

**Daily God Walk**  
**The Christ Walk**

**Conduct**

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All Scripture quotations are taken from the New International Version (NIV). All other translations used will be credited using these abbreviations:

(KJV) – King James Version

(NKJV) – New King James Version

(TLB) – The Living Bible

(TM) – The Message

(AMP) – The Amplified Bible

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## Have you considered hosting a small group Bible Study?

The Daily God Walk is written with a dual purpose. First it is a devotional tool that helps the reader grow in their walk of faith. But, a second purpose is to be a tool to be used in leading a small group. That is why we added a second page to each devotion.

**The second page of each devotion in the Study Guide Edition includes these sections:**

- ✓ **Message:** The message of the devotion is emphasized. This is an excellent tool for beginning a discussion about the devotion.
- ✓ **Affirmation:** The message is followed by an affirmation. The affirmation is good to be used in prayer and meditation. When we personalize the principle by affirming it in prayer it becomes a part of us.
- ✓ **Reflection:** The reflection section provides some very good material for discussion. This section usually gets to the heart of what is being taught in the devotion and contains statements or questions which help stimulate discussion.
- ✓ **My Thoughts:** Finally, there is a section where the reader can share their thoughts on the devotion. This section is a very good tool to help the reader begin to journal on a regular basis. It is also good for a person to record their comments and questions about the devotion so they can bring them out during the small group discussion time.

For more information on how to use the Daily God Walk in the small group setting visit the website below:  
[www.dailygodwalk.org](http://www.dailygodwalk.org)

Day One

## *Conduct Worthy of the Gospel*

Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel.

- Philippians 1:27

Paul is writing this letter to the church at Philippi from a prison in Rome. In the earlier verses he writes of his hope to be set free so that he can visit them, “I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, so that through my being with you again your joy in Christ Jesus will overflow on account of me” (v25-26).

Even though Paul was speaking of a hope to be free to travel again to the places he shared the gospel, he also knew that he had to face the realities of his situation. He was in a Roman prison and would likely never be released.

In that context he writes, “I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain” (v20-21).

Facing prison, and likely martyrdom, Paul’s concern was that he would not be ashamed of the manner in which he faced his fate. His hope was that Christ would be exalted, either by his life or by his death. Life for him was to serve Christ; death for him was to be with Christ.

He finally gets to the point he is making in our passage for today. He is calling the church to conduct themselves in a manner that is worthy of the gospel of Christ regardless of the circumstances.

We are given that same instruction today. Whether in persecution, temptation, or prosperity, we are to live worthy of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

**Prayer:** Father, I need the grace to face whatever circumstances with the character of Christ so that I will not be ashamed by my conduct. Help me to walk worthy of the gospel. In Jesus name.

**Message:** Paul is calling the church to conduct themselves in a manner that is worthy of the gospel of Christ regardless of the circumstances. We are given that same instruction today. Whether in persecution, temptation, or prosperity, we are to live worthy of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

**Affirmation:** My heart is submitted to God and my life is a reflection of the Christ who lives in me.

**Reflection:** Paul calls followers of Christ to live worthy of the gospel they have embraced. What does he mean by that? Does he mean that believers must earn their salvation by living a certain lifestyle? Give some thought to just what he means.

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Two

## *Conduct Worthy of a Believer*

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. - Ephesians 4:1-2

Did you notice what Paul calls a worthy life in this passage? He does not address the issues that we most commonly associate with living a holy life. He doesn't address sinful activities and he doesn't make reference here to "the world." No, he goes deeper than that.

Paul describes a worthy life as being completely humble, patient, and lovingly bearing with one another. Verse two in the Amplified Bible reads this way, "Living as becomes you with complete lowliness of mind (humility) and meekness (unselfishness, gentleness, mildness), with patience, bearing with one another and making allowances because you love one another."

Just so the reader doesn't miss the point he is making, Paul goes on to say in verse three, "Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace." Our first calling is to love one another and to be united in agape (God's love) which produces a bond of peace.

How much more peace would we have among ourselves if we lived out this passage. What affect would our detractors have if we responded in true humility and concern for them, patiently bearing with them until they came into unity with the body?

In verses four and five we are reminded that there is but one body of Christ, and there is but one Spirit in the body, and we have all been baptized with the

baptism of Christ, therefore we are to pursue unity in the bond of peace.

The path to conduct worthy of our calling is to be completely humble and gentle, patiently making allowances for others.

**Prayer:** Lord, it is easier for me to discipline myself concerning the world than it is to be humble, gentle, patient and tolerant of my brothers. Grant me the grace to live worthy of my calling.

**Message:** The path to conduct worthy of our calling is to be completely humble and gentle, patiently making allowances for others. What affect would our detractors have if we responded in true humility and concern for them, patiently bearing with them until they came into unity with the body?

**Affirmation:** I am committed to being humble and gentle while patiently making allowances for others because I know that is a key component to keeping the unity of the spirit.

**Reflection:** It is human nature to think of ourselves first and others later, but in Christ we are called to think of others first. We are not only called to think of others but to think of how our attitude affects the body of Christ. Give some thought to some ways you can help spread unity in the body of believers.

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Three

## *Be An Example to the Believers*

Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. – 1Timothy 4:12

Timothy was a young man Paul had been mentoring for some time and he had been appointed as the elder over the church at Ephesus. He was young and Paul was continuing his mentoring relationship with Timothy in this writing.

The instruction in this passage, though given specifically to Timothy 2000 years ago, is appropriate at any time for believers of any age. We must be reminded that the world and other believers are watching us. Whether we are in leadership in the body or are engaged in service in other areas of the kingdom, we would all do well to remember that.

Much trouble in the body of Christ would be avoided if believers would take to heart this instruction. We should be asking ourselves, “How can I be an example in...”

- Speech: How does the manner in which I speak and the things I say affect others?
- Life: Is the life of Christ reflected in the way I live and the way I act toward others?
- Love: Is agape (God's love) a way of life for me or do I pick and choose who I love?
- Faith: Are my moral and spiritual convictions based on the word of God or is my faith according to the way I wish things were?



▪ Purity: Are my thoughts and actions an expressions of a pure heart, or do they come from a heart influenced by self and the world?

These are big questions for all of us, but we should use them to remind ourselves of our continued need to walk humbly before God and others.

*Prayer:* Help me to be an example in speech, life, love, faith and purity so that others will see Christ in me. In Jesus name, amen.

*Message:* We should be asking ourselves, "How can I be an example in speech, life, love, faith, and purity." When we are purposed for our lives to be a reflection of Christ in all of these areas then we will and example to believers and the world.

*Affirmation:* I am careful of what I say, how I live, how I love, and how my faith draws me to purity.

*Reflection:* Paul was instructing the young man Timothy to live in such a way that others would not despise his youth. And, at the same time, he was calling him to be an example to others. Give some thought to how Paul's instruction to Timothy applies to you as a believer today. How should your speech, life, love, faith and purity reflect the Christ in you?

*My Thoughts:*

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Day Four

## *Be an Example to the Unbelievers*

Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us. - 1 Peter 2:11-12

Friends, this world is not your home so don't make yourselves cozy in it. Don't indulge your ego at the expense of your soul. Live an exemplary life among the natives so that your actions will refute their prejudices. Then they'll be won over to God's side and be there to join in the celebration when he arrives. -TM

Don't you just love the way The Message makes this passage clear? We are reminded that this world is not our home, or as Peter writes we are aliens and strangers in the world; therefore, we should not be cozy in the world!

When we are born again we are born into another world. We are still physically in this world, but we must always remember, as the song says, "This world is not my home, I'm just passing through. My treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue" (This World Is Not My Home, Albert Brumley).

