

your PRACTICING CHRISTIANITY



*"Let us run with endurance
the race that is set before us."
Hebrews 12:1*

RICK HUGHES



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PRACTICING YOUR CHRISTIANITY

Sudden death overtime in the Super Bowl. Your team lines up for a thirteen yard pass to win the game. Who do you want passing the ball? The water boy or the star quarterback?

One second left in the final game of the NBA Championship. The series is tied. The score is tied. Who do you want shooting the game winning free throw? The ball boy or the most valuable player?

What sets superstars above other athletes? What do all elite athletes have in common? For one thing, they do not become stars overnight. They work harder than anyone. Through months and years of dedication, concentration, practice and tough training, they develop the skills that bring them success.

Christianity needs spiritual superstars. We need quiet spiritual heroes who understand God's plan for their lives and execute it. It takes daily commitment to be a spiritual superstar and receive recognition grander than the accolades received by the most famous athletes. Every Christian's goal should be hearing God say:

Well done, My good and faithful servant. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things. Enter into the joy of your Master. (Matthew 25:21)

Today's headlines are more and more shocking - chaos and confusion in our country, our workplaces, our schools and even our homes. What was once considered good is now evil and what was evil is now considered good.

But as a spiritual superstar you will see the chaos and confusion and still be calm and confident.

One thing is certain, just as with superstar athletes, such inner strength and peace of mind does not happen overnight. Spiritual skills must be learned and practiced throughout our lives if we are to reach spiritual MVP status and have the happiness and contentment God intends for us.

Here is the training schedule for a spiritual superstar:

Get on God's team by accepting God's gift of salvation. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior. Christianity is a permanent relationship with God.

Stay in fellowship with God the Father and empowered by the Holy Spirit by using the rebound technique, confessing your known sins to God the Father through silent prayer (1 John 1:9).

Understand God's game plan. Grow in the grace and knowledge of your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ through the daily study of the Word of God.

Learn the rules and the plays. Practice!! Execute the game plan. Keep pressing toward the objective of receiving the winner's wreath of glory.

This book is an introduction to give you some basics on how to practice your Christianity. Do you want to be one of God's champions? Great - then let's get started.

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MAKING THE TEAM

You need to be saved to be on God's team. Salvation is God's grace gift to you but you have to decide to accept it. The most important decision you'll ever make in your life is to accept or to reject the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior. If you are not on God's team, do not wait another minute; make the decision now.

**God the Father sent His Son Jesus Christ
to die on the cross as your personal substitute**

He made Him [Jesus Christ] who knew no sin
to be sin on our behalf, so that we might
become the righteousness of God in Him.
(2 Corinthians 5:21)

In other words, Jesus Christ never sinned and yet He was judged for every sin that has or will ever be committed. He took your punishment. This concept of ultimate sacrifice has been illustrated in many different ways.

Let me share one about a criminal who committed a horrendous crime and was sentenced to death. Just as he was being escorted to the chamber for the lethal injection, a stranger came forward and said, "I am willing to take your place and die for you." The guilty fellow was astounded. "But I am the one who committed the crime and deserve to die. You can't be serious!" The man nodded. "I understand you are guilty but I will take your place so you can live." He went into the death chamber and willingly died in place of the criminal. The criminal was still guilty but his crime had been paid for and now he was free.

In the same way, Jesus Christ took your place. You and I are the guilty ones yet He died as a substitute for us so we do not have to face the death penalty we deserve and spend eternity in the Lake of Fire.

Salvation is simply faith in Jesus Christ as your Savior

Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. (Acts 16:31)

You either choose to accept Jesus Christ as your Savior, which is positive volition, or you choose to reject Him through negative volition. Volition is the decision maker in your soul.

Salvation, being on God's team, is a choice.

You are saved by the grace of God

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy. (Titus 3:5)

Are you familiar with the word grace in the Bible? Grace is God's policy. Grace is God doing all the work. **Salvation is a grace gift from God.** You can't do anything to earn salvation nor do you deserve it by being good or working for it. You are saved by faith alone in Christ alone. God does it all!

**An individual has to realize he is lost
before he can see his need for a Savior**

For the Son of Man [Jesus Christ] has come
to seek and to save that which was lost.
(Luke 19:10)

While on a hunting trip, I came upon a man who was lost but did not realize it. He thought he was walking toward the base camp. I informed him the camp was in the other direction and his reply was, "I guess I'm lost." He was lost but hadn't realized it until I told him.

Each of us is born in a lost state because we are all born spiritually dead and therefore separated from God. *"For you were like sheep gone astray"* (1 Peter 2:25). Sadly, many people remain lost to God because they have a false sense of security from their own talents, intellect or from wealth, material things and status. They don't see the need to be saved.

Believing God exists is not salvation. According to the Bible, the issue for salvation is:

What think you of Christ? (Matthew 22:42)

You may say, "I believe in God" but do you accept Jesus Christ died as a substitute for you? Do you realize you can do nothing to save yourself? Do you understand you are under the wrath of God? The Bible says, *"He who believes in the Son [Jesus Christ] has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him"* (John 3:36).

The question isn't "Do you believe God exists?" The question is "Do you accept Christ's death was a substitute for yours?" If you do not accept Jesus Christ died as a substitute for you, you are not saved. You will not go to heaven.

You can be saved at any age, anytime and in any place

Believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name. (John 20:31)

You cannot be saved by not sinning

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23)

Every one of us sins. Even if everyone in the world stopped sinning (impossible but pretend) nobody would be any closer to heaven. **Sin is not the issue.** Salvation has nothing to do with sin or with being good or bad. The only issue for salvation is *“What think you of Christ?”* (Matthew 22:42).

God does not care how morally good the non-Christian is. He can go to church, read the Bible every day, never cheat or lie, help seniors, do community service but none of these good works can save him. Being good is noble, and you should be good, but being good cannot save you.

Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation

I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.
(John 14:6)

Notice this clearly states *the* way, not *a* way. The way is Jesus Christ. He is the only source of eternal life. No other way will work. 1 John 5:12 says, *“He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.”*

Salvation is not a religious ritual such as baptism. *“For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel”* (1 Corinthians 1:17). Salvation is not an effort of personal sacrifice or commitment nor is it trying to not sin.

“For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23). In Matthew 11:28, Jesus Christ said, *“Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.”* Here rest means that at the moment you accept Christ as your Savior you can relax knowing you have been set free from the slave market of sin.

You will have two births or two deaths You decide

In John 3, God tells us about Nicodemus. One of the greatest Jewish leaders of his time, Nicodemus was proud of himself because he prayed many times a day, studied the Old Testament and precisely performed all of the Jewish rituals. He thought since he was as religious and righteous as he could possibly be, he did not need a Savior. Because he couldn't figure out who Christ was, he went to meet Him to try and understand. He came to Jesus and said, *“We know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him”* (John 3:2).

Jesus did not argue with Nicodemus or try to convince him that He truly was the Messiah promised to the Jews. Jesus came right to the point, to the only issue that mattered.

Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.’ (John 3:3)

Nicodemus asked Jesus, *“How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born, can he?”* (John 3:4). Jesus answered, “Nicodemus, this is not a physical birth. It is a spiritual birth.”

Of course Nicodemus couldn’t go back into his mother’s womb! He could only be born again if his human spirit was made alive through trust in Jesus Christ as his Savior.

**At the moment of salvation, God the Holy Spirit
brings your dead human spirit to life**

Even when we were dead in our transgressions, He made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).
(Ephesians 2:5)

Everyone is born physically alive but spiritually dead. If a person remains spiritually dead without ever being born again, when he dies physically, his soul leaves his body and goes to hell to await judgment. Hebrews 9:27 says, *“It is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment.”* This physical death is his first death.

**You will live forever
either in Heaven or baking in the Lake of Fire**

His second death occurs when Jesus Christ judges him at the Great White Throne of Judgment for his rejection of God’s grace gift of salvation. He will be condemned and sent to the Lake of Fire to bake in the lake. Here also death will be destroyed, thus making it impossible for his soul to die and end his agony (Revelation 20:11-15). He will endure this eternal torment, horror, because he rejected the redemption and forgiveness provided by the love of God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Salvation only takes a second and in that second you are given eternal life

The moment you accept Jesus Christ as your Savior you have eternal life. How can it be so quick? Because on the cross Jesus Christ did all of the work. Nothing remains to be done except for you to believe. The instant you do believe, God brings you into an eternal and permanent relationship with Him. In that simple moment of belief, you pass from spiritual death to eternal life. In the instant you believe, the glorious blessings of heaven and eternal life are yours forever.

