financial disputes, bitterness, or old wounds like weights around their necks. But Jesus calls us to lay aside both sin and unnecessary weights that hold us back. Some things are not sins, but they are still slowing your progress.

Ask yourself: What weights am I carrying that I do not need?

There are many good things you could do in life, but the real question is: What has God called you to do?

Jesus could have stayed where He was and built a tremendous following, but He said, "I must preach the

Kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent.”

Your call may be different from mine or from your neighbour’s, but your responsibility is the same. It is to obey.

Faith Over Doubt

Along the way, doubters and critics will try to hinder you. Jairus faced this when he asked Jesus to heal his daughter.

“But when Jesus heard it, He answered him, saying, “Do not be afraid; only believe, and she will be made well.” When He came into the house, He permitted no one to go in except Peter, James, and John, and the father and mother of the girl. Now all wept and mourned for her; but He said, “Do not weep; she is not dead, but sleeping.” **Luke 8:49-52.**

Faith moves in a different realm than sight. It sees life where others see death.

The doubters may ridicule, but when the miracle comes, it is faith that stands vindicated.

Temptations will come, as they came to Jesus in the wilderness. Snares and heavy weights will seek to slow you down, but the Word of God will warn and guard you if you stay rooted in it.

The Christian journey is not about doing what everyone else is doing. It is about living with eternity in view. We press on, not for temporary rewards, but to hear the Master say: "Well done, good and faithful servant... enter into the joy of your Master."

So run with perseverance. Let go of the weights. Reject sin. Keep your eyes on Jesus because the best is yet to come.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How can you stay focused on your call?
2. How do you usually interpret storms in your life - do you see them as signs you're off course, or as part of the journey?
3. Has there ever been a blessing in your life that subtly became a distraction or an idol?
4. What situations in your life do you need to "let go" rather than fight?
5. How clear are you about what God has called you to do?
6. How can believers encourage each other to "keep going" when life gets overwhelming?

Living a Life of Honour

To live unto the Lord is to look to Him, to be aware that you belong to Him, and to recognise the invisible realm of Jesus Christ. It is setting your heart on Him so that your deepest desire is for everything in your life to please Him.

The Bible exhorts us:

"If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth." **Colossians 3:1.**

So many people live consumed by problems - bank accounts, inflation, mortgages, or rent. Yet worrying achieves nothing. Instead of being weighed down by anxiety, lift your hands and give Him thanks. When you are stressed, praise Him. Worry changes nothing, but worship shifts your perspective to the eternal.

Put It to Death

Paul writes:

"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." **Galatians 2:20.**

The devil wants to remind you constantly that you are subject to earthly limitations and problems, but your life is hidden with Christ in God. Because of this truth, we are commanded to put to death what belongs to the earthly nature - fornication, impurity, passion, evil desires, and covetousness. Covetousness, Scripture says, is idolatry. Advertising often appeals to this desire for more—shoes, clothes, cars, houses, and luxuries. But as children of God, we are not to be manipulated by such appeals. Our joy and contentment come from Christ alone.

Surrounded by Witnesses

The Bible exhorts us:

“Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,” **Hebrews 12:1**

I was reminded of this truth while ministering in the Czech Republic. As worship filled the room in the Czech language, I turned to look at the congregation - but no one was singing. Yet the entire space resounded with heavenly worship. Both my colleague and I experienced it. Truly, we are not alone in our worship; heaven joins with us.

Because such witnesses surround us, let us lay aside every weight. Weights are not always sins; they can be

things that simply hold us back. For years, I was weighed down by caffeine. It disrupted my body, my emotions, and my focus. It was not a sin, but it was a weight that hindered me. When I finally laid it aside, I found freedom.

Run with Endurance

The Christian journey is not a sprint but a marathon. Paul urges us to run with endurance, laying aside both sin and the snares that entrap us. Snares are subtle - they trap us when we least expect them.

Endurance is crucial when dealing with challenging individuals. The Lord once gave me this wisdom: when tension rises, simply keep your mouth shut. Sometimes silence is the most Spirit-led response. By refusing to engage in anger, we honour Christ.

The only way to run well is to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith. Difficult people and circumstances will test us, but He strengthens and refines us through them.

Jesus endured the cross, despising its shame, for the joy set before Him. He now sits at the right hand of God. Likewise, we are to despise shame and live not for the approval of the world but for the glory of God.