Peter is warning believers that they must not be influenced by the spirit of this world but live as strangers here. When we live the life we are called to live in the power of the Holy Spirit, the world will not affect us but we will affect the world.

When we live an exemplary life before the citizens of this world they will see that their prejudices and

biases against believers is unfounded. In fact, when we truly live out the Christ-life many of them will be converted and they too will be born into a new world and join with us in that great day of celebration.

I challenge you today to live as aliens and strangers in this world who are on assignment to influence others to join us.

**Prayer:** Lord, help me to remember my life is having an effect on the world around me and give me the grace to live an exemplary life so that others will come to know Christ. In Jesus name. Amen.

**Message:** When we truly live out the Christ-life many unbelievers will be converted and they too will be born into a new world and join with us in that great day of celebration.

**Affirmation:** I hold the things of this world loosely because I'm an alien just passing through and my treasure is laid up somewhere beyond the blue.

**Reflection:** Peter is trying to convey an attitude about how we should live in this present world. Is he calling followers of Christ to a monastic life, totally unaffected by the world? Or is he calling believers to live in this present world with the realization that we are just strangers passing through? How should our life look if we are living as strangers and aliens?

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Five

## *Be an Example as an Elder*

Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless - not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. - Titus 1:6-8

A few years back character was a big issue in a major political race. A poll was taken among the people which asked a question something like, "Is personal character and lifestyle an important factor in considering a candidate." I was surprised at the response. An overwhelming number of people responded that personal character and lifestyle were not important factors.

In my opinion the character and personal lifestyle of a person has everything to do with being qualified as a leader. How can a person lead others in a moral society if they don't have those characteristics of morality in their own life?

Perhaps one of the causes of the breakdown of our own society is the inability of our leaders to stand and declare as Paul, "Follow me as I follow Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1). You just don't hear leaders giving that challenge today.

In his letter to Titus Paul is giving instructions as to how believers are to live and how leaders in the body of Christ are to conduct themselves. If it is important that societal leaders have character and live upright, it is much more important for those who have the responsibility of leading believers in the kingdom of God to have character and live upright before God.

Before we ever desire to be a leader we must first desire the character of God. In fact, we should all seek the characteristics given in our passage today because they are a reflection of the character of God.

Ask yourself if you are hospitable, if you love what is good, if you are self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined.

**Prayer:** Lord, I find myself all too often falling short of the character of Christ. Grant me the grace to submit myself fully to you so my life will reflect your character. In Jesus name. Amen.

**Message:** Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless - not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined.

**Affirmation:** I know that I am a representative of Christ, therefore I am careful to not be overbearing and to maintain decorum. I am not given to drunkenness, violence or pursuing dishonest gain. I strive to be hospitable, loving what is good and being self-controlled.

**Reflection:** Give some thought to the character one should have who is a follower of Christ. Paul is calling us to consider how we are looked at by outsiders. Considering the way you live, act and talk, how do you feel others think about you?

**My Thoughts:**

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## Day Six

### *The Way Believers Should Act*

The grace of God that brings salvation has happened to all men. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in the present age, while we wait for the blessed hope – the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. – Titus 2:11-13

The entire second chapter of Titus is instructions to believers on how we should live. Paul speaks to three groups of people: Older men and women, younger men and women, and slaves, or we could say employees. And, just in case someone feels they don't fit in any of the above categories he writes, “The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches to say “No” to ungodliness...”

A common theme in each of the groups he mentions above is self-control. Look at what he writes:

- Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled (v2).
- Teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers (v3).
- Train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure (v4).
- Encourage the young men to be self-controlled (v6).

Paul is trying to encourage all believers to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives and he gives two reasons for teaching this lifestyle:

- So that no one will malign the word of God (v5).

➤ We wait for the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ (v13).

What is the conclusion? We should live self-controlled lives. We should be temperate in all that we do and we must always be careful that our lifestyle does not give others the occasion to look down on believers. We need God's grace to do that.

*Prayer:* God, I get the point, but I need your grace. In my natural state I am driven by worldly passions, grant me the grace to live self-controlled and upright before you and the world. Amen.

*Message:* We should live self-controlled lives. We should be temperate in all that we do and we must always be careful that our lifestyle does not give others the occasion to look down on believers.

*Affirmation:* I endeavor to be self-controlled and temperate in all that I do. I am careful that my lifestyle does not give others the occasion to look down on believers.

*Reflection:* We may not be responsible for what our brother does, but we are responsible for how our life influences the brother. Paul tells us that we should live in such a way that others see Christ in us. Remember the WWJD bracelets? How would your life change if you asked, "What would Jesus do?" before you acted?

*My Thoughts:*

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Day Seven

## *Be an Example By Doing What is Good*

In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us. – Titus 2:7-8

We are being called to set an example before the world as to how a believer should act. We are reminded time and time again that the only Christ the world will see is the Christ that is in us. The life we live is the one the world will declare to be the way Christians live. That is an awesome responsibility.

It is unfortunate that so many nationally known ministries have fallen prey to the spirit of the world and have brought shame upon the message of Christ. The term “televangelist” has become a disparaging label.

The world has seen far too many believers fall victim to the deceitfulness of our sinful nature and it is time for serious believers everywhere to take up their cross and follow Jesus with integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose us may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.

We are being called to a life that is contrary to the nature of man and that is why there is so much teaching in the scripture about resisting temptation and disciplining the flesh. We are also being called to be self-controlled and to make sure that our actions are motivated by the Holy Spirit and not our flesh.

How do we do that? We must ever be conscious of our need to be submitted to the Spirit of God so that



we will have the grace to submit our will to his will. And, being conscious of our need we must then actually surrender ourselves to his will submitted to his divine plan for our lives and our work in the kingdom.

**Prayer:** Lord, help me to ever be conscious of how my life, my actions and attitudes, affect the world around me. Help me always be an example of a true believer in Jesus as the Christ my Lord and Savior. In Jesus name. Amen.

**Message:** We are being called to set an example before the world as to how a believer should act. We are reminded time and time again that the only Christ the world will see is the Christ that is in us. The life we live is the one the world will declare to be the way Christians live.

**Affirmation:** I can only live as God calls me to live by submitting my will to Him. As I submit to Him Holy Spirit guides me into a lifestyle that is an example of Christ.

**Reflection:** If you were to live totally submitted to the will of God, what would that look like? What must be done in your life so you could live that way?

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Eight

*Prove Your Wisdom by  
Living a Good Life*

Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. - James 3:13

James is giving us an interesting path to a good life filled with good deeds and humility. It is the path of wisdom. He tells his readers that deeds done in humility come from wisdom. Where does this wisdom and understanding come from?

In verses 14-16 James contrasts godly wisdom with worldly wisdom. He writes, "If you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice."

The wisdom of the world tells us that "we had better get it while the getting is good." The world's wisdom tells us that, "If it feels good, do it." A popular song some years ago had the line, "How can it be wrong if it feels so good," that is the wisdom of the world in a nutshell.

The world's wisdom leads us to lives of selfish ambition, self-aggrandizement, self-realization and self-justification. It is hard to find humility when our life is about self.

James writes, "The wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness" (v17-18).

When we have acquired the wisdom and understanding which comes from God our lives will be filled with good deeds driven by humility. The answer to the question, "How do I gain this kind of wisdom," is simply this: Seek God and submit to his will and purposes for your life. Surrender your own ambitions in favor of God's plan for you.

This is not an easy path but the rewards are eternal.

**Prayer:** Lord, I find myself being influenced by the attitudes and the opportunities of the world. Give me the grace to fully surrender to your wisdom and humbly serve you. Amen.