He who hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life. (John 5:24)

So you used your volition to make God's team and now the angels are cheering from the bleachers! *"There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who is saved"* (Luke 15:10). Be confident in your eternal security. You will share God's perfect happiness forever in heaven.

Imagine:

He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away. He is making all things new. (Revelation 21:4-5)

Things which the eye has not seen and the ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him. (1 Corinthians 2:9)

You become a member of God's Royal Family

For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:26)

Your new birth makes you acceptable to God. God adopts you into His royal family. You are a child of God with an eternal inheritance through Christ Jesus. This is amazing!

An inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for salvation.
(1 Peter 1:4)

You can never lose your salvation

I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. (John 10:28)

You can't do anything to be thrown off of God's team. No matter how often you fail, you will always be a member of His family. **God will never disown you and will never turn His back on you.** Just as you can't be unborn from your physical family, you can't be unborn from God's royal family.

Once saved, always saved

Many Christians blaspheme God by thinking they can cause the loss of their salvation. **You did nothing to earn salvation and can do nothing to lose it.** Salvation is a grace gift from God. God does not take back His gifts. The Lord says in Hebrews 13:5, *"I will never desert you nor will I ever forsake you."*

You may be thinking, “What if I’ve stopped believing and doubt I’m saved? What if I’ve done something really terrible, how can I still be saved?” Your salvation depends on God, not you. God will never leave you. Never means never.

You can’t do anything to lose your salvation

God’s faithfulness is so complete that even if you now deny He exists, God remains faithful.

If we are faithless, God remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself. (2 Timothy 2:13)

You have eternal security

For God the Father to deny us, members of His royal family, He would have to deny Christ. He cannot do it. He will not do it. The minute God places you in His royal family through your faith in Jesus Christ your position is secure and eternal. You will spend eternity in heaven. This is God’s promise, a guarantee.

This is the promise which He Himself made to us, eternal life. (1 John 2:25)

God gives everyone an opportunity to be saved

The Lord is not slow about His promise, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance [faith in Christ]. (2 Peter 3:9)

But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift. (Ephesians 4:7)

The point at which one recognizes that God exists is called the point of God consciousness. It may be while gazing at the shimmering stars and realizing Someone must be out there greater than ourself. *"The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands"* (Psalm 19:1). It may be while studying evolution in science class and realizing no half-man/half-ape is running around; Someone must have created humans. *"I am fearfully and wonderfully made; wonderful are Your works"* (Psalm 139:14).

Or maybe an individual falls from a cliff and as he hovers near death he realizes that Someone greater than himself may exist. *"What man can live and not see death? Can he deliver his soul from the power of the grave?"* (Psalm 89:48).

When a person is positive toward God and wants to learn more about Him, God will make sure the Gospel is presented to him, and in his own language, so he can clearly understand it. Even the inhabitants of remote jungles have equal opportunity to learn about God and to be saved. God wants everyone to be on His team and therefore He is patient in judging unbelief.

Alert - you have no guarantee of a tomorrow.

**If you haven't made
the most important decision in your life
on where you will spend eternity
Heaven or the Lake of Fire
don't wait another minute**

In silent prayer say something like this, "Heavenly Father, I believe your Son Jesus Christ died on the cross for me. I accept Him as my Savior. In Jesus Christ's name I pray, Amen."

UNDERSTANDING GOD’S GAME PLAN

Consider God’s game plan as three unique stages:

Stage One: Salvation

To believe in Jesus Christ as your Savior

Stage Two: Time on Earth

To execute the spiritual life and reach spiritual maturity while living on this earth

Stage Three: Eternity

To live with God forever in heaven

We’ve covered Stage One, salvation, so let’s move on to Stage Two, your time on earth. Perhaps you’ve been asking yourself, maybe even asking others, “Now that I am a Christian, what does God expect of me?”

The Protocol Plan of God

As you continue this study you must understand an important word: protocol. **Protocol means to do the right thing in the right way.** God has a marvelous game plan for your life. It is called the Protocol Plan of God. I like to use the analogy of a football team. Every Christian is a member of God’s team, however very few Christians put in the effort to train and be prepared for God to use them in the game.

Christians who do not learn the plays of His protocol plan sit in the bleachers, members of the team but not dressed out. God takes the strengths and weaknesses, the talents and spiritual gifts of all maturing Christians and He molds them together to form a playing unit that

glorifies Him. Each team member has the responsibility to learn the plays and to practice diligently. Together, the members of the team are much stronger. This collective strength is one of the reasons for local churches. *“Do not neglect the assembling of yourselves together ... but for the purpose of encouragement; even so much the more, as you see the day drawing near”* (Hebrews 10:25).

The Protocol Plan of God has a system of authority. Just as athletes must have a coach to coordinate the talents of all of the players, you must have a coach for your spiritual life. Your coach is God the Holy Spirit. The Christian way of life is unique. To understand and live it, you need the unique resources God provides: the ministry of the Holy Spirit and the living Word of God, the Bible.

To have the enabling ministry of the Holy Spirit empower you, you must be in fellowship with God the Father, filled with the Holy Spirit. This is accomplished by naming your known sins to God the Father in silent prayer. 1 John 1:9, *“If we confess our [known] sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness [known, unknown and forgotten sins].”* Unconfessed sin in your life quenches the Holy Spirit and makes you ineligible to train.

The Protocol Plan of God gives you a mentor. At the moment of salvation, you received the permanent indwelling of God the Holy Spirit and He sealed you as proof you are in God’s family forever. The Holy Spirit lives in you! Ephesians 1:13-14 says, *“In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation - having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance.”*

In addition to the Holy Spirit being your coach, He is also your mentor. The Holy Spirit gives you the ability to learn and understand God’s game plan as you study

your playbook, the Bible. He helps you recall the plays and guides you in how to live your spiritual life.

It's important you study the Word of God every day, not just once a week or twice on Sunday. You must study every day so the rate of learning exceeds the rate of forgetting. God's Word is your fuel, your energy, your soul nutrition.

This is why you need to develop a daily routine of Bible study so you can develop and strengthen your spiritual muscles. Your opponents are tough and you must train hard so you are ready for God to put you in the game.

The Protocol Plan of God has an administrator. It is the pastor-teacher who functions as your assistant coach. Just as the assistant coach relays the plays from the head coach, so the pastor, with authority given by God, communicates God's Word to you. **You can't coach yourself to be a spiritual MVP.** The Bible is a textbook. God designed it to be taught. This is why God gives certain men the spiritual gift of pastor-teacher.

One of the roles of the pastor is to teach you to be spiritually self-sustaining. He must present the Word of God clearly and accurately from the original languages. If no such pastor exists in your area, accurate Bible studies are available free of charge and you can study at home under the ministry of a well-qualified pastor, as I do.

The Protocol Plan of God has a system of solutions. In football, team members choose among play options, depending on how the defense or offense lines up. They must assess their opponent and select the play option that will work best. As a member of God's team, **you have at least 10 play sets called God's problem-solving devices** which I will discuss later in this book. You must master these if you want to be a champion. God's solutions are the only solutions. Human solutions are no solutions.

The Protocol Plan of God has assets. A football team has helmets, water bottles, a practice field, many assets. Likewise, God has given you many divine resources to live your supernatural life. These include the indwelling of God the Holy Spirit, the imputation of God's righteousness, eternal security, the living Word of God, 24/7 direct access to Him via prayer, and the availability of divine power through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

The Protocol Plan of God has a system of production and service. An athlete can be the best in the world, but if he's not in the game, he's of no use. In the same way, a Christian must be filled with the Holy Spirit for his production and service to glorify God. Prayer, giving, raising children and other production in the spiritual life are divine good only when they are done while filled with the Holy Spirit.

The Protocol Plan of God has a system of rewards. When a team wins the Super Bowl, players have immediate national recognition and rewards such as a ring they can keep for the rest of their lives. As you grow spiritually, God will bless you in time and the rewards that await you in eternity are phenomenal. Be diligent in practicing your Christianity so you will receive the winner's wreath of glory.