Philippians 3 reminds us that our citizenship is in heaven. We do not live by the world's standards but by

the righteous standards of the Word of God. When persecuted, Jesus tells us not to retaliate but to rejoice.

He even said,

“Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward is great in heaven, For in like manner their fathers did to the prophets.” **Luke 6:23.**

I can imagine families seeing a believer respond this way—hanging up the phone after receiving harsh words, then leaping for joy in the living room. What a testimony to living by heaven’s rules rather than earth’s reactions!

All Things Subject to Him

Our heavenly citizenship gives us confidence that all things are subject to Christ. When problems arise, we cast our burdens on Him instead of relying on our flesh to fix them.

The flesh seeks control through manipulation—anger, cold shoulders, or silent treatment, but faith releases divine intervention. God often allows difficult people in our lives to test our hearts to see whether we will trust Him, forgive, and love.

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.”
Romans 12:1.

This is not about pleasing people but living to please the Lord.

A Life of Honour

I recall a prophecy over an older woman who sacrificed time with her family to pray. Though she loved them deeply, she chose obedience when the Lord called her to intercede. God publicly honoured her faithfulness. That is the life of honour to which we are called.

My own journey was marked by an extended fast in my twenties. Although I felt hungry and weak, in the end, I was given a vision that changed my life. I saw massive oak doors swing open, and the King of Glory entered in. He walked on a royal red carpet toward the throne, while kings and queens cast down their crowns before Him. It was a revelation of Jesus Christ in His majesty—a reminder that He is honoured in heaven and must also be honoured on earth.

Proverbs teaches us to honour the Lord with our possessions. Whether through tithing or giving, the point is not the percentage but the heart of honour. When we give, we acknowledge that everything comes from Him and belongs to Him.

More importantly, we must guard our hearts with diligence, for out of the heart flow the issues of life. If the heart is right, blessings can manifest. An example of forgiveness is the young woman who released her

traffickers and her husband, allowing God's power to flow through her.

Ask yourself daily: Is what I am doing pleasing unto Him? Am I living unto Him?

Bow Before the King!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Share a time that the Lord helped you keep going in the midst of challenges.
2. What are some practical ways we can “set our minds on things above” in a world that constantly pulls our attention to earthly concerns?
3. Why do you think covetousness is described in Scripture as idolatry?
4. Have you experienced moments where focusing on Jesus helped you endure hardship or persecution?
5. How can Christians live as citizens of heaven while still being rooted in earthly responsibilities like work, family, and community?
6. Have you ever had a personal encounter, vision, or moment with God that reshaped your faith journey?

The Heart of Humility

Humility is at the very centre of the Christian life. It is the soil in which correction can grow, and correction is of great value - both practically and spiritually.

In any trade or career, mistakes are inevitable. Through correction, you refine your skills and grow stronger. In the same way, in the spiritual life, correction shapes us and leads us into righteousness.

As Paul wrote:

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

Many believers long for the Spirit's anointing to equip them for ministry. Yet God's equipping does not come only through the power of the Spirit, but also through the correction the Spirit brings—through His Word and often through His people. To receive this correction, however, requires a humble heart.

The Struggle with Correction

Why is our first response to correction so often being defensive? I have asked myself that question many times. When someone points out a flaw, I immediately

feel the walls go up. Part of it comes from past hurts, but often it is simply pride.

Yet humility changes everything. Even when we believe the person correcting us is wrong, humility listens rather than argues. Our response to correction may be more important than the subject at hand. A soft, humble response strengthens relationships, while pride weakens them.

Humility is also the foundation of spiritual promotion. Pride keeps us stuck, because God Himself resists the proud, but when He sees a heart that is meek and surrendered, He draws near and lifts that person. As Scripture says, “Humility precedes exaltation.”

The Example of Christ

Our ultimate model of humility is Jesus Christ.

The Bible exhorts us:

“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,”
Philippians 2:5.

Humility begins in the mind—it is an attitude we can cultivate.

Jesus, though fully God, did not parade His divinity. He called Himself “the Son of Man” and made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a servant. He humbled Himself in obedience, even to the point of death on a

cross; because of this, God highly exalted Him and gave Him the name above every name.

The way of Christ is downward before it is upward. When you go low, He will take you high.

Over the years, I have witnessed the beauty of hidden humility. In Montreal, I met an elderly Indigenous woman whose life of prayer left me feeling like a spiritual child beside her. Without speaking a word, the atmosphere around her carried the fragrance of Heaven. She confided that most nights she spent weeping before God in prayer. Few knew her name, yet she carried great spiritual authority through humility.