**Message:** When we have acquired the wisdom and understanding which comes from God our lives will be filled with good deeds driven by humility. The answer to the question, "How do I gain this kind of wisdom," is simply this: Seek God and submit to his will and purposes for your life. Surrender your own ambitions in favor of God's plan for you.

**Affirmation:** I seek God for his wisdom because I know the wisdom of this world is in opposition to God.

**Reflection:** The wisdom of the world says, "If it feels good, do it!" How does the wisdom of God respond to that philosophy? The wisdom of the world calls us to self-realization, and is all about self-fulfillment. How is that philosophy compare to the wisdom of God?

**My Thoughts:**

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## Day Nine

### *How to Have the Good Life*

Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another, be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. For, “Whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech. He must turn from evil and do good; he must seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”

Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. “Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened.” But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. It is better, if it is God’s will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

- 1 Peter 3:8-17

A rather lengthy passage today but it seemed necessary to get the message of how to have a good life. A good life comes from:

- ✓ Living in harmony with one another
- ✓ Being sympathetic and Loving as brothers
- ✓ Being compassionate and humble
- ✓ Blessing those who do evil against you

- ✓ Keeping your lips from evil
- ✓ Refraining from evil and doing good
- ✓ Seeking peace and pursuing it

Doing all of this with gentleness and respect may not keep you from persecution, but it will give you a clear conscience and you will have a good life.

**Prayer:** It seems only natural to want to get even with those who are insulting and demeaning to us. Grant me the grace to bless those who insult me and give me a life of peace. Amen.

**Message:** Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. It is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

**Affirmation:** I have learned that the good life comes from living in harmony with others being sympathetic, compassionate, and humble.

**Reflection:** There are seven traits listed in the devotion. Give some thought to each one. How can you manifest these traits in your own life?

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Ten

## *Prove Your Faith With Good Deeds*

What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do. - James 2:14-18

James is pointing out a glaring error in the faith of some in the kingdom of God. For some who claim faith in Christ there is a disconnect between their faith and their lifestyle. I have met people who have accepted the doctrine of Christ and salvation through faith in him and have professed faith, but there is nothing in their life to indicate that they are followers of Christ. Those are the people James is addressing when he writes, "Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do."

This discussion seems to always raise the question of, "Are we saved by works or faith?" And the answer to that question is that "it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

James is not addressing that issue at all. He is making the point of how faith will affect a persons' lifestyle. If my faith is in Christ and I follow his teachings then my life will reflect that faith. If my deeds do not reflect the faith I claim then perhaps I have not truly placed my faith in Christ.

In this passage we are being called to consider how our faith has affected our lifestyle. We should ask ourselves if our faith has driven us to selfless service. Are we careless with our actions? Are we careful to serve the needs of others? How does your faith affect your lifestyle?

**Prayer:** Lord, this passage has gotten my attention. Help me to show my faith by serving your kingdom well. In Jesus name.

**Message:** Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do.

**Affirmation:** I have learned that faith is an action word. Scriptural faith moves me to take action on what I claim to believe.

**Reflection:** Some have seen a conflict between what Paul taught about being saved by grace without works and what James is teaching about our faith being demonstrated by works. Are these two ideas mutually exclusive, or are they complimentary? If James is not talking about being saved by works then what is he saying?

**My Thoughts:**

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## Day Eleven

### *The Way We Ought to Live*

Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. – 2 Peter 3:11-12

What kind of people ought you to be? That is the big question. Believers have differing perspectives on the subject depending upon their theological background and the ideas range from, “It doesn’t make any difference how we live,” to, “You must be careful because any little sin will keep you out of heaven.” And we aren’t about to settle that discussion today.

It would be good though to take a look at the point Peter is making in this passage. In verse one he writes, “Dear friends, this is now my second letter to you. I have written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking.” He then goes on to give warning concerning the end of the age.

He speaks of God’s longsuffering toward us with the hope of bringing man to repentance but then warns that at the end of the age, “The heavens will disappear with a roar, the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.” That is verse 10, then in verse 11 he gives the warning which reminds us to be careful how we live.

He concludes this chapter, and the book with these words: “Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever. Amen” (v17-18).



It should be clear to us that Peter is concerned that we live holy lives, separated from worldly ambition and attitudes as we pursue God and grow in the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. If that is our focus we will have nothing to be worried about on the day of the Lord.

**Prayer:** Lord, help me to keep in mind the warnings that Peter has given us and to be careful of what I allow to influence my life. Grant me the grace to walk humbly before you. Amen.

**Message:** We should live holy lives, separated from worldly ambition and attitudes as we pursue God and grow in the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. If that is our focus we will have nothing to be worried about on the day of the Lord.

**Affirmation:** I have learned that as I pursue God and grow in grace I become more and more separated from worldly ambition and the attitudes of this world.

**Reflection:** Have you figured out yet how to live a holy life unaffected by the world? I don't know if we can ever reach perfection in being unaffected by the world, but we certainly should keep that as a goal. What have you done, and what should you do, to safeguard yourself against adopting the attitude of the world?

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Twelve

## *Love Produces Blameless Conduct*

And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ - to the glory and praise of God.

- Philippians 1:9-11

Paul had just spoken of his confidence that “he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion” (v6) and with that confidence he is encouraging the church at Philippi to abound in love, knowledge and depth of insight.

Why is he encouraging them to abound in those things? So that they may be able to discern what is best and that they may be pure and blameless before God. He is making a direct connection between their abounding love, their knowledge of God, their insight into spiritual matters, and being pure and blameless.

Many years ago I had my first date with my wife. It may have been foolish but I fell head over heels in love with her on that first date. I didn't want to wait a week or longer to see her again; I wanted to see her as soon as I could. The next day was Sunday and I called her after church to see if I could come by and see her. In 10 days I had about 15 dates with her.

Every time I was with her I learned a little more about her and got greater insight into the kind of person she was. The more I learned about her the more I liked her and the greater my insight the greater my love. We were married in a couple of months and my love for her has grown even greater.

I tell that story to reinforce what Paul is writing to the church. As our love abounds for Christ so will our desire to be with him and to get to know him. As we spend time with him we gain deeper insights into his person and purposes and we are able to discern what is best to be pure and blameless.

**Prayer:** It seems that I am often in conflict with a love, or desire, for the world and my love for you. Help me to surrender my love for the world in favor of loving you. Amen.

**Message:** There is a direct connection between our abounding love, our knowledge of God, our insight into spiritual matters, and being pure and blameless.

**Affirmation:** As I learn more about God my appreciation for His love grows and my love for him grows as well.

**Reflection:** Paul expresses his desire for the church to abound in knowledge and depth of insight in order to be blameless and produce righteous fruit. How do you see that working in your own life? What can you do to deepen your walk with God and your commitment to righteous works?

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Thirteen

## *Bad Conduct Alienates Man From God*

Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation - If you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel.

- Colossians 1:21-23

In our life before Christ we were solely under the influence of the world and the flesh. We were alienated from God by our evil, or *poneros* (Greek word translated evil), behavior. *Poneros* is an interesting word. It can mean anything from the pain of common labor to malicious and sinister deeds.

The reason I am bringing up the origins of the word evil is that so many of us may think, "Well, I'm not so bad, and I'm certainly not evil." We think because we tend to associate evil only with the malicious and sinister deeds that our deeds don't rise to that level.

The truth is the efforts of our natural man to live a life independent of God's influence is what makes our deeds evil. We may not be malicious, but given the choice between what would be to our benefit and the benefit of another we will tend to choose our benefit, even if it inconveniences others.