Christians who sit on the bench during their time on earth will still be in heaven but when winner believers receive eternal blessings and rewards, they will be left out. God couldn't use them because they failed to learn His plays. They were too busy or lazy to train. Regrettably, many Christians will hear, "Sorry, sit down, you never learned the plays, you never got into the game. I gave you every chance to succeed, but you rejected My coaching, you failed to learn and execute My plan."

God's Protocol Plan is revealed through the Bible

PRACTICING BY THE RULES

Someone once asked me how long it takes to become a mature Christian. That question doesn't have an exact answer, but be assured spiritual maturity doesn't take a lifetime nor does it require knowledge of every concept of the Bible. Spiritual maturity comes from consistency, routine and practice. Consider that an athlete becomes a star only after years of daily training, studying film, competing and a lot of practice, practice, practice - and before he or she becomes old!

**God has given you the playbook
and the resources to be a champion
It's up to you - Spiritual MVP or bench warmer?**

Many Christians never grow up spiritually. They are spiritual babies when they are born again and twenty years later, they are still spiritual babies. They have refused to study God's playbook and to practice His plays. The Bible often compares basic Biblical concepts to baby's milk and deeper Biblical doctrines to meat. Anyone whose only nourishment is milk will be anemic and puny - physically or spiritually.

For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice [God's Word in their souls] have their senses trained to discern [human] good and evil.
(Hebrews 5:13-14)

Beware that Satan through the lures of the world will take aim at you. He will try to knock you out of the game. The lures of the world will give you plenty of excuses to miss Bible study or to be distracted while you are there. *“But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ”* (2 Cor 11:3).

You - and you alone - have the responsibility to grow from a baby to an adult Christian. **God commands you to acquire the mind of Christ, to change your way of thinking from human viewpoint to divine viewpoint.** This will occur as you learn and apply God’s Word.

Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 2:5)

Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and forever. (2 Peter 3:18)

I trust you are studying this book because of a desire to obey these mandates from God. You would not have read this far if you did not. This is the first step in your advance to spiritual maturity. Now keep going! Find a well-qualified pastor and study God’s Word daily. Put yourself on a tough training schedule.

Rule #1

Stay Filled with the Holy Spirit

You are not left to face the world alone. You have divine power and it comes through the filling of God the Holy Spirit. Believe the Lord Jesus Christ’s promise in John 14:16-17, *“I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth.”* Your Helper is the Holy Spirit.

“The world does not see Him or know Him but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you” (John 14:17). This is your power to live the spiritual life. “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you” (Acts 1:8).

The indwelling of God the Holy Spirit is a permanent relationship. **The filling of the Holy Spirit is conditional and based on you having no unconfessed sin in your life.** When you sin, your sin nature, rather than the Holy Spirit, controls your life and you’re incapable of having fellowship with God or learning His Word, no matter how hard you try. You must be filled with the Holy Spirit to serve and glorify God.

Regaining the filling of the Holy Spirit is a simple process. Acknowledge (name) your sin to God the Father in silent prayer. **We call this rebound which is God’s problem-solving device #1:** *“If we confess our [known] sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness [known, unknown and forgotten sins]” (1 John 1:9).*

Engrave this verse on your heart because without using it you will be a failure in God’s eyes. As soon as you realize you have sinned, use rebound. **Don’t try to hide your sin from God.** Confess it to God the Father. Notice I said that you confess your sins only to God. Your sins are nobody else’s business just as others’ sins are none of your business.

At the moment you rebound, you are back in fellowship with God and filled with the Holy Spirit. As David said to God, *“I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I did not hide; I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the Lord;’ and You forgave the guilt of my sin” (Psalm 32:5).*

**Stay filled with the Holy Spirit to be
empowered by the ministry of the Holy Spirit**

For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit,
and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are
in opposition to one another, so that you may
not do the things that you please.

(Galatians 5:17)

A war rages inside you. The Holy Spirit and the sin nature are fighting for control of your thoughts and therefore your actions. God the Holy Spirit, your coach and mentor, is telling you to learn and apply the Word of God in your life and glorify God. **To remember this think LAG - Learn, Apply and Glorify.**

But your sin nature is tempting you saying, “Forget learning God’s Word ... boring. Wouldn’t you rather play video games or shop or hang out with your friends?” After a long hard day, your sin nature may suggest, “Why don’t you just take it easy tonight? Missing one day of Bible study won’t matter, especially when you are too tired to concentrate anyway.”

The Apostle Paul, one of the greatest Christians who has ever lived, recognized this battle in his soul, and no, he did not always make the right decisions, especially as a new Christian. *“What I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not doing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate”* (Romans 7:15).

What was wrong? The sin nature was fighting for control of Paul’s life and sometimes it won. But when he sinned, Paul rebounded and moved on. You, too, must rebound every time you sin and then move on in growing spiritually.

Rebound is your most important play and is how you practice Rule #1: Stay Filled with the Holy Spirit.

Rule #2

Keep a Short Account of Sin

Do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts. (Romans 6:12)

What does “letting sin reign in your body” mean? It means the sin nature is winning the war for control of your soul, your thoughts. You are letting the sin nature control your life.

You need the power of the Holy Spirit to resist the temptations of your sin nature and the lures of the world. *“Walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh [your sin nature]”* (Galatians 5:16).

Sin occurs in one of three categories: something we think, something we say or something we do.

Mental attitude sins include anger, arrogance, bitterness, covetousness, envy, fear, guilt, hatred, implacability, inordinate competition, jealousy, judging, malice, pride, resentment, self-absorption, self-pity, self-righteousness, vindictiveness and worry.

Sins of the tongue include bullying, criticizing, cursing, deceiving, gossiping, hurtful speech, judging, lying, maligning, retaliation, slander and having temper tantrums.

Overt sins include abuse, addiction, civil disobedience, crime, destruction of property, drunkenness, murder, pornography, rebellion, stealing, sex outside of marriage, suicide and violence.

This list of sins isn't inclusive. I just wanted to give you an idea of the things God identifies as sins and these are all found in the Bible. Everyone sins, including Christians. *"If we say we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us"* (1 John 1:8). God isn't shocked when you sin nor will He turn His back on you. He gives you the grace provision of rebound so you can get back under control of the Holy Spirit. **When you admit your sin to God, He is faithful and just to forgive you, every time.** *"I, even I, am the one who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake, and I will not remember your sins"* (Isaiah 43:25).

When you choose to live outside of the filling of the Holy Spirit, you are in carnality and produce energy of the flesh. This is called human good. Human good is unacceptable to God and will be destroyed by fire. When you allow God the Holy Spirit to control your life, you produce divine good.

For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ [salvation is your foundation]. Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident ... and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. (1 Corinthians 3:11-13)

Unconfessed sin over a period of time will bring divine discipline. There are three stages:

Warning Discipline: God warns you with something to get your attention.

Do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor faint when you are reproved by Him. (Hebrews 12:5)

Intensive Discipline: God intensifies the warning and will discipline you in a way that hurts to get you to wake up and get back in His will before you destroy yourself.

But if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged. (1 Corinthians 11:31)

Dying Discipline: God removes the perpetually carnal Christian from this life because he is walking in darkness and refuses to respond to God's discipline through rebound. This is called the sin unto death in Scripture. The Christian will go to heaven but his time on earth is cut short.

Grievous punishment is for him who forsakes the way; he who hates reproof will die.
(Proverbs 15:10)

Humility responds - Arrogance reacts

Remember, you are God's child. God disciplines you to get your attention, to correct you and to get you back in line with His plan. God loves you and wants only the best for you. God wants you to respond to His loving discipline and not to react to the circumstances of your suffering or testing. Responding leads to acknowledging your sins to God. Reacting is wrong and leads to bitterness, resentment and rebellion, terrible sins.

Learn from divine discipline
Allow it to lead you back to God's game plan

The acrostic NICE may help you remember the plays for practicing **Rule #2: Keep a Short Account of Sin.**

N - Name It. Name your sin to God the Father in silent prayer. Many people say, “I don’t feel bad about it so how can I confess it and be forgiven?” Confessing doesn’t have anything to do with how you feel about it. Rather it is an acknowledgment.

If we confess our [known] sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness [known, unknown and forgotten sins]. (1 John 1:9)

I - Isolate It. Don’t let one sin expand into others. Don’t be a chain sinner.

