

Your CHRISTIAN SPIRITUAL LIFE

GROW TO MATURITY
& GLORIFY GOD

*"Walk in a manner worthy of the Lord
to please Him in all respects ...
increasing in the knowledge of God."
Colossians 1:10*

RICK HUGHES



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FOREWORD

A year ago I became curious about how Christians understand the spiritual life. When I asked fellow believers about their spiritual lives, the answers were disturbing. Many thought I meant their church involvement. They related church attendance and activities to a successful spiritual life.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Your spiritual life is lived in the mentality of your soul. It is not overt nor is it material. It is a continuous way of living from the moment of salvation until physical death, and God has designed a system for living it.

My team of associates and I have assembled this book to clear up falsehoods and to help you better grasp your unique spiritual life. I pray this book will encourage you to grow to spiritual maturity and bring maximum glory to God through your representation of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Rick

For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain
(Philippians 1:21)

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YOUR UNIQUE SPIRITUAL LIFE

This book is a challenge for you to assess your spiritual life. If you were to ask people “how is your spiritual life?” or “define the Christian spiritual life” you would hear a variety of answers. You might even get blank looks. Many Christians are confused. They don’t know what God expects of them and haven’t been taught what the Bible says about living the spiritual life.

Far too many believers remain spiritual infants and never grow to spiritual maturity, thus failing to fulfill God’s plan for their life, which has eternal repercussions.

The Goal is Spiritual Maturity

Your spiritual life starts at the moment you believe in Jesus Christ as your Savior. At that point, God creates in you a human spirit, making you spiritually alive. This is your second birth. *“Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God”* (1 John 5:1).

Why is this important? Because at physical birth you were born spiritually dead. *“Even when we were dead in sin, He made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)”* (Ephesians 2:5).

If you want to live forever in heaven rather than be condemned to torment in the Lake of Fire forever, you must be born again. Accepting Jesus Christ as your Savior is the start of your new life in Christ. It is a permanent relationship. *“If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come”* (2 Corinthians 5:17).

The Start is Salvation

The second you put your faith in Jesus Christ, God the Holy Spirit permanently indwells you, and He seals you as proof of your union with Christ and your membership in God's royal family forever (Ephesians 1:13-14). The Holy Spirit gives you the ability to have fellowship with God and live your spiritual life.

However, the first time you sin after you are saved, your fellowship with God is interrupted and your sin nature takes control. **As a Christian, at any given moment you are either filled with the Holy Spirit or ruled by your sin nature.** There is no overlapping or blending of the two. In Ephesians 5:18 God commands us to *"be filled with the Spirit."* This tells us that being controlled by the Holy Spirit rather than our sin nature is a decision we must continually make.

The Power is God the Holy Spirit

When you sin, how do you regain the filling of the Holy Spirit? **The solution is the most basic and important procedure in the Christian life.** My pastor referred to this as the Rebound technique. Rebound is not a Biblical word but it describes God's provision to bounce back into fellowship with God and restore the filling of the Holy Spirit after you sin. *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"* (1 John 1:9). You need to know God's solution to personal sin, what we call Rebound, and use it often!

Rebounding is simple. It is confessing (naming) in private prayer your known sins directly to God the Father. He promises He will forgive the sins you name and He will also *"cleanse [purify] you from all unrighteousness"* which includes your unknown sins and forgotten sins.

As soon as you realize you have sinned, confess it to God so you recover the filling of the Holy Spirit and resume your spiritual life.

Only Christians Have Spiritual Lives

As a Christian, you have a body, a soul and an alive human spirit. This distinguishes you from an unbeliever who doesn't have a human spirit, and therefore can't have a spiritual life nor comprehend spiritual matters. *"But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned"* (1 Corinthians 2:14).

Your soul and your human spirit are immaterial and immortal. At death they are separated from your body and go to heaven. Your spiritual life is also immaterial and immortal. It never ends.

Immaterial, Invisible and Impactful

The mentality of your soul is the command post of your spiritual life. You are what you think. *"For as he thinks within himself, so he is"* (Proverbs 23:7). The Christian spiritual life is an amazing divine design for power, growth and protection. It also has far-reaching impact on your nation, family and community through your representation of Jesus Christ in thought and actions.

Godliness [your spiritual life] is profitable for all things since it holds promise for the present life and the life to come. (1 Tim 4:8)

You are Responsible Your Decisions are Key

God gives you volition - freedom to choose. How you use your free will during your remaining time on earth will determine whether you reach spiritual maturity.

Living your spiritual life is your responsibility to God, not to anyone else.

Falsehoods

You may hear that “spirituality means different things to different people.” False ideologies are prevalent today.

God has designed a system to live the spiritual life and it is based solely on using His grace resources.

Some things that Do NOT make you spiritual:

Being a Good Person

Just as salvation is based on grace - *“For by grace you are saved through faith”* (Ephesians 2:8) - so is your spiritual life. It is not a matter of good works or morality. It is not feeding the hungry, giving money to charity or marching for a cause.

Sounding or Acting “Holy”

Spirituality is not using a “holy” vocabulary, such as “God willing,” “Amen brother” or “Hallelujah.” Nor is it behavior like tithing, piety or how you dress.

Mystical, Ethereal or Magical

Being empathetic, tuning-in to your inner self, seeking life’s meaning or being one with the universe - these are not the Christian spiritual life. Nor are spending time in nature, yoga or meditation.

Lifestyle of Self-Denial or Taboos

You are not spiritual by giving up all worldly possessions and everything that is fun, or by obeying legalistic mandates such as don’t drink, don’t smoke, don’t swear, don’t dance, don’t wear make-up.

A few of these may be worthwhile but they are not the Christian spiritual life. God provides the means and the direction for living your spiritual life according to His grace plan and all for His glory.

Depends on God's Grace

Grace is God's policy. Grace is all God does for us and is neither earned nor deserved. Everything about the spiritual life is based on God and His grace resources.

My grace is sufficient for you. (2 Cor 12:9)

The Purpose is Glorifying God

The purpose of your spiritual life is to glorify God. *"Do all to the glory of God"* (1 Corinthians 10:31). Glorify means to praise, honor and exalt. One of the ways you do this is to magnify His essence. God is sovereign, righteousness, justice, love, eternal life, omniscience (all knowing), omnipresence (everywhere at one time), omnipotence (all powerful), immutability (doesn't change) and veracity (absolute truth).

As you grow spiritually, you understand God's plan in more detail and your trust in Him increases. You then begin to reflect His attributes to others in your thoughts, words and actions. This is what glorifies God.

Let your light shine before others in such a way that they may see your spiritual strength and glorify your Father who is in heaven.
(Matthew 5:16)

Centered in Your Thoughts - Lived in Your Soul

Your spiritual life is lived in your thoughts, in the mentality of your soul. The battles you face today and for the rest of your life are for control of your mind. Satan and his world will seek to brainwash you with human viewpoint thinking. To win the battles for control of your mind: *"Fix your eyes on Jesus Christ"* (Hebrews 12:2).

The Foundation is Jesus Christ

For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.
(1 Corinthians 3:11)

The Essence of Your Spiritual Life Is Knowing Jesus Christ -- Having the Mind of Christ

I count all things to be loss in view of **the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord** and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ. (Philippians 3:8)

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 2:5)

The model for our spiritual life