The thing which makes the difference believers who have placed our faith in Christ from the those who are enemies of God is that we have been made holy by the work of Christ in us.

Now that we are holy our deeds are holy. That doesn't mean we can do what we choose and the things that we do will be sanctified and made holy, but it does mean when our desire is to please him then our deeds will be pleasing to him. Because our heart has been cleansed and made holy so then our actions are holy, without blemish and free from accusation.

**Prayer:** Lord, you have made my heart holy through faith in Christ. Keep me holy and keep me strong in the faith. Amen.

**Message:** In our life before Christ we were solely under the influence of the world and the flesh. We were alienated from God by our evil behavior. But now, because of what Christ has done for us and our faith in him, we are without blemish and free from accusation.

**Affirmation:** I thank God that in Christ my life has been changed from pursuing evil to being without blemish and free from accusation.

**Reflection:** Here is a question to consider: Does a person have to be malicious, or have sinister ambitions to be considered evil in the eyes of God? How would you describe the evil in the average person?

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Fourteen

## *How Do We Walk As Jesus Walked?*

We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. The man who says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did. - 1 John 2:3-6

There has always been a segment of people who claim to know Christ but have never gotten past acknowledging the historical Jesus, or the doctrinal Jesus, and they have never made Jesus a part of their life. Some would call these nominal Christians, or cultural Christians. They go to church on occasion, but Christ has had little effect on their life.

John in our passage makes the point that just because one says that they are believers in Christ does not make them believers. In fact, John said that if someone claims to be a believer but they do not obey what Jesus taught then they are a liar. That's pretty strong.

John is telling us in this passage that it is not enough to claim to know Jesus, but if we truly know him then our life will be affected. In fact, when we know Jesus the way we walk, talk, think and act will be affected. John declares, "This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus walked."

An interesting truth is brought out in this passage. John moves from knowing him to being in him. Did you notice that? The only way we can obey his

commands is to know him; the only way we can know him is to be in him; the only way we can be in him is to be born in him. We must be born again and when we are we are enabled to walk as Jesus walked.

When we are “in him” we will walk like him.

**Prayer:** Lord, I have not walked perfectly as Jesus walked, but I have learned that the more I surrender my will to you the more consistently I walk this path. Grant me the grace to always be submitted to your will and to obey you. In Jesus name. Amen.

**Message:** The only way we can obey his commands is to know him; the only way we can know him is to be in him; the only way we can be in him is to be born in him. We must be born again and when we are we are enabled to walk as Jesus walked.

**Affirmation:** I can walk as Jesus walked because I know he is in me and I am in him.

**Reflection:** Years ago someone came up with the question of if you were arrested for being a Christian would they find enough evidence to convict you. That is what John is talking about here. What is the evidence in your life that you are "in Christ?"

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Fifteen

## *New Life Equals New Conduct*

We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. - Romans 6:4

We who are leaders in the body of Christ may have fallen short when it comes to teaching people about the new life we have in Christ. We sometimes make coming to Christ sound like making a deal with God.

Jesus is preached as the one who will save us from an eternity of hell, he will straighten out our life, he will give us health, hope and prosperity. Those things are all true, but they are also all about us; our eternity, our life, our health, etc, etc...

The true message is that just as Christ died on the cross for us we must die out to our natural person for him. When we go down into the waters of baptism we are declaring to God, to the world and to the body of Christ that we are burying the old person and we are being raised as a new person.

What does that new life look like? It looks like Christ. In the new life we are to no longer be influenced by sin.

Read what Paul writes in the next verses: "Count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness" (v11-14)."



New life equals new conduct. We are given new life when we are born again. We start all over again. We are new creations in Christ, however, we are not robots who can't make life choices. We still have the ability to choose sin, but that is a path that will make the new life just like the old life, and who wants that. I encourage you as Paul: Count yourselves dead to sin but alive to Christ.

**Prayer:** Lord, give me the strength and the courage to consider myself dead to the sin nature and grant me the grace to live the righteousness of Christ. In Jesus name. Amen.

**Message:** New life equals new conduct. We are given new life when we are born again. We start all over again. We are new creations in Christ, however, we are not robots who can't make life choices. We must choose to live the Christ life.

**Affirmation:** I am a new creation in Christ and I choose to live the Spirit filled life.

**Reflection:** Apostle Paul said to count ourselves dead to sin. Why do you suppose he told us to do that? If our old nature died when we received Christ and was buried when we were baptized, why does Paul tell us to count ourselves dead to sin? Give some to the question of whether that nature that died can be resurrected? Can the old nature still draws into sin?

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Sixteen

## *Turn From Evil and Seek Peace*

Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it. The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their cry; the face of the Lord is against those who do evil, to cut off the memory of them from the earth. - Psalm 34:14

This psalm was written by David after he had experienced a miraculous escape from his enemy. 1 Samuel 21 tells the story of David wandering into an enemy camp when he was fleeing from Saul. Realizing what he had stumbled into and the danger he was in he began to act insane. He babbled and drooled saliva into his beard as he ran around acting crazy.

The King ordered his men to drive David out of their camp because he didn't want to have anything to do with a crazy man. David had an inspiration by God which literally seemed to be an insane thing to do, but God knew just how to deliver him. David writes, "I sought the Lord, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears... this poor man called, and the Lord heard him; he saved him out of all his troubles" (v4,6).

David lived the words he wrote. When he wrote, "Seek peace and pursue it," he was writing out of his own experiences. He had been anointed by Samuel to be king over Israel, but as long as Saul was king David would make no move toward taking the throne. When Saul called him he would come, and when he chased him he would run, but he would not fight his king.

We would all do well to follow David's instruction and pursue peace even when we have a righteous claim against the aggressor. It is entirely possible that had David not acted humbly before God and ran from Saul

rather than fight him, that God would not have delivered him from the enemy he stumbled into.

Remember this: “The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their cry.” When we are committed to the will of God and our heart is right before him he will hear our cry even when the situation seems impossible.

**Prayer:** Lord, help me to accept your will and your purposes to be fulfilled in my life. Grant me the grace to patiently pursue your will and trust you for the outcome. In Jesus name. Amen.

**Message:** “The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their cry.” When we are committed to the will of God and our heart is right before him he will hear our cry even when the situation seems impossible.

**Affirmation:** I am convinced that God will deliver me from any and every situation when I cry out to him because the righteousness of Christ is upon me.

**Reflection:** David was willing to do what God told him, even if it seemed an insane thing to do. If he had not been willing to hear God he would probably have been killed. Are you willing to follow God, even when it doesn't make sense?

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Seventeen

## *Be Rich in Good Deeds*

Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasures for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life. - 1 Timothy 6:18-19

Timothy was Paul's protégé and Paul loved him like a son. He wrote two long letters to Timothy giving him some very specific instructions about how to be a good leader and how he should conduct his own personal life. He also gave a considerable bit of advice on how to instruct those he was leading. We would do well to consider both of these letters.

In our passage today Paul is instructing Timothy regarding how those who have much in this life are to use their prosperity. In verse 17 he writes, "Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment."

Paul follows that verse by telling Timothy to command those who have plenty to use their resources to do good deeds and to be generous and willing to share. That instruction applies to all of us. Most of us have enough, and many of us have more than enough, so that we should be thinking of ways we can invest ourselves in good deeds which will affect the lives of others.

This passage is calling all of us to examine our lives taking inventory on how we use our resources of time, talent and treasure. Ask yourself, "How much of myself am I investing in others outside of my own family?" Do

you do any community volunteer work? What good deeds do you do for the poor and needy?

These are questions which should make us aware of what God is calling us to do in this present age. We are not saved by good deeds, but a proof of our salvation is our good deeds.

