

About This Newsletter



This August edition will address a number of topics, including questions recently raised by readers.

The articles are designed to help saints gain a clearer understanding of how to apply Scripture wisely.

Next month will begin a new series, I Corinthians. This epistle can help us learn to recognize and adjust carnal thinking, correct misunderstandings, and apply basic teachings already presented in Romans, enabling us to make wise judgments.



The Church: A Great Comfort!

Some saints see the Church as a duty, others as a social club or a weekly fix of Scripture. Yet God designed it to be so much more!

Believers are members of our body, closer than family. Seeing Christ in them is a refreshing drink to a thirsty soul! Paul reveals his attitude: *"Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved."* (Phil. 4:1)

The local assembly is a place to learn, ask questions, share concerns, and be encouraged to move forward. *"I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."* (Phil. 3:14)

Meeting together is to be a safe, supportive place, with love and oneness. Here, we can feel comfortable, sharing the unity of the Spirit, Scripture, & Christ's mind!

Just A Minute! With Scripture

The King James Bible is used for all references. Verses may be underlined or made bold for emphasis.



Wise Choices In A Complicated World

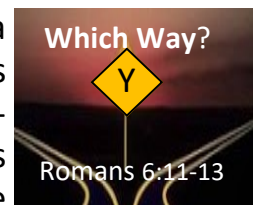
Most of us come to critical points in life, unsure of how to proceed. So much depends on choices. Making decisions can cause us fear; maybe we will make a mistake! At these times, we so want God or anyone wise to tell us specifically what to do. God can help, but how?

Of course, the Lord doesn't swoop down to physically handle things for us. Instead, He graciously gives us responsibility with free will to make choices based on understanding and experience using Scripture. The local Church can also be a source of comfort and a valuable resource by example and godly counsel. Paul is our pattern; he made judgments by trusting the Word within him: *"Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful."* (I Corinthians 7:25)

God is our Father and deeply cares, desiring only good things for us. Yet, as a good father, He wants us to become independent and wise in Christ. Led by the Spirit, we can use the Word built in us to negotiate issues, but for most of us, the tendency is not to trust this power.

Fear is normal, and miscalculations are a part of learning. Good and bad decisions provide vital experience; it's an education if we're paying attention. Maturity is slow, as from a baby to an adult. Take one step at a time, be thankful, and give all the glory unto God. *"To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen."* (Rom. 16:27) Consider suggestions below:

1. Give yourself grace and trust God! (Everyone makes mistakes.)
2. Pray and meditate on the problem, then brainstorm options.
3. Reflect upon what God has taught you thus far, setting personal goals, then align decisions with these priorities. (Review regularly.)
4. Think about how to best meet each goal, considering godly wisdom, your situation, and resources, i.e. time, energy, money, etc.
5. Learn from experiences, good/bad, and reflect to adjust thinking and make changes. Then, get back on track and move forward.
6. Pray & be renewed in sound doctrine: reprov'd, corrected, and instructed in righteousness. How? Stay in the Word. (II Tim 3:16)



Is It Ever Okay To Focus On Me?



In Christian circles, so much is said about serving and putting others first, but are your personal needs important? Let's examine the issue:

Is it good for a new Christian to concentrate on 'self'?

Actually, once a person trusts that Christ died for his sins,



this would be 'his priority' to learn basic Bible teaching to live unto God. So, 'Me-time' is essential to grow, read, meditate, pray, seek answers, go to Bible meetings, and have fellowship. *"For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."* (Romans 8:6)

God's way to mature a new saint is strategically laid out in Paul's epistles. Romans is placed first, and will establish us in steps: **1) Romans 1-5:** How to be justified and have eternal life. **2) Romans 6-8:** Explains our new identity in Christ and how to live a holy life unto God. **3) Romans 9-11:** God's enduring love and mercy are manifest, revealing that Israel was set aside for a time to begin this mystery time of grace to Gentiles according to His plan/purpose. **4) Romans 12-16:** In this final section, God reveals a new way for the Body of Christ to worship and do godly service.

Is it Okay for a mature saint to focus on 'self'? Here too it seems crucial to make time for yourself to become a servant of Christ. First, you learn to know and love who Christ made you: your new inward man. (Romans 1-8) Then, you're able to love and minister to others. *"...Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."* (Gal.5:14) In order to serve, take the time to be prepared spiritually.

Day-to-day living, balancing a myriad of responsibilities, but also keeping God as the priority, can be tough. 'Me-time' to rest and think on spiritual things to apply them is so important! It's easy to be swept up into the busyness of life or be lulled to sleep by distractions. Having spiritual life goals provides direction to set boundaries to assure they happen. For example, you are able to decide how much time and energy to spend at work, on chores, seeing family/friends, on leisure activities, on Bible reading/study, or involved in ministries. Prioritizing can help you keep a balance to wisely care for 'yourself' physically/spiritually/emotionally, readied and better able to minister to others, *"...that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction."* (I Corinthians 7:35)

So, yes, it's important to focus on self to align your life with true priorities and practically apply convictions, but also to make time to be refreshed. *"Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you."* (Phil. 4:9)

Saying "No" To Assert Yourself And Live What You Learn

God works in you as you yield to set a new direction for your life. His love can constrain you to live by what you believe in the Word. *"For we walk by faith, not by sight...For the love of Christ constraineth us..."* (II Cor. 5:7, 14) The lures of this world, together with old habits and the flesh, do not 'have to' determine what you do. Assert yourself to make wise choices and protect your new direction. To live your new priorities, explain: "I'm sorry, I can't go, as I have other plans."