See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble. (Hebrews 12:15)

C - Clear Your Conscience. Forget the sin. Don’t have guilt. Don’t promise God you’ll never do it again.

One thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead. (Philippians 3:13)

E - Execute. Get up off the ground and move on in executing your spiritual life. If you aren’t progressing, you are regressing.

I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:14)

Rule #3

Learn God's Word

God speaks to you through His Word, the Bible. Studying the Bible is how you learn God's plays. This is how you learn about God and His will, purpose and plan for your life.

My Words will last forever. (Matthew 24:35)

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight. (Proverbs 3:5-6)

Can you teach yourself the Bible? No. The Bible is a textbook and God designed it to be taught to you by a pastor. Choosing a pastor is an important decision.

“Do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is” (Eph 5:17). The Greek word for *unwise* means to lack spiritual common sense and the word for *understand* means to bring together all the pieces of the puzzle.

Putting the pieces of the spiritual life together accurately is the only way you'll become a spiritual superstar. You acquire the pieces by studying God's Word and you put them together by practicing and applying them. Only a well-qualified pastor can teach you God's Word accurately, the pieces of the puzzle, and then instruct you in the correct application of God's Word, the right way to put those pieces together.

And never forget the role of your coach and mentor, God the Holy Spirit. You can't learn anything unless you are filled with the Holy Spirit.

That God would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be made strong by means of the Holy Spirit. (Ephesians 3:16)

I call God's process for learning the Bible the **4 C's**.
The Word of God is:

Communicated to you by a pastor who presents the Word of God accurately.

Captured in your human spirit by means of the filling of the Holy Spirit.

Comprehended and metabolized through "I believe it" and the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Complied with through application (your thoughts, intentions and actions).

You begin the learning process by hearing the Word of God taught accurately by a pastor. The Holy Spirit picks up the information and sends it to your human spirit. At this stage, you have a basic, academic-only understanding of the information, called *gnosis* in the Greek.

To know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God. (Ephesians 3:19)

Based on your faith perception ("I believe it"), the Holy Spirit then transfers this academic information from your human spirit to your soul and helps you understand it. This is God's Word being metabolized in your soul. Now it is ready to be used.

Let me illustrate. When you eat food, it needs to be digested and metabolized for you to be physically nourished. Likewise, the Word of God needs to be metabolized in the mentality of your soul for your spiritual nourishment.

Once this information is metabolized in your soul it becomes full knowledge called *epignosis* in the Greek.

Full knowledge is God's Word that is understood, believed and ready to be applied as you practice your Christianity. The ministry of the Holy Spirit includes recalling relevant Biblical principles you've stored in your soul so they are "at the ready" when you need to use them. The Bible says we must "*All attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge [comprehend and metabolize] of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ [growing to spiritual maturity]*" (Ephesians 4:13).

The ministry of the Holy Spirit works with your positive volition and faith perception to metabolize the Word of God in your soul. Just as food on the shelf does someone with hunger no good, so information in the mind is useless without understanding it and applying it. God commands you to:

Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord
and Savior Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 3:18)

Practicing is so important! You may find it hard to establish a consistent and daily routine for learning God's Word but you must do it if you want to be His champion. 1 John 5:3 states, "*For this is the love of God, that we keep His mandates; and His mandates are not hard.*"

In Psalm 90:12 Moses asked God to "*Teach us to number our days, that we may present to you a heart of wisdom.*" You, too, must organize your days if you want to gain the wisdom of God. This means staying filled with the Holy Spirit and studying daily under a well-qualified pastor. Winners recognize this will require self-discipline and perseverance.

Imagine the heat beating down on you as you work outside in the summer. Sweat drips from you, soaking your clothes. Gnats are swarming. Then someone walks up and offers you a big drink of cold water. How refreshing that would be! This is what the absolute truth

of God's Word does for your soul. It renews you. It encourages you. It drives you!

Those who wait for the Lord will gain new strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary. (Is 40:31)

Sadly, many Christians don't see the need to study God's Word every day. Think about it this way. If you had gone to school only one and a half hours a week when you were in elementary school you would never have made it to high school. It's the same thing with learning in your spiritual life.

If you go to church for only an hour and a half a week, ten years from now you will still be struggling in the first grade spiritually. How can you grow on only snacks of spiritual nourishment? You can't! Advancing to spiritual maturity demands full-course meals throughout the week.

A problem today is there are too many preacher-performers and not enough pastor-teachers. We have churches and preachers on every corner, including all over social media, but there are very few Biblically sound pastors. Here's a tip - if your song service is longer than the teaching, you're being gyped. Many worship services are full of ritual with very little reality. This results in very few Christians who are training to be Spiritual MVPs.

Someone who is a Spiritual MVP has Momentum, Virtue and Poise. **Momentum** from hearing and keeping God's Word on a daily basis. **Virtue** from discernment, discretion and insight from the wisdom of God's Word. **Poise** from the ability to think and act under pressure.

**Will you make learning
God's Word priority #1 in your life?**

Learning God's Word is a decision you will need to make every day. What will it be? Yes, I'm hungry to understand God and learn how He wants me to live or No, I'm too busy.

The decisions you make determine the life you lead

Rule #4

Think with the Mind of Christ

The Christian life is about making good decisions every day based on Biblical principles. This isn't as hard as it sounds. As you learn God's Word you begin to acquire the mind of Christ. You are able to make good decisions from a position of strength, from His thinking, which we call divine viewpoint thinking.

'For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,' declares the Lord.
'For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.' (Is 55:8-9)

"My thoughts are not your thoughts." God thinks divine viewpoint. Man thinks human viewpoint. Here's an example. Human viewpoint is thinking people or circumstances will make you happy. Divine viewpoint is *"Happy are those who hear the Word of God and keep it"* (Luke 11:28). Human viewpoint is what your friends tell you to do. Divine viewpoint is what the Bible says.

"My ways are not your ways." **Divine good is God's way.** Human good is man's way. Divine good is doing a right thing in a right way while filled with the Holy Spirit. Giving money to the church, supporting missionaries, praying, witnessing, helping those in need are all good. However, if you have unconfessed sin in your life, it's all human good. **Human good is unacceptable to God.**

“For My thoughts are higher than your thoughts, and My ways are higher than your ways.” As long as you continue thinking “your thoughts” you will never be able to execute God’s game plan. As a Christian, you must change your way of thinking.

Many Christians who attend churches that don’t provide in-depth teaching of God’s Word leave with an emotional high, believing they have really worshipped. There is nothing wrong with emotions but Christianity functions on what you think (your mentality) not on how you feel (your emotions).

Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 2:5)

This verse does not say, “Let these emotions be in you.” Emotions will not sustain you. Emotions will not carry you through adversity in life. **What will carry you are the same divine resources the Lord Jesus Christ used during His time on earth - the filling of the Holy Spirit and Scripture, the living Word of God.** Christ left us a pattern for how to think and live and it’s all recorded in the New Testament. *“We have the mind of Christ”* (1 Corinthians 2:16).

Stop thinking of self in terms of arrogance beyond what you should think but think in terms of humility because God has assigned to each one of us a standard of thinking from His Word. (Romans 12:3)

The standard of thinking God has assigned to you is thinking with the mind of Christ. The key to acquiring divine viewpoint is having humility. Jesus Christ had humility and you need it too. **Humility is a learned asset.** It’s a must-have if you want to receive the winner’s wreath of glory.

Humility is teachability

In humility, you recognize God's perfection and your own imperfections. You recognize you are helpless to succeed apart from God and His provisions. With humility you realize His promise of living grace provisions gives you everything you need, including the means to true happiness. Humility is respect for authority and the absence of arrogance.

God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time. (1 Peter 5:5-6)

Arrogance is the pitfall of many Christians

Arrogance is the opposite of humility. You can make the Christian life difficult, and it shouldn't be. If you don't develop the spiritual skills that lead to humility, you'll get into arrogance and your life will become complicated.

Arrogance is a progression of mental attitude sins. Often it is manifested in self-justification. You'll justify why it's okay to do things your way and not God's way. You have a better way, an easier way than changing the way you think through the daily study of God's Word. Your self-justification will lead to self-deception, lying to yourself, followed by self-absorption which is doing whatever you want regardless of the rules or consequences. Arrogant people will eventually destroy themselves through their own bad decisions.

**Human solutions are no solutions
God's solutions are the only solutions**

The Christian way of life requires a unique way of thinking called divine viewpoint.