**Prayer:** Lord, you have blessed me way beyond what I deserve. Give me a heart to share your blessings with others so that they can know your love as well. In Jesus name. Amen.

**Message:** Most of us have enough, and many of us have more than enough, so that we should be thinking of ways we can invest ourselves in good deeds which will affect the lives of others. We are not saved by good deeds, but a proof of our salvation is our good deeds.

**Affirmation:** I have found the more I give of myself to others the richer I am in my inner man.

**Reflection:** One point that is brought up in the Scripture passage for this devotion is the idea of rewards for doing good deeds. The way it is said is, "In this way they will lay up treasures for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age." From that statement a question arises: Are there really rewards for doing good deeds? And are there "levels" of blessed living in heaven? Think about it.

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Eighteen

*Encourage Others By  
Your Good Conduct*

Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another - and all the more as you see the Day approaching. - Hebrews 10:24-25

The Scriptures teach, "There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God - having a form of godliness but denying its power" (2 Timothy 3:1-5). Doesn't that sound like the day in which we live?

Knowing what was to come the writer of Hebrews is instructing us to be aware that some will draw away from the fellowship of other believers not feeling that it is necessary, and in another place those people are referred to as those whose love has grown cold.

When we pull away from fellowship with other believers we begin to turn from being Christ and kingdom centered to being self-centered and our concern is turned to the world and what it has to offer.

We need each other. We need faithful believers who will challenge us to do good works and who will warm our hearts with the report of the grace of God at work.

I urge you as our passage today urges us all; encourage one another and stimulate each other to doing good works for the benefit of the kingdom of God.

Do not be like those who did not see the value of fellowshiping with other believers, coming together to worship and to do works of righteousness, who were drawn into themselves and turned away from the faith.

**Prayer:** Lord, help me to always be aware of my need for fellowship with others and to be committed to serving in the kingdom in whatever way that I can. In Jesus name. Amen.

**Message:** Do not be like those who did not see the value of fellowshiping with other believers, coming together to worship and to do works of righteousness, who were drawn into themselves and turned away from the faith.

**Affirmation:** I know I need the strength I gain from being in fellowship with other followers of Christ, therefore, I am diligent about gathering with others to fellowship, worship pray and share God's word.

**Reflection:** Remember when you were encouraged by a fellow believer, then look for a believer who is struggling and pull them into times of fellowship. They will be blessed and so will you.

**My Thoughts:**

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## Day Nineteen

### *Conduct to Avoid: Works of the Flesh*

So I say, live by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law. - Galatians 5:16-18

Several times in his writings apostle Paul contrasted the life of the natural, or sinful, man with the spiritual man. In Romans he writes, "The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law" (8:6-8).

His message is clear; when we live according to our natural instincts we will be directed toward sin and when we have been born again by the Spirit of God we will be directed away from sin.

Over these next few days we are going to look at the list of acts, or sins, Paul gives us in Galatians 5:19-21. He prefaces his list with the verses which make up our passage for today. I have broken this list into four categories because I feel that they each apply to a particular kind of sin.

The first sin category is unacceptable sexual behavior; the second is God substitute behavior which includes Idolatry and witchcraft; the third category is attitude behaviors which include envy, discord, jealousy, hatred and rage; the fourth category is lifestyle behavior and includes selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, drunkenness and self-indulgence.



As we go through these next few days I would encourage you to examine yourself to see if you are being influenced by the flesh in any of these areas. If you are then purpose to begin new behaviors in your daily routine which will strengthen your spiritual man so that your conduct will be controlled by Christ.

**Prayer:** Lord, I know that I am far too often influenced by my natural man and drawn toward sinful thoughts and behaviors. Grant me the grace to being submitted to your Spirit so that it is Christ living through me. In Jesus name. Amen.

**Message:** Examine yourself to see if you are being influenced by the flesh in any areas. If you are, then purpose to begin new behaviors in your daily routine which will strengthen your spiritual man so that your conduct will be controlled by Christ.

**Affirmation:** I often examine myself to see if I am being influenced by fleshly desires and I daily submit myself to God and ask Holy Spirit to cleanse me and give me a pure heart.

**Reflection:** Give some thought to the four categories of sins mentioned in this devotion. We'll be looking at these over the next few days. Can you see any of these sins being a challenge in your own life? Develop ways of dealing with desires of the flesh so you can be an overcomer in every way.

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Twenty

## **Conduct to Avoid: Unacceptable Sexual Behavior**

The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: Sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery... I warn you as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. - Galatians 5:19

When God created man and woman he created them with a common desire for each other. Because of this desire of each other God said, "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

It was God's plan that a man's desire would be for his wife and the desire of the woman would be for her husband, but all of that was upset when sin entered into the equation.

Do you remember Eve's reasoning when she partook of the forbidden fruit? She saw that it was good to eat and pleasing to the eye, so she took some to eat (Genesis 3:6). Isn't that the core issue to just about any sin? If it appeals to our human nature, and it looks to be good, then go ahead, take advantage of the situation.

There is a story in the life of King David that demonstrates this point. He was on the roof top of his palace just aimlessly looking around when he saw a beautiful woman bathing on the roof of a nearby house. He desired her and sent a servant to bring her to his palace. That desire led him to commit adultery and then to have the woman's husband killed.

Paul puts sexual sins at the head of this list of the acts of the sinful nature. He is warning us that we must guard ourselves against being influenced by our sinful nature to commit sins that destroy our relationship with God.

When we are doing right, and living as God intended us to live, the marriage relationship is something that is beautiful and fulfilling, but when we are living according to our base nature the very thing God intended to be a blessing becomes a curse to us.

**Prayer:** Lord, help me to keep my heart pure so that my desire will be for your righteousness. In Jesus name. Amen.

**Message:** When we are doing right and living as God intended us to live the marriage relationship is something that is beautiful and fulfilling, but when we are living according to our base nature the very thing God intended to be a blessing becomes a curse to us.

**Affirmation:** I guard my heart by being careful what I rest my eyes upon and being careful what thoughts I entertain in my mind. I am committed to being pure in thoughts and deeds.

**Reflection:** David is a perfect example of looking upon forbidden fruit. Give some thought to how our enemy seeks to entice us today and draw us away with our own desires. What effect to you see movies, TV and the internet having on us?

**My Thoughts:**

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## Conduct to Avoid: Idolatry

The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: ... Idolatry and witchcraft... I warn you as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

- Galatians 5:19-20

The second category of sins Paul addresses is what I call "God substitute sins." The reason I call them God substitute is because they are sins which take the place of God in our lives.

The first of the Ten Commandments is, "You shall have no other gods before me," and the second is, "You shall not make for yourself an idol" (Exodus 20).

Idolatry and witchcraft go hand in hand. While idolatry is replacing God with an object, witchcraft is replacing God with a "spirit." 1 Samuel 15:23 reads, "Rebellion is like the sin of divination (or witchcraft), and arrogance (or rebellion) like the evil of idolatry." Whether it is an object or a spirit, anything which takes the place of God in our life is a sin.

A lot of people would say, "I don't have any idols around my house, and I certainly don't participate with witchcraft." It isn't hard to make a quick examination to see if in fact that is true.

How much time do you spend on the computer or watching TV as compared to how much time you spend in prayer and reading the word of God? For some people their job stands between them and God, for others it's sports or some other form of entertainment. If those things come first in your life, then you may be making an idol of them.

Paul writes in Romans, "The sinful mind is hostile to God, it does not submit to God's law" (8:7). Ever since mankind rebelled against God in the garden thinking that if he ate the forbidden fruit he would be as wise as God, the soul of man has been in rebellion against God.