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It can feel selfish (and promote guilt) to say "No" in order to read the Word, rest, or serve others. Yet recall, *"For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace."* (Romans 6:14) Living your new life in Christ happens as you make godly choices based on what you learn. *"Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing."* (Phil. 3:16) Keep new goals in the forefront to position yourself wisely, saying "No" to the flesh to live your convictions.

Letting Go Of The Issues That Plague Us

How do we release ourselves from the things that we agonize about regarding the past, present, or future? Some believers overly focus on words or behavior: what was, what is, or something that may/may not happen, causing great turmoil inside.

Gain God's perspective to walk by faith:

As you study and believe the Word, you increase faith, trusting God to live it. With a renewed mind you become more impressed by God's Word than by feelings & what is seen. Attaining the mind of Christ enables you to set aside life's physical issues and anxieties, 'closing these windows of thought' by replacing them with godly thinking. *"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God."* (Col. 3:1)

Slow down to pray and meditate:

This familiar verse may help: *"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."* (Phil. 4:6-7) Communicate with God 'in everything.' He's your coach, your confidant, but most importantly, your Father; ask Him to help. Paul goes on to teach you to think and do 'the things' He instructs (Verses 8-9). The fruit is freedom and peace!



Know that emotions and circumstances don't 'have to' control you. In each moment, you can rely on God's great love and power, by the Word, to work within. When you become anxious, that is, 'overly caring' about things of this world, recall Paul's instruction about contentment: *"Not that I*

speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." (Phil. 4:11) You can choose what is important based upon what God teaches, yet maturity takes time.

When forgiveness, love, and grace are in the heart of things, much can naturally be let go.

Be centered on God & eternity in heaven:

Cares about this life can haunt you, preventing a walk of faith. Let go of legalism and the works of the flesh. When you become fixed on worldly things, such as excessive attention on behavior or circumstances, get off that road of thinking: *"...forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."* (Philippians 3:13-14) Keep God's grace perspective and rejoice in the glorious things He has done, is doing, and plans to do in eternity.

God's way is life & peace, as Christ is 'formed' in you:

Scripture will transform and conform you to Christ's image. You then gain God's mind on things with His eternal view (Romans 8:29 & 12:1-2), the fruit of the Spirit, but also confidence, contentment, and trust in God's power in you. These help you to negotiate life challenges to focus above. As Paul was transformed, he acquired resources: *"...I can do all things through Christ...But my God shall supply all your need..."* (Phil 4:13, 19) Stay free from all the cares, pressing forward to attain what God desires for you. **Trust His Word and live!**



Let God Set You Free!

Stamp

Christian Life Coach Support Services

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To:

“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus...” (Romans 3:24)

Eating & Digesting Food



Our favorite foods can be so enjoyable! Are we able to devour Scripture with this same enthusiasm? Absolutely; it just takes time and diligence. Babies are slowly weaned from milk to eat strained, then cut-up foods. As they grow, the body matures to enjoy adult food. Similarly, God desires that we ‘consume spiritual milk.’ In time, many rejoice to read/study, even able to digest and desire the ‘meat’ teaching.

At first, believers may read simply because they know God desires it; this is the essence of ‘walking by faith.’ They make it a priority, even though they don’t see the real significance of Scripture, find it hard to get started, are uncomfortable with so many new terms, or always feel too busy.

Eventually, saints process and apply what is learned, and begin to understand basic doctrine. This can help them realize the eternal value of God’s spiritual food, producing great joy in study. *“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piecing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” (Heb. 4:12)*

Romans 1:16 says, *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation...”* This power, as we believe, gradually gives us: Clarity in life on earth, and into eternity, enables Christ to live in us, and provides hope, comfort, and purpose. This spiritual sustenance is also necessary to serve. *“That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Romans 15:6)*

As we develop a taste and appetite for eating the Word, it becomes more delectable than any gourmet food: *“How sweet are thy words unto my taste! Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!” (Psalm 119:103)* The Spirit helps us to understand Scripture and mature, filling the great hunger in the depth of our spirit and soul for an intimate relationship with God, nourished in His wisdom and ways. How glorious!



‘On A Personal Side’

We welcome feedback & questions.

From Our Readers

“Just received your monthly newsletter. We so enjoy reading it. It provides so much encouragement and Biblical information. (Florida)

“Thanks for sharing the Romans (timeline) outline on page 3. It’s very good. (May, 2017 Newsletter - Alabama)

“I thank God for you. Thank you for your ministry. (California)

“We are working through the “Growing Up In Christ” book in our women’s group and I am reading through Chapter 3 this morning. Man, is it what I needed to hear! (Florida)

Request email/postal subscriptions/past issues or forward questions and ideas using contact information below.

Opportunities To Study

In North Chesterfield, VA

1. **Brian’s Family Study: Fridays 7-9 pm**
2. **Women’s Bible Study & Support**
Wed.: 10:30-12 pm LaPrade Library
3. **Women’s Study: Fridays 1-3 pm**

Call for Info at (804) 519-1210