Guarding Against Pride

Spiritual pride is subtle. The higher we go in God, the more we must go lower in ourselves. True maturity always points back to Jesus. Everything we have—breath, health, family, provision—is a gift from above.

As James wrote,

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.” **James 1:17.**

Humility keeps us hungry. Jesus said,

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” **Matthew 5:3.**

When we recognise our spiritual poverty, then we are wealthy. But when we think we have arrived, we prove we have not.

I once met a man who told me, “I’ve read the Bible already - once.” His words revealed complacency, not hunger. True humility approaches God’s Word afresh each day, allowing it to cut into our lives and transform us.

The Bible exhorts us:

“Receive with meekness the implanted Word, which is able to save your souls.” **James 1:21.**

The Grace of Humility

Humility attracts God’s grace like a magnet. Jesus told of the Pharisee and the tax collector in the temple. The Pharisee thanked God he was not like other men, while the tax collector beat his chest and cried, “God, have mercy on me, a sinner.” It was the humble man who went home justified.

When someone corrects you —even if they are mistaken —responding with humility positions you to receive grace. The heart posture matters more than the accuracy of the correction.

Honouring Elders

Humility also means honouring those who have walked with God longer. Scripture exhorts younger people to submit to their elders. My own mentors were decades older than I, and their years of experience and wisdom became treasures I could draw from. Age in the Lord carries a weight that should be honoured.

As the Bible reminds us:

“Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for “God resists the proud,

But gives grace to the humble.” 1Peter 5:5.

Humility in Prayer

Our prayers must be clothed in humility. God looks not only at our words, but at the posture of our hearts. Bitterness, unforgiveness, or pride will block our prayers. Faith itself requires humility, for faith is dependence on God rather than self.

The promise remains:

“if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.” 2 Chronicles 7:14.

The Beginning of the Kingdom

Humility is the doorway into the kingdom of heaven. When we justify our sins, we stand in pride and rebellion. But when we bow low, confessing “Lord, You are right and I am wrong,” the kingdom breaks in with forgiveness, healing, and new life.

Every justification for sin must fall away - whether it is bitterness, greed, lust, complacency, or unbelief. In humility, we repent, turn from sin, and surrender to Christ. Like the tax collector, when we cry out for mercy, God draws near with grace.

Humility is not weakness. It is a strength surrendered to God. It is the path of Christ, the secret of spiritual authority, and the sure way into more profound grace.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think receiving correction is closely linked to humility in the Christian life?
2. Can you recall a time when correction helped you grow spiritually?
3. What are the ways pride can creep into our lives, even when we are serving God faithfully?
4. Why do you think humility attracts God's grace?
5. How might pride or unforgiveness be blocking your prayers today?
6. If humility is the soil where spiritual maturity grows, what daily practices can you cultivate to remain rooted in it?

Let it Go!

Let go of every thought, every attitude, every burden in your life that does not conform to the righteous standard of God's Word. Just let it go.

Many people live with a half-hearted confession of faith. They say things like, *"At the moment, I'm okay. At the moment, I have no pain."* But such a confession still clings to the idea that healing may not last. It keeps a grip on sickness, almost waiting to see if it will come back. That attitude leaves the door open to fear. When symptoms reappear, you believe the lie that healing was only temporary because you never truly let it go.

When you receive prayer, believe in your heart, *"I am healed."* Walk by faith in your healing. Our confession of faith is not based on our momentary experience but on the Word of God, which declares, *"By His stripes we are healed."* If the enemy tries to bring symptoms back, you stand firm, rebuke him, and remind yourself of the truth: the Word of God has set you free.

I remember a woman in New Zealand who had suffered terribly with her back. One night, during prayer, she was taken into a vision of heaven. She saw angels operating on her, and as she lay on the floor, electricity surged through her spine. When she rose hours later, she was completely healed. But the next morning, she woke with excruciating pain. Instead of yielding to fear, she got angry at the devil, rebuked him, and walked in faith. God

completed her healing. She refused to say, *“I’m fine for the moment.”* She believed she was permanently healed at the cross.

Letting Go of Bitterness and Offence

There are other things we must let go of—wrong attitudes toward others. Bitterness, resentment, grudges, and unforgiveness do not hurt those who wronged you; they imprison you.