When we come to Christ we are to surrender all of the things we have had in our life which kept us from God, and we are to submit to his will. If we are still putting things in front of God and if we are still doing things our way instead of his, we just may be guilty of submitting to our flesh rather than submitting to God.

**Prayer:** Lord, help me not to set my heart on the things of this world. Grant me the grace to submit my will to you and keep my heart free from anything that would separate me from you. In Jesus name. Amen.

**Message:** If we are still putting things in front of God and if we are still doing things our way instead of his, we just may be guilty of submitting to our flesh rather than submitting to God.

**Affirmation:** I am intentional about guarding myself against allowing something else to become more important to me than God.

**Reflection:** Read 1 Samuel 15 to get the context in which Samuel told Saul, "Rebellion is like the sin of divination (witchcraft) and arrogance (or rebellion) like the evil of idolatry." Notice how witchcraft and rebellion are linked together. Why do you think that is? How is rebellion the same as idolatry?

**My Thoughts:**

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## Conduct to Avoid: A Bad Attitude

The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: ... hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage... I warn you as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. - Galatians 5:19-20

This third category of sins I call attitude sins and they have to do with the way we feel about others. We usually dislike others, or stir up trouble among others and become angry with them because of some perceived offence they have caused.

I found it interesting that the Greek word translated "hatred" is *echthra* and means "a reason for opposition." This word implies that one person would have a reason to be upset with another person. But Paul is saying hatred is a sin of our fallen nature.

These four sins mentioned by Paul; hatred, discord, jealousy and fits of rage, all stem from the same thing. They come from taking an offence over something someone said or did against us. Often we are justified in our offence, but allowing a wrong done against us to escalate to that point in our life is sin.

Discord, or as some would say, "rebel rousing," comes from taking an offense, even a well deserved offense, and using it as a tool to get back at the offender. Proverbs gives a list of seven things God hates and one of them is "a man who stirs up dissension among brothers" (Proverbs 6:19). Jealousy and fits of rage go along with discord.

What causes of all this? Having a reason for opposition, or a reason to take offence and using that as an occasion to get an attitude about someone. Jesus addresses this issue when he talks about forgiveness.

Jesus told us that if we have something against another person we must go to them and make it right before we come to God.

Jesus said that if we didn't forgive others the Father would not forgive us. Can you see how these attitude sins can cause problems in our walk of faith?

I would suggest that we take the advice of Jesus when he said, "If you are offering your gift at the altar... first go and be reconciled to your brother, then come and offer your gift" (Matthew 5:23-24).

**Prayer:** Lord, grant me the grace to be forgiving so that I don't carry an attitude that will affect others and my relationship with you. Amen.

**Message:** Jesus addresses the issue of these sins when he talks about forgiveness. Jesus told us that if we have something against another person we must go to them and make it right before we come to God.

**Affirmation:** I have made it a point to take to God any offense I feel from another and pray until I have no offense toward that person in my heart.

**Reflection:** Think about what causes one to have hatred, or jealousy, against another person. Don't think of what the other has done but rather think about why it bothers you. How would you guard yourself against hatred, discord, jealousy and rage?

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Twenty Three

## Conduct to Avoid: Selfish Ambition

The acts of the sinful nature are obvious:... Selfish ambition, dissensions, factions... I warn you as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. - Galatians 5:19-21

This portion of the attitude sins is among the most destructive to the body of Christ. It is selfish ambition that produces dissension and factions. The Greek word for dissensions is *dichostasia* and it means sedition, disunion or divisions.

It is in the nature of man to be ambitious. Many would say that a man without ambition isn't worth much, and that is true, but selfish ambition always leads to disunity, a lack of harmony and divisions.

We have all known people who were so wrapped up in their business, or their job, that their family was neglected. The ironic thing is that every one of those people will tell you that they are making sacrifices for their family.

I have seen the same thing at work in ministries. Churches have split and ministries have been destroyed because some of the leaders had an idea of the way things should be done and they could not submit to the others. The irony of that is they claim to be standing for truth.

All of these division and factions develop because people are not able to surrender their own ambitions for the good of the entire body. I would encourage you to avoid the ravages of selfish ambition at all costs. John Wesley would say, "On essentials unity, on nonessentials tolerance." Someone today might echo



that idea with, "Don't sweat the small stuff," and some would add, "Everything is small stuff."

Paul encourages us in Ephesians to, "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:2-3).

*Prayer:* Lord, grant me the grace of humility so that I will not cause divisions by my own ambitious ways. In Jesus name. Amen.

*Message:* Paul encourages us in Ephesians to, "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:2-3).

*Affirmation:* I have learned that the way to peace is to surrender my own selfish ambition and use my resources to further the kingdom of God.

*Reflection:* Sometimes it is hard to distinguish between our own ambition and what is best for the kingdom of God. Some would ask, "How can I tell the difference?" There is no ironclad way because it is often just between the person and God, but here is one tip: If I feel at peace with God about it and when it is completed it has promoted peace in the body of Christ, then you may be on the right track.

*My Thoughts:*

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Day Twenty Four

## *Conduct to Avoid: Lifestyle Sins*

The acts of the sinful nature are obvious:... Drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. - Galatians 5:19-21

It is the nature of mankind to seek out pleasure. When we give in to the tendency to focus on seeking pleasure in life, that which began as pleasure becomes a sickness to us.

Drunkenness here doesn't just refer to a person drinking too much on occasion. It is referring to people who have a lifestyle of overdrinking. There is a saying among recovering alcoholics: First the man takes a drink, then the drink takes the man.

When we read "orgies," we think of sexual sins, and this word can mean that, but it can also mean more. The Greek word here is *homos* and it means to loosen inhibitions with the connotation of a party lifestyle. The King James version translates this word, "revellings."

The dictionary defines revel, or reveling as, "To make merry; be noisily festive." Reveler is defined as one who makes merry, one who celebrates boisterously.

Does this mean that we shouldn't go to parties, or to places where there is boisterous celebration? It doesn't seem to mean that going to a party is sin, but it does seem to indicate that if life is just one big party you have a problem.

The message here seems to be that an indulgent life leads to sinful reveling and we must guard against such

things. The Scripture teaches us to be self-controlled, focusing upon spiritual things (Colossians 3:1-2).

Paul warns us in Romans that "we become slave to the one whom we obey; whether we obey sin, which leads to death, or obey Christ which leads to righteousness" (Romans 6:16).

We would do well to heed the warning given in the scripture text for today: "I warn you as I did before that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God."

**Prayer:** Lord, I am still in this human flesh, but I ask you to grant me the grace of self-control so that I do not hlive after the flesh. Help me to live after the Spiriti. In Jesus name. Amen.

**Message:** We would do well to heed the warning given in the scripture text for today: "The acts of the sinful nature are obvious:... Drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you as I did before that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God."

**Affirmation:** I am committed to living a balanced life and not letting my fleshly desires drive me to excess in drinking or partying.

**Reflection:** Lifestyle sins are those sins which grow out of indulging our fleshly desires. I ask you to examine your life to see what gives you pleasure and how committed you are to indulging that pleasure. Some of these lifestyle sins can be; sports, gambling, winning at any cost, and yes, drunkenness and orgies.

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Twenty Five

## *Spirit Driven Conduct*

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

- Galatians 5:22-23

We have looked at the acts of the sinful nature now we will look at the fruit of the Spirit. Those of us who have been born of the Spirit will have a different nature than those who have just been born of the flesh.

The first spiritual fruit mentioned is love. Paul tells us that if we claim all kinds of spiritual manifestations but do not have love for God and each other we will just be as a resounding gong or a clanging symbol (1 Corinthians 13). We may claim to be spiritual but if our spirituality is not demonstrated by love it is empty.