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.
(Romans 12:2)

God commands you to renew your mind. Renew means to renovate, to change how you think. Why? Because by doing so you will be able to fulfill the plan, purpose and will of God for your life. How do you renovate your thinking? By acquiring the mind of Christ through studying and applying God's Word. You obey God's mandate to renovate (change) your thinking by studying the Bible. Do you now see how Rule #3 - Learn God's Word and Rule #4 - Think with the Mind of Christ are connected?

God's will is that you re-present your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This is your objective! God leaves you here to be Christlike, to be a light to a lost and dying world, just as Jesus Christ was when He walked on this earth. This is why the Apostle Paul said, *"It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me"* (Galatians 2:20).

Rule #5 Live Free

If you continue in My Word ... you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free. (John 8:31-32)

God's game plan is for you to have a life of freedom. Freedom from the details of life. Freedom from stress. Freedom from lust related sins.

What a wonderful way to live!

Freedom from the details of life. The details of life can trap you into thinking that happiness and success depend on them. When I use the phrase details of life I mean things, people or circumstances. My pastor taught me details of life include money, success, pleasure, friends, loved ones, social life, health, materialistic things, human approbation, reputation and status symbols such as a luxury car or home. As you learn and obey God's Word and think with the mind of Christ, you put the details of life in proper perspective.

Happy is the one who finds wisdom and the one who gains understanding. (Proverbs 3:13)

I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. (Philippians 4:11)

Freedom from stress. You know you are under stress and not living the plan of God when you are agitated, worried, anxious or conflicted. Instead of reacting to pressure, learn to respond with a relaxed mental attitude, knowing that His plan for your life is sufficient to overcome any adversity.

As you grow spiritually, you'll discover that adversity, such as the death of a loved one, an accident, sickness or social rejection, can't take away your happiness. You don't react to pressure or fall into stress but rather respond by applying Biblical rationales you recall from your soul. You stay relaxed relying on God's promise of daily grace provisions. Freedom from stress means you can have inner peace both in prosperity and in adversity.

The Lord is for me; I will not fear; what can man do to me? (Psalm 118:6)

**Worry is a symptom of
assuming unassigned responsibilities**

Freedom from lust related sins. A lust is an intense or unrestrained craving or desire. Many lusts are mentioned in the Bible:

Material lust - a lust for material things such as clothes, cars, money or the newest technology.

Sexual lust - a lust for sexual pleasure with someone to whom you are not married.

Criminal lust - a lust to steal, vandalize, commit crimes.

Chemical lust - a lust for drugs or alcohol.

Approbation lust - a lust for praise or status.

Power lust - a lust to control others.

Ego lust - a lust to be number one.

Don't think that because you have no sexual lust, you have no lust in your life. This is as wrong as thinking a "little white lie" is not a sin. The power for the Christian to resist lust temptations comes from the filling of the Holy Spirit and obedience to God and His Word.

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. (Philippians 4:13)

Rule #6

Stand on the Promises of God

Standing on the promises of God is how you develop trust in God and live a life free of stress. As you practice using God's promises you'll see He has a super game plan for your life. The Bible contains over 7,000 promises from God. However, if you don't know any promises, you can't stand on them.

I encourage you to memorize several so you have them "at the ready" when an unforeseen circumstance hits and to compile a list of your favorite Go To promises as a useful resource.

You may be thinking, “I’ve heard claim a promise but how do I actually do it?” First, be sure you are filled with the Holy Spirit. Next, recall a promise. Then claim the promise by expressing your thoughts to God the Father in prayer, reciting His promise to you. This is where God’s provision of the ministry of the Holy Spirit, your coach, comes into play. The Holy Spirit will help you recall relevant Biblical principles you have learned and now you have sound options to consider. The final step is to mix your faith in God’s promise with a relevant Biblical principle. Apply this discernment in your thoughts, intentions and actions and you will persevere through the circumstance you are dealing with.

Here are just a few of God’s promises to you:

“My grace is sufficient for you” (2 Corinthians 12:9).

“Be strong and courageous. Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go” (Joshua 1:9).

“My God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19).

“For nothing will be impossible with God” (Luke 1:37).

“I am the Lord your God who holds your right hand, who says to you, Do not fear, I will help you” (Isaiah 41:13).

“In peace I will both lie down and sleep, for You alone, O Lord, make me to dwell in safety” (Psalm 4:8).

“Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Be faithful until death and I will give you the crown of life” (Revelation 2:10).

Use God’s Promises

Rule #7

Pray

At the moment of salvation every Christian gets a direct line to God the Father. Prayer is your way to communicate with God 24/7. **Note, prayer is not a problem-solving device.** It is a divine resource you are mandated to use. Prayer strengthens your faith and your spiritual muscle.

Rejoicing in hope, enduring in affliction,
persevering in prayer. (Romans 12:12)

Prayer is for Christians only. An unbeliever is not a child of God and therefore can't use prayer. The only prayer that God will hear from an unbeliever is a prayer for salvation. Romans 10:13 says, *"For whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved."*

God designed the correct way to come to Him in prayer. We call this His prayer protocol. Protocol is doing a right thing in a right way. This is God's prayer protocol:

- **Be filled with the Holy Spirit** by naming any known sins to God the Father (use Rebound)

- **Address your prayer to God the Father**

- **In the power of the Holy Spirit**

- **Close in the name of Jesus Christ**

When you pray, go into your inner room.
Close your door and pray to your Father.
(Matthew 6:6)

- What to pray:

Gratitude and Thanksgiving. Give adoration and thanksgiving to God for His daily grace provisions.

In everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. (1 Thess 5:18)

Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving. (Col 4:2)

Intercessions. Pray for others. Pray for your nation and its leadership. Pray for those who seek to do you harm.

I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. (1 Timothy 2:1-2)

With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints. (Ephesians 6:18)

Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. (Matthew 5:44)

Petitions and Supplications. Pray for yourself. Request sanctification of food.

For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude; for it is sanctified by means of the Word of God and prayer. (1 Timothy 4:4-5)

**Prayer is incredibly powerful
God tells you to use it boldly and often**

Let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.
(Hebrews 4:16)

Reasons Why Your Prayer Is Not Answered

- Unconfessed sin in your life.

If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear. (Psalm 66:18)

- Failure to follow God's prayer protocol sequence.
Pray to God the Father, in the power of the Holy Spirit, and close in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you. (John 15:16)

- Absence of faith.

All things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive. (Matthew 21:22)

- Wrong motivation.

You ask and do not receive, because you ask with the wrong motives. (James 4:3)

- Rejection of God's counsel.

Listen to counsel and accept discipline, that you may be wise the rest of your days.
(Proverbs 19:20)

- Arrogance in petition.

They cry out, but He does not answer because of the pride of evil men. Surely God will not listen to an empty cry nor will the Almighty regard it. (Job 35:12-13)

- Lack of domestic tranquility.

You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way ... and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life so that your prayers will not be hindered. (1 Peter 3:7)

- Spiritual growth is not a priority.

Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and forever. (2 Peter 3:18)

- Not in God's will.

This is the confidence which we have before Him that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. (1 John 5:14)

- You are not a believer in Jesus Christ. The only prayer an unbeliever can pray is a prayer for salvation.

Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. (Acts 16:31)

A simple prayer changes your life and your destiny:

**“Father, I believe,
I accept Jesus Christ as my Savior.”**

God the Holy Spirit makes intercessions on your behalf

The Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us.
(Romans 8:26)

In John 14:13, Jesus Christ's role in prayer is emphasized, "*Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.*" This doesn't mean we can ask for whatever we want and like a magic genie God will grant our wish. That is ridiculous. Remember, wrong motivation is a reason prayer is not answered.

God answers in His timing, not yours

Public prayers are to be short and to the point. "*When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by men*" (Matthew 6:5).

Prayer is one of your greatest assets in practicing your Christianity. Use it.

**Then you will call upon Me
and come and pray to Me
and I will listen to you.
(Jeremiah 29:12)**

EXECUTING AS A CHAMPION

Now that you have the rules for practicing your Christianity, starting with the need to stay filled with the Holy Spirit, it's time to execute as a champion using the divine resources God has given you. Remember, your spiritual life is the execution of what is in your mind.

Use God's Problem-Solving Devices

Every problem in life has a solution stated in the Word of God. Learn God's Word through the ministry of the Holy Spirit and you will have the solutions you need.

In whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. (Colossians 2:3)

You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart. (Jer 29:13)

Problems come in all areas and are not limited to only the bad things that happen to you. Prosperity can be as much of a problem as adversity. **Adversity is inevitable but stress is optional.** Often stress is what you do to yourself. God gives you problem-solving devices to handle life's challenges. I learned these ten devices from my pastor, R. B. Thieme, Jr., years ago and he gave me permission to teach them to you. If you learn them and use them, you will master God's game plan! It's all about using divine solutions, not human solutions.

God's solutions are the only solutions

God's 10 Problem-Solving Devices

- #1 Rebound
- #2 Filling of the Holy Spirit
- #3 Faith-Rest Drill
- #4 Grace Orientation
- #5 Doctrinal Orientation
- #6 Personal Sense of Destiny
- #7 Personal Love for God
- #8 Impersonal Love for All Mankind
- #9 Sharing the Happiness of God
- #10 Occupation with Christ

Rebound

Problem-Solving Device #1

Solves the problem of personal sin.

This is the most important problem-solving device. You can't live the spiritual life in carnality under control of your sin nature. Rebound is a term describing the confession of a known sin. Simply put, when you get out of fellowship with God by committing a personal sin, you bounce back by confessing (naming) it to God the Father in silent prayer. We discussed Rebound in detail in a previous chapter. Go back and review as necessary.

If we confess our [known] sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness [known, unknown and forgotten sins]. (1 John 1:9)

I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I did not hide: I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord'; and You forgave the guilt of my sin. (Psalm 32:5)

Filling of the Holy Spirit

Problem-Solving Device #2

Solves the problem of sin nature control and is essential to living the Christian life.

You are either filled with the Holy Spirit or under control of your sin nature. The Filling of the Holy Spirit is an absolute. Yes, you will sin because you have a sin nature. What is critical is to use Rebound as soon as you recognize you've sinned so you can get back in fellowship and be empowered with the ministry of the Holy Spirit. We discussed this problem-solving device in detail in a previous chapter should you want to review.

Do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts. (Romans 6:12)

Be filled with the Spirit. (Ephesians 5:18)

This is a command from God. The Holy Spirit lives in you as your guide and mentor. This is your power to learn God's Word and apply it so you can glorify God to the maximum. That's why we're here - to glorify God.

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in Spirit and truth. (John 4:24)

**** You must be filled with the Holy Spirit to use the following problem-solving devices ****

Faith-Rest Drill

Problem-Solving Device #3

Gets focus back on God. Solves the problem of anxiety and how to handle unforeseen circumstances.

Your faith muscles are developed by learning and metabolizing God's Word and applying it in adversity.

Faith comes from hearing and hearing by the Word of God. (Romans 10:17)

The faith-rest drill is you standing on the promises of God and trusting God to handle your problem. This allows you to think rather than emote. You focus on God and His solution rather than your problem.

He has granted to us His magnificent promises so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature. (2 Peter 1:4)

Faith is spiritual stamina

Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil ... Taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. (Ephesians 6:10-16)

This describes tools available to live the Christian life. For example, each Roman soldier had a shield he carried into battle that protected him from enemy arrows and spears. The soldiers would link shields to increase their protection. The Apostle Paul tells us we also have a shield. Ours is not made of wood or steel; it is made of God's Word. When you use the Word of God, you can

defend yourself against your three enemies: the world, the flesh and the devil. **Lifting your shield is mixing your faith with God's promises. Faith is confidence in things unseen.** Similar to the Roman soldiers, Christian teammates are stronger when they link shields and stand shoulder-to-shoulder.

God will supply all your needs according to
His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. (Phil 4:19)

God promises to always meet your needs. Are you willing to trust in Him or do you think you have a better plan? If you trusted God to save you, don't you think you can trust Him to provide for you, to take care of you?

In God I have put my trust, I shall not be
afraid. What can man do to me? (Ps 56:11)

The faith-rest drill has three steps. **First, claim one of God's promises.** There are over 7,000 in the Bible. This stabilizes you and allows your mind to take over from your fear-panic emotion. But in order to claim a promise, you need to know some.

Second, examine the Word of God to find relevant Biblical principles and rationales to apply to your circumstance. Let's consider the essence of God. He is perfect and therefore His plan for you is perfect. Has He made a mistake or forgotten you? No, He can't. God is love. Has He quit loving you? No. He is truth. Has He lied to you? Never. He is all powerful. God can solve any problem you have. By using Biblical principles and rationales, you can find answers from the Word of God.

**Behold, I am the Lord
Is anything too difficult for Me?
(Jeremiah 32:27)**

Third, come to a conclusion. *“If God is for us, who is against us?”* (Romans 8:31). No matter your adversity, stay relaxed. God knew about it in eternity past and gives you everything you need to handle it. He will not allow you to be tested more than you can endure.

No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it. (1 Cor 10:13)

If you fail to use your shield of faith you will fall victim to your sin nature and live a lifestyle of fear and anxiety, never experiencing the peace of God. Everything you need has been provided by God. Now it's up to you. Learn God's Word and pick up your shield of faith. Don't become a Christian casualty on the battlefield of life.

Grace Orientation

Problem-Solving Device #4

Solves the problem of legalism, human good works and man trying to appease God.

Grace is God's policy. Grace is God doing all the work, based on Who and what He is. Grace is undeserved. It is based on the subject not the object. It is compassion. Grace orientation is learning to exploit and enjoy the benefits of grace. God provided saving grace, living grace, dying grace and even surpassing grace in heaven.

Saving grace is what you experienced when you believed in Jesus Christ. You were saved from the penalty of sin and guaranteed eternal life with God in heaven.

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

Living grace is what God supplies for you each day. This is also called logistical grace meaning the divine provisions, support, planning, resources and blessings God gives you to fulfill the protocol plan of God. Logistical grace support comes from the justice of God to His righteousness that is in you through Jesus Christ.

My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness. (2 Corinthians 12:9)

Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think. (Ephesians 3:20)

Dying grace is promised to those Christians who are advancing in the plan of God and have confident expectations of their fantastic eternal future. It is a special grace provision involving both blessing and happiness while dying. This is a wonderful grace asset for you to anticipate. You know where you are going. This is what faith does - faith gives you the ability to see the unseen. The relationship of blessing in time with blessing in eternity is found in dying grace because dying grace brings all your eternal rewards into focus.

Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on! (Revelation 14:13)

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. (Psalm 23:4)

Surpassing grace includes your rewards earned in time and experienced in heaven.

Things which the eye has not seen and the ear has not heard ... all that God has prepared for those who love Him. (1 Corinthians 2:9)

You have a mandate from God to grow in grace

Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and forever. (2 Peter 3:18)

See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God. (Hebrews 12:15)

The enemy of grace is legalism. A legalist is someone who thinks God is impressed with his good deeds. Often legalists are self-righteous, judge others and stick their noses where they don't belong. Legalists are eager to tell you how to be a good Christian. Don't get trapped in this lifestyle.

God expects you to live by grace and treat others with grace. Grace Orientation is a wonderful mindset.

Think grace and demonstrate grace

Doctrinal Orientation

Problem-Solving Device #5

Provides the solution to any problem.

Doctrinal Orientation, Bible doctrine, is having God's Word in your soul and thinking with divine viewpoint.

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. (Psalm 119:105)

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind ... Think in terms of humility because God has assigned to each one of us a standard of thinking from His Word. (Romans 12:2-3)

**Every problem in life
has a solution stated in the Bible**

As you use Doctrinal Orientation, you'll find yourself asking, "What does the Bible say about this?" You will see how God's Word relates to every area of your life. Bible doctrine guides and encourages you with the truth.

I have directed you in the way of wisdom; I have led you in upright paths. When you walk, your steps will not be impeded; and if you run, you will not stumble. Take hold of instruction; do not let go. Guard her, for she is your life. (Proverbs 4:11-13)

Your words were found and I ate them, and Your words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart. (Jeremiah 15:16)

Personal Sense of Destiny

Problem-Solving Device #6

Solves the problem of wrong priorities, self-absorption and "why am I here?" Gives life meaning, purpose and direction.

This is an extension of the first five problem-solving devices. You advance to the point where you keep your focus on the Lord Jesus Christ rather than on yourself. You leave your personal agenda behind and you walk through the door into God's agenda. This is where you

begin to understand God's plan for your life. Your life takes on meaning and purpose. You know why you're here. Now you're on God's agenda, not your own.

Many plans are in a man's heart, but the counsel of the Lord will stand. (Prov 19:21)

A Personal Sense of Destiny motivates you to get your priorities right. You move through spiritual self-esteem to spiritual independence and then to spiritual maturity. You can stand on your own applying the Word of God you have stored in your soul. You don't have to rely on others for counseling, motivation or propping you up.

Personal Love for God

Problem-Solving Device #7

Is the motivation to be obedient to God and practice your Christianity.

The Bible commands us to love God.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. (Matthew 22:37)

Though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory. (1 Pet 1:8)

When the Bible tells us to love God, it implies we must know Him. **If you don't know His Word, you can't know and understand Him and you can't love Him.** That's why Bible study is so important. The more you learn about God, the more you love Him, and the more you love Him, the more you want to learn about Him.

This Personal Love for God is a mental attitude based on the Filling of the Holy Spirit and the content of God's Word in your soul. It is understanding and respecting Who and what God is. *"Hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us"* (Romans 5:5).

This is the love of God, that we keep His mandates; and His mandates are not hard.
(1 John 5:3)

The way you know you love God is if you obey Him. God doesn't ask you to do something that you can't do. So love is a test. The test is, will you obey God?

If you love Me, you will obey Me. (John 14:15)

You are motivated to obey and to serve God because you know He loves you, unconditionally. You reciprocate His love for you when you love Him. Reciprocal love motivation is one of the by-products of Personal Love for God. *"We love, because He first loved us"* (1 John 4:19).

Whoever keeps His Word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked. (1 John 2:5-6)

**Personal Love for God
motivates your practice**

Impersonal Love for All Mankind

Problem-Solving Devices #8

Solves people problems.

If someone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also. (1 John 4:20-21)

This problem-solving device is vital for dealing with people. Yes, people are imperfect and make mistakes. All of us have a sin nature. Love is not designed to work only when you are on good terms with someone. Think about the most obnoxious person you know. I call them WOJs - weird obnoxious jerks. God says you must love WOJs. This is hard! It requires you use impersonal love, not personal love. This mandate from God makes Christians unique because we are to love our enemies. That does not mean we would not fight to defend our country, homes and families. **It teaches we must follow Christ's example and love all people using impersonal love.**

The problem comes when you try to love people using personal love. People will let you down, count on it. Getting angry or reacting with some other mental attitude or verbal sin is the wrong thing to do. **The right thing to do is to switch from personal to impersonal love.** Impersonal love is not based on the other person or his actions. Rather it is based on you and your integrity that comes from your personal love for God. Impersonal Love for All Mankind is a functional virtue. Use impersonal love when dealing with people, basing it on your personal love for God, and it will resolve all sorts of problems in your life.

And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment. (Philippians 1:9)

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you. (Ephesians 4:32)

Sharing the Happiness of God

Problem-Solving Device #9

Is perfect happiness, tranquility of soul, contentment and capacity for life.

This gives you the means to never be unhappy. Happiness comes from your relationship with Jesus Christ, not people or circumstances. *“Be filled up to all the fullness of God”* (Ephesians 3:19). The key to Sharing the Happiness of God is keeping your focus on Christ and consistently learning and applying God’s Word in your life.

These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full. (John 15:11)

Happy is the one who finds wisdom and the one who gains understanding. (Proverbs 3:13)

There are three concepts of happiness:

(-H) This is the happiness a person tries to find through some system of the world such as material things. Perhaps you think winning the lottery will bring happiness. Many people have won the lottery and found they are still unhappy. This happiness isn’t lasting.

(H) This is neutral happiness and is all the unbeliever is able to attain. It may be found in marriage, family or business.

(+H) This is God's happiness. It is a happiness and contentment only available to Christians. Jesus Christ even had +H on the cross because He knew He was fulfilling the Father's plan.

Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:2)

You may go through undeserved suffering but you can have the same +H Christ had if you stay in fellowship and use faith-rest. If you get bitter and full of self-pity, you will move to sins of arrogance and become preoccupied with your problems. Your +H will be gone.

Having the happiness of God is your choice

God's happiness is characterized by tranquility, contentment, capacity for life and self-motivation. **Tranquility** of soul is inner peace, complete trust in God's perfect plan. **Contentment** is being satisfied with what you have and who you are. You realize happiness is not related to people or circumstances, and you keep the details of life in perspective. **Capacity for life** comes from contentment. If you are content, you have the capacity for God to bless you. **Self-motivation** means your happiness comes from within. You do not sit around waiting on someone or something to make you happy.

I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. (Phil 4:11-13)

Happy are those who hear the Word of God and keep it. (Luke 11:28)

Occupation with Christ

Problem-Solving Device #10

Solves the problem of unrealistic expectations. Is the objective for all Christians.

Very few people are loved the way they want to be loved or treated the way they want to be treated. This comes from unrealistic expectations. Without Bible doctrine and the application of God's problem-solving devices, it is inevitable these unrealistic expectations will cause frustration and great instability.

Occupation with Christ is you putting your emphasis on God rather than people or circumstances. You go to Jesus Christ for your encouragement and confidence. Divine viewpoint has replaced human viewpoint.

It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. (Galatians 2:20)

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight. (Proverbs 3:5-6)

When you are occupied with Christ, He is your role model and the subject of your concentration. Always be ready to answer anyone who asks you the reason for the hope and confidence within you.

Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence. (1 Peter 3:15)

**Getting to Occupation with Christ
is gradual as you progress to spiritual maturity**

The peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:7)

To the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. (Jude 1:25)

Learn and use God's 10 problem-solving devices and you will have a main line of resistance in your soul to keep the outside sources of adversity from becoming stress in your soul.

Adversity is inevitable - Stress is optional

God wants you to be spiritually mature. This is your objective as a champion. All of your hard work in practice will be worth it when God puts you in the game. By advancing to spiritual maturity, God will use you, and often in unseen ways.

Growing old is inevitable - Growing up is optional

Grow to Spiritual Maturity

Spiritual maturity is based on the content of the Word of God you have learned and stored in your soul. Growth is a choice. You must decide to execute the training schedule for a spiritual superstar. Growth is a process of learning God's Word and thinking and applying it by means of the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

There's no such thing as a quick way to grow to spiritual maturity. It requires a daily routine of growth under the filling of the Holy Spirit learning God's Word from a qualified pastor teaching it to you. **The more you practice, the sooner you will reach spiritual maturity.**

God will bless your faithfulness in practicing your Christianity. As a spiritually mature believer, you will be an invisible hero to those in your sphere of influence. In addition to giving you blessings in time and in eternity, God also blesses others by their association with you. Because of your faithfulness to God and His Word, God may bless your family, friends, professional colleagues, those you work or go to school with, your teammates, and even your nation. The mature Christian who is the source of all these blessings is unknown except by God and His angels. Imagine: a truck driver who is a mature Christian can cause the corporation for which he works to be successful. Spiritual blessings overflow from the spiritually mature Christian to everyone around him.

Spiritual maturity takes time and occurs in stages

Spiritual maturity starts with **spiritual self-esteem** where you develop self-confidence as a Christian. Your spiritual life takes on meaning and you develop spiritual common sense.

Then it progresses into **spiritual autonomy** where you have independence from relying on others. Your spiritual life is not designed for you to be dependent on the

counsel of others. God's game plan is that you get your counsel, your direction, your encouragement from Him. You are able to handle every problem and circumstance you face, adversity and even prosperity, without leaning on someone else. You are confident. **Spiritual autonomy is contentment with what God gives you and the capacity to enjoy it.**

Such confidence we have through Christ toward God. (2 Corinthians 3:4)

Contentment is the key to capacity for life. You can actually be content and patient as God's plan unfolds for you. Spiritual autonomy means you have perpetual mental stability and this is critical to advancing spiritually. This mental stability allows you to think under pressure and use God's 10 problem-solving devices. Your thoughts are stabilized. You can't be hurt by people. **Occupation with Christ gives you control of your life.** *"Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men"* (Colossians 3:23).

Spiritual autonomy leads to **spiritual maturity**. This is where God wants you to be. In spiritual maturity you begin to take on the identity of Jesus Christ and glorify Him. Through your thoughts and actions, you re-present Jesus Christ to those in your sphere of influence.