Paul wrote thus:

“O Corinthians! We have spoken openly to you, our heart is wide open. You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted by your own affections.” **2 Corinthians 6:11-12.**

Unforgiveness cages the soul. Holding onto hurt can make you sick, depressed, anxious, or even physically ill. Many today live on psychiatric medication because they never learned to let go. The words spoken against them live on in their memory, poisoning their hearts.

Words carry power. A prophecy under the anointing of the Holy Spirit carries life, healing, and conviction, but words spoken in anger or hatred are often fueled by demonic power, designed to wound the soul. That is why forgiveness is so important. Forgiveness and blessing neutralise the enemy’s weapon. Jesus taught us to bless those who curse us, to forgive and to walk in love. This

is not only obedience to God—it is freedom for our own hearts.

Forgiveness and Intimacy with God

Jesus exhorts us:

“And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses.” **Mark 11:25.**

There are no exceptions. No matter what has been done to you - betrayal, abuse, slander, or worse - you must forgive. Without forgiveness, there is no true intimacy with God.

Intimacy with the God of love is impossible while harbouring grudges. Forgiveness is not excusing sin; it is releasing it to God, who judges righteously. When you forgive, you free yourself and make room for His presence.

Letting Go of Stereotypes and the Past

We must also let go of stereotypes—both of others and of ourselves. Too often, people judge others by their past sins instead of seeing them through the lens of God’s grace.

I recall a young man in London who had spent ten years selling drugs. The Holy Spirit revealed to him, “*You have*

been an ambassador of darkness. Now you will be an ambassador of light.” Today, he preaches boldly on the streets. What God redeems is redeemed. We have no right to call someone by the name of their past when God has given them a new identity.

Paul reminded the Corinthians that some of them had been adulterers, idolaters, drunkards, thieves, and even homosexuals. But he declared,

“And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.” **1 Corinthians 6:11.**

The old have passed away. You are no longer your past—you are a new creation in Christ.

Paul himself once persecuted the church and blasphemed the name of Christ. Yet he could say,

“although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.” **1 Timothy 1:13-14.**

He no longer saw himself as a murderer but as an apostle of Christ. That is the power of grace.

Many believers remain bound by shame, condemnation, and the labels of their past. But under God’s abundant

grace, the past no longer defines you. See yourself through His mercy, not through old failures.

Letting Go of Worry

Another burden we must release is worry. Worry is not just a habit—it is a spiritual battle. At times, it can even become a demonic stronghold in the mind. But Scripture shows us how to fight. The Bible exhorts us:

“Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You.” Psalm 56:3.

Fear and anxiety can be turned into triggers for trust. Every time worry rises, let it drive you deeper into faith.

I experienced this personally when facing cancer. Waves of fear and anxiety struck me, but I learned to use them as reminders to trust God. Worry must be cast onto Him, for He cares for us. Mary, the mother of Jesus, demonstrated this at the wedding in Cana. She brought the problem to Jesus—“They have no wine”—and left it with Him. That is the posture of trust.

Worry about finances, family, health, or the future must be surrendered. Hand it over to the Lord and let Him carry it.

Letting Go of the World’s Values

Finally, let go of the values and securities of this world. Too many spend their lives preparing for retirement,

hoarding wealth, or chasing investments, only to lose it all in an instant. Jesus told the parable of the rich fool who stored up goods for many years but died that very night. The lesson is clear: what matters is treasure in heaven.

My own mother often told us we were poor, and indeed we were. But one night God gave me a dream. In it, I entered His treasury room, filled with transparent gold. He impressed upon my heart, *"This is yours. You are an inheritor of all the riches of Christ."* From that day, I knew I was rich - not with earthly possessions, but with the eternal treasures of heaven.

The true treasures of heaven are not money or possessions, but love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, compassion, and the goodness of God. These are the riches worth seeking.

So let go of unforgiveness, of bitterness, of worry, of worldly values, of the past. Take the hand of Jesus and trust Him. He is still Saviour, Healer, and Deliverer. When you let go of what holds you back, you can fully hold onto Him.

He will never let you go.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why thoughts or attitudes do you have that fall short of the righteous standards of God's Word?
2. How does our confession shape our experience of God's promises?
3. In what ways does unforgiveness act like a prison for the soul?
4. How can we practically turn fear into trust in daily life?
5. What are areas that you worry about and need to surrender to God?
6. How can letting go of unforgiveness draw you closer to a deeper intimacy with God?

But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

2 Corinthians 3:18.