In just about everything, man in his natural state is the opposite of what God is. Almost all of what man does is for his own benefit and all that God does is for the benefit of those who will trust him. Man seeks to gain for himself and God seeks to give of himself.

When we are born again we take on the nature of God. We may not be perfect in this nature, but we should be growing and maturing as we become perfected in him.

Love is intrinsic to the nature of God and we who are born into his nature are growing in love as we are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Over the next few days we will be looking at how the nature of God is expressed in us as fruit of the

Spirit. Let us examine ourselves as we look into the mirror of Scripture to see just what our life should be.

As we take the journey inside ourselves let us begin with asking the question, "Do I love as Jesus loved?" If our goal is to become like him and we are being transformed into his likeness, then we will love as he loves. His love cost him everything - What has your love cost you?

**Prayer:** Lord, grant me the grace to love as you love. I tend to have too much fruit of the natural man. Help me to submit to your nature so the fruit of you Spirit grows in me. In Jesus name. Amen.

**Message:** Love is intrinsic to the nature of God and we who are born into his nature are growing in love as we are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory (2 Corinthians 3:18).

**Affirmation:** I am growing in faith as I am being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory and Holy Spirit is the driving force behind my conduct.

**Reflection:** This devotion mentions that just about everything man does in his natural state is the opposite of what God does. Give some thought to that statement and think of some examples that confirm it. What examples in your own life can you see that demonstrate that idea?

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Twenty Six

## *Fruit of the Spirit: Joy and Peace*

The Fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace... Against such things there is no law. - Galatians 5:22, 23

Turn your back on sin; do something good, embrace peace - don't let it get away. - Psalm 34:14 (TMB)

I know a lot of people who claim to have the joy of the Lord, but they need to let their face know. It is incredible how many people claim the peace of God, yet by the things they talk about you don't get the idea that they have much inner peace.

There are times for all of us when our joy has waned, and our peace has been disturbed, and that will continue to happen so long as we live in the human form. But when that has happened we must be aware of it and begin to do what must be done to have our joy restored and to have inner peace. How do we do that?

Joy and peace are Siamese twins and we don't get one without the other. When we are living in the Spirit we have peace and that peace releases joy. If that is true then we can use joy and peace as a gauge of our present spiritual condition. I have noticed in my own life that when my peace is disturbed it is time to look to God and find out what is affecting my peace.

I have seen many people give their heart to the Lord and it is very common to hear them comment almost immediately, "I feel such peace." In John 14:27 Jesus said, "My peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." Faith in God equals joy and peace.

When the circumstances of the world affect our joy and peace then we know that it is time to begin rebuilding our faith. The only time the world can affect us is when our faith is low and the only way we can stay strong against the influence of the world is to maintain faith.

**Prayer:** Lord, help me to be aware of when the world is pressing in on me and affecting my joy and peace. Grant me the grace of faith so that I can live surrendered to you that my joy might increase. Amen.

**Message:** Joy and peace are Siamese twins and we don't get one without the other. In John 14:27 Jesus said, "My peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." Faith in God equals joy and peace.

**Affirmation:** I have experienced the peace and joy of the Lord and I have learned that by continuing to submit my heart to God his peace and joy continue to flow through me.

**Reflection:** I have known many believers who seem to seldom have peace or joy. They are always speaking about something that disturbs peace and when they allow things to disrupt their peace their joy is hindered as well. Examine yourself to see if you have been allowing things to disrupt your peace.

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Twenty Seven

## *Fruit of the Spirit: Kindness*

The fruit of the Spirit is... Kindness. Against such there is no law.- Galatians 5:22, 23

We put no stumbling block in anyone's path, so that our ministry will not be discredited. Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in... patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love. - 2 Corinthians 6:3-7

One of the frustrations that the apostle Paul faced was people who tried to discredit his ministry. Because of that he often feels compelled to validate his call. In this passage he writes much more than what we have written in the text. He speaks of hardships, beatings, being misunderstood, and more. He adds that he has endured with patience and kindness in the Holy Spirit.

It is not natural to be kind to those who are not kind to us. It runs against the grain. Everything in us tells us to defend ourselves, get ready for battle. But Holy Spirit compels us to respond with kindness. It is a grace of God that enables us to endure hardship and rejection and still feel compelled the Spirit to endure with patience, returning kindness for unkindness.

Paul had the ability to stay focused on the task at hand and not be distracted by circumstances. He begins this chapter with, "As God's fellow workers we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain." He wanted to help the Corinthian believers continue in faith and grow in grace. He knew their ability to receive was measured by his patience and kindness toward them - and he knew that he could only produce the fruit of kindness through the Holy Spirit.



We must appeal to the Holy Spirit for his strength and submit to his guidance so his fruit lives in us. Our actions are motivated by the Spirit in us. If Holy Spirit is dominant in our life, then our actions will reflect the fruit of the Spirit; if Holy Spirit is not dominant in our life, we will produce fruit of the flesh. It's time to do a check up to see what kind of fruit we are growing.

**Prayer:** Lord, I need your grace so that kindness flows from me even when I have been mistreated. In Jesus name. Amen.

**Message:** Our actions are motivated by the Spirit in us. If Holy Spirit is dominant in our life then our actions will reflect the fruit of the Spirit; if Holy Spirit is not dominant in our life we will produce fruit of the flesh.

**Affirmation:** When I am submitted to the work of the Holy Spirit He gives me patience and kindness toward others.

**Reflection:** Paul says that he puts no stumbling block in anyone's path so that the ministry will not be discredited. That should be a caution to all of us. He was addressing the way his ministry affected those who were either not believers or that were weak believers. Can you see the need for patience and kindness in dealing with others? Which is more important; to be proven right, or to show kindness and patience?

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Twenty Eight

### *Fruit of the Spirit: Goodness*

The fruit of the Spirit is... Goodness. Against such there is no law. - Galatians 5:22, 23

You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth.)

- Ephesians 5:8-9

The things we did before we knew Christ may not have been evil in the sense of being sinister or malicious, but they were certainly evil in the sense that our will is at odds with God's will. Many times Jesus refers to the evil of man, but not always in the sense of being malicious.

Jesus said in Matthew 7:11, "If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him." When Jesus called the crowd evil he did not imply that they were mean, he was simply showing that even flawed humanity will treat their children well and in like manner the Father treats us well.

If we understand that the evil which is in all men is the darkness that keeps men separated from God, then we can better understand the value of being in the light. In this passage Paul is making a distinction between those who are in darkness, satisfying their worldly desires, and those who have entered light and whose deeds consist of all goodness.

This fruit of the Spirit we call goodness is more than good deeds. It is what is alive on the inside of us. In darkness we gratified the fleshly desires but in the light our desires have changed. The fruit of being light

is that we desire goodness. Righteousness flows from us because of the goodness of the Holy Spirit in us.

We cannot live in the Spirit and respond as the world responds; we cannot live in the Spirit and desire wealth, fame and ambition as the world does. If those things have a strong influence in our life then we have not fully come out of the darkness.

**Prayer:** Lord, grant me the grace of having the fruit of goodness in my life so I won't be influenced by evil. In Jesus name. Amen.

**Message:** We cannot live in the Spirit and respond as the world responds; we cannot live in the Spirit and desire wealth, fame and ambition as the world does. If those things have a strong influence in our life then we have not fully come out of the darkness.

**Affirmation:** I have the fruit of goodness because I have come out of darkness and I now live in the light. I do not desire the things of the world but rather the things of the spirit.