Spiritual maturity is your objective in time!

CLAIMING THE PRIZE

God wants you to be a champion. He wants you to qualify to claim the prize. What is the prize? The eternal wreath of glory presented to God's champions.

You've made God's team. You've been given the game plan and the playbook. You know the rules. You have the living Word of God to equip yourself and you have supernatural coaches.

Will you practice so God can use you in the game?

In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul used many military and athletic illustrations called metaphors. Paul was very familiar with the Roman army as well as Greek athletic events such as the Isthmian Games and the Olympic Games. Paul wrote 1 Corinthians to Christians in Corinth where the Isthmian Games were held. They were very familiar with athletic competitions just like we are in America today.

Athletes throughout Greece would compete in foot races, wrestling, boxing, throwing the discus and the javelin, long jump, chariot races, poetry reading and singing. You didn't know about poetry reading, did you? Today we have the competitions of the Super Bowl, the NBA Finals, the World Series and the Stanley Cup. We have PGA tournaments, NASCAR races, fishing championships such as the Bassmasters Classic and even arm wrestling championships. We love competition. We honor our winners with accolades and great status such as MVP, the most valuable player.

I want you to recognize there are winners and losers in the arena of contention we are in called the Angelic Conflict. This conflict will exist during your entire life.

You are in the center of the arena of contention. God wants you to be a winner. This is why practicing your Christianity is so important.

Paul warned the Corinthians about the intense dedication that was needed to be committed to being a winner in this conflict. Paul used athletic metaphors to describe the devotion and training needed. His challenge was this in 1 Corinthians 9:24, ***“Run in such a way that you may win.”***

The Christian life is compared to running - not sitting, not standing - running. Paul described the winner believer, the champion, as one who mastered the event. In the next verse he says, *“Everyone who competes for the prize exercises self-control in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable wreath, but we for an imperishable wreath”* (1 Corinthians 9:25).

Champions of the games received the ultimate recognition of the winner's wreath. **God's champions will receive an imperishable wreath of glory to wear forever in eternity.** The Apostle Paul used this analogy when he described the winner's wreath in eternity, *“When the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory”* (1 Peter 5:4).

I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached [Jesus Christ] to others, I myself will not be disqualified [fail to finish the race]. (1 Corinthians 9:26-27)

Here Paul is using himself as an example when he proclaims, **“I run with a purpose”** and **“I fight a real opponent.”** Many Christians start out running on emotional highs after getting saved but get overcome by adversity or distracted and discouraged in the daily grind of life. You will face challenges in life but don't let them

distract you from the game. **God has given you everything you need to be a champion. It's up to you.**

In 1 Corinthians 10:5, Paul talks of the Jews in Moses' time who were defeated because of distractions. *"With most of them God was not well pleased."* Because of their failure to trust God and enter the Promised Land, the entire generation died wandering in the wilderness for forty years (Numbers chapter 14).

Christians who fail to learn and execute God's game plan wind up wandering in the wilderness of life being led astray by the tour guide, Satan, and the lures of his world. Deceived and discouraged, wandering Christians chase the happiness they can never catch.

It's called the My Way Highway. They waste their opportunities and their lives through self-deception leading to self-destruction. They won't receive the wreath of glory. *"Always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth"* (2 Timothy 3:7).

My prayer is you use your volition to practice diligently and become one of God's champions

If you want to receive the winner's wreath you must learn the plays found in the playbook, the Bible, by means of the ministry of the Holy Spirit, your supernatural coach. You must absolutely understand the protocol plan of God, God's game plan, and execute it as a winner.

If anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules. (2 Timothy 2:5)

Here it is. **You will not be a champion unless you learn and play by God's rules.** I've laid out the rules in a previous chapter. God's protocol plan requires a right thing must be done in a right way. *"Discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness"* (1 Timothy 4:7).

Godliness is your duty and responsibility to God. It means acquiring the mind of Christ and re-presenting Jesus Christ to others. Through exercise, your muscles will get stronger. Spiritual exercise requires training your volition to obey God's mandates. Godliness is you understanding God's game plan, practicing by God's rules and growing stronger spiritually every day. Spiritual muscle is what counts!

In 2 Timothy 4:7, the Apostle Paul gives you the strategy for victory where he says, *"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."*

I Fought

I Finished

I Kept the Faith

These are the stats of a champion. If you want a crown of glory in heaven, this imperishable wreath that fades not away, if you want to be recognized as a winner in eternity, this is what you must do:

Fight. You are in a war and it's a war for your thinking. This is why you need to renovate your thinking by acquiring the mind of Christ. *"Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil"* (Ephesians 6:11). Every day the enemy seeks to distract and discourage you from reaching spiritual maturity. Remember you have three enemies: the world, the flesh (your sin nature) and the devil.

Finish. Paul's time was about up and he knew he would soon be executed. Our call to the Home Office is always God's perfect timing. He won't take you home too soon and He will never take you too late.

**As long as you are alive
RUN until you cross the finish line**

Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us. (Hebrews 12:1)

I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.
(Philippians 3:14)

Keep the Faith. This is the recognition and acceptance of the truth of God's Word, and not deviating from it. This is putting your trust in God. Faith is spiritual stamina developed through consistent, daily practice.

Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. (Hebrews 11:1)

Without faith it is impossible to please God, because he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him. (Hebrews 11: 6)

Execute your Christianity as a Champion

Practice ... practice ... practice ... so you are prepared for God to call you into the game.

**I heard the voice of the Lord saying,
“Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?”
Then I said, “Here am I. Send me!”
(Isaiah 6:8)**

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GOD'S PROBLEM SOLVING DEVICES

REBOUND

FILLING OF THE
HOLY SPIRIT

FAITH-REST DRILL

GRACE
ORIENTATION

DOCTRINAL
ORIENTATION

PERSONAL SENSE
OF DESTINY

PERSONAL LOVE
FOR GOD

IMPERSONAL
LOVE FOR ALL
MANKIND

SHARING THE
HAPPINESS
OF GOD

OCCUPATION
WITH CHRIST

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RICK HUGHES, founder and President of Rick Hughes Evangelistic Ministries, Inc., communicates clear and concise Biblical principles for people to apply in their lives. For over 50 years, Rick has presented the truth to thousands of students and spoken at hundreds of schools and churches. He has authored books and training publications and hosts *The FLOT Line*, a weekly radio broadcast that is also available as an archived podcast library. All of these resources are available free of charge on his website, rickhughesministries.org.

A native of Birmingham, Alabama, Rick was raised in a modest, single-parent home. He distinguished himself through excellence in athletics, being named to the High School All-American football team and setting state records in the shot put and discus. The University of Florida offered Rick a full football scholarship, but his SAT scores were too low. Challenged by a coach to overcome this failure, Rick applied himself in the classroom as he had done on the field. He seized the challenge, earned a second chance, and entered the University of Alabama as a football player under the training of the prestigious coach Paul “Bear” Bryant. The team won a national championship that year. After just one successful year, however, Rick quit school and drifted down *the my way highway*. Rick emphasizes that *bad decisions limit future options*, and that *God gave you two ends: one to sit on and one to think with. Success in life depends on which end you use. Heads you win—tails you lose*. Many of Rick’s personal experiences vividly illustrate these principles.

Rick’s turning point came when he accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as his Savior, by faith alone in Christ alone. This is the most important decision in your life, also. Rick’s decision opened a new path, not of football, but one personally designed for him by God. Through the ministry of Berachah Church in Houston, Texas, and its pastors, R. B. Thieme, Jr. and now R. B. Thieme III, Rick learned principles and promises of God’s Word that directed him into a life of Christian ministry. Rick’s life is proof that when you leave your own agenda behind and walk into God’s plan, you can have fulfillment and happiness beyond your imagination. “For with God, nothing will be impossible” (Luke 1:37).

PRACTICING YOUR CHRISTIANITY

Christianity is a relationship with God. Practicing Your Christianity gives you the mechanics to understand and to live the unique Christian way of life. You can be a spiritual MVP! Make learning and applying the Word of God a priority, a daily habit, and you will discover God’s will, purpose and plan for you. God uses prepared Christians. “How blessed [now and throughout eternity] is the one who finds wisdom and gains understanding” (Proverbs 3:13).



Rick Hughes
EVANGELISTIC MINISTRIES