**Reflection:** Jesus calls common man evil in Matthew 7:11. What do you think he meant by that? Does he mean that all men are malicious and have sinister intent? What is it that causes mankind to be "evil?"

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Twenty Nine

## *Fruit of the Spirit: Faithfulness*

The fruit of the Spirit is...faithfulness - Galatians 5:22

Steve was a good man, but he was also hooked on meth. He entered our program but he couldn't stay clean of drugs so we discharged him. Our policy was that when we put a person out they could come back in 30 days. Steve was put out four times. Then he became truly converted and began to live the Spirit filled life. That was many years ago and he is still faithful.

Faithfulness is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. When we come to Christ the Holy Spirit is placed in us and as we learn to submit to his working in us we mature and begin to bear fruit. Our life may have been marked by wrong choices and inconsistencies, but when we yield to the work of the Holy Spirit he makes us faithful.

Many years ago as a young pastor my life was very inconsistent. I prayed little and spent very little time in God's word. Once I was praying about the inconsistencies in my life and the Holy Spirit impressed upon the need to have a daily devotional life. I took a while but I began to be consistent with prayer and Bible reading every morning.

As I developed consistency in visiting with the Lord every morning I began to notice that the rest of my life was taking on a new order as well. Finally I could see the fruit of faithfulness being produced in my life. What began as a struggle became easy to maintain as I developed the pattern of morning devotions.

The Holy Spirit will only do in us what we allow him to do. If we are determined to live our way, he will let us, but he will have little influence in our life. The

key to faithfulness is learning to daily surrender your life to God and allow Holy Spirit to be an influence in your life. God desires to be continually working in us, but we must make the choice to allow him to.

If you haven't developed a faithfulness in having a time of prayer and reading God's word every day I challenge you to begin working on it - today! You'll find it becomes easier as you become faithful.

**Prayer:** Lord, grant me the grace to be consistent in prayer and devotions so that I will be faithful in my walk. In Jesus name. Amen.

**Message:** If you haven't developed a faithfulness in having a time of prayer and reading God's word every day I challenge you to begin working on it - today! You'll find it becomes easier as you become faithful.

**Affirmation:** Daily I come to God in prayer and reading his word because I know my strength comes from communing with God and spending time reading and meditating upon his word.

**Reflection:** Have you been consistent in daily prayer and daily reading God's word? If you have you know the value of it; if you haven't then you are probably struggling in other areas as well. I challenge you today Take A Knee In Prayer Daily. In fact, check out this website which talks about having a time of prayer every day: [www.take-a-knee.org](http://www.take-a-knee.org)

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Thirty

## *Fruit of the Spirit: Self-Control*

The fruit of the Spirit is... self-control.

- Galatians 5:22-23

His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him... Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises... For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith... self-control... If you possess these qualities... they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive. - 2 Peter 1:3-8

We all want to be effective and productive in our walk of faith, but all too often we fall short of that objective. That's why Peter gives this list of virtues to add to our faith. The gift of salvation which comes from faith in Christ is not something to be minimized, but salvation is just the beginning of the process faith works in us. As we add these virtues to our faith we become more consistent and effective.

If self-control is a virtue of the Spirit, then how do we add it to our faith? Wouldn't it be the work of the Holy Spirit to add it to our faith walk? The answer to that question is a "Yes and no." Yes, it is a fruit of the Spirit, but no, it doesn't just automatically become a part of our walk.

The reason Peter instructs us to add self-control is that he is reminding us we still live in a body of flesh and this body of flesh keeps resurrecting the desires which are natural to it. The virtue of controlling these desires requires us to submit to the guidance and control of the Holy Spirit.

The reason so many of us lack self-control is that we are not willing to submit to the control of the Holy Spirit. We can only live out the virtues of Galatians five and 2 Peter one by submitting to the Holy Spirit so that he can produce the fruit of self-control in us.

It sounds like a contradiction in terms but the only way to have self-control is to surrender control to the Holy Spirit.

**Prayer:** Father, grant me the grace of self-control so that all you have promised can be released in me and through me and thereby I will be productive in your kingdom. In Jesus name. Amen.

**Message:** The reason so many of us lack self-control is that we are not willing to submit to the control of the Holy Spirit. We can only live out the virtues of Galatians five and 2 Peter one by submitting to the Holy Spirit so that he can produce the fruit of self-control in us.

**Affirmation:** I have learned that the only way I can have self-control is to surrender control of my life to Holy Spirit.

**Reflection:** It does sound like a contradiction to say that in order to have self-control a person must surrender control. As long as we are in the flesh we will struggle with self-control. What would you consider to be signs that a person is not exercising self-control. What would be signs that Holy Spirit is in control?

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Thirty One

### *Fruit of the Spirit: Gentleness*

The fruit of the Spirit is... Gentleness. Against such there is no law. - Galatians 5:22-23

Every High Priest is... appointed to represent [the people] to God. He is able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray... [Christ] is a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.

- Hebrews 5:1-6

When God delivered the law to Moses he set up a system whereby a priest would petition the Lord for the needs of the people and he would offer sacrifices of atonement for their sin. There were many priests between Moses and Christ who performed those duties, but not all of them were gentle.

The writer in our passage today underscores a characteristic of Christ as the high priest that reveals his character. He wrote, "He is able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray." It is the gentle hand of this great high priest that leads us to the throne of God.

All of us have sinned, but some of us have sinned so grievously that we don't think anyone can help us. We sometimes feel that God is just waiting for the chance to take revenge on us for what we have done. Then we are approached by the gentle high priest.

Over the years it has been the touch of this gently hand of the Lord that has brought me back from the brink of utter failure my faith walk. He has seen my ignorance, and sometimes my purely self-willed decisions, yet he has always been there for me.

The Holy Spirit seeks to be manifest in gentleness to those who would walk with him. I am concerned



that far too often we are so caught up in seeing that things are done in a way which we believe is right that we become harsh and intolerant of others who are struggling with their own walk of faith.

We who have experienced the gentleness of Christ in our lives must allow the Holy Spirit to bring forth gentleness in us so we can better understand and work with those who are struggling.

**Prayer:** Lord, grant me the grace of a gentle spirit so that I may serve well in your kingdom. In Jesus name.

**Message:** Too often we are so caught up in seeing that things are done in a way which we believe is right that we become harsh and intolerant of others who are struggling with their own walk of faith. We who have experienced the gentleness of Christ in our lives must allow the Holy Spirit to bring forth gentleness in us so we can better understand and work with those who are struggling.

**Affirmation:** As a minister of the grace and gospel of Christ I am more concerned with being gentle with others than I am with impressing them with what I know.

**Reflection:** Have you had an occasion when it was the gentleness of God's hand which restored you as opposed to receiving a harsh rebuke? Think of some ways you can approach one with gentleness who is failing in their walk.

**My Thoughts:**

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## Take A Knee In Prayer 30 Day Challenge

The Take A Knee In Prayer Movement is about one thing: Prayer. We Aren't asking you for anything except to pray and to invite your friends to pray.

We provide resources to encourage you in your commitment to Take A Knee In Prayer every day.

You are encouraged to gather with others who are committed to Take A Knee In Prayer every day for periodic group prayer.

Everyone who joins the Take A Knee In Prayer 30 Day Challenge gets a free book of devotions on prayer. This book of devotions on prayer is not to tell you how to pray but to encourage you to pray. We trust that it will be an inspiration to you as you commit to Take A Knee In Prayer daily.

Get more information on the Take A Knee In Prayer Challenge at: [www.take-a-knee.org](http://www.take-a-knee.org)

You may email Paul Smith to get more information at: [paul@nhmresources.org](mailto:paul@nhmresources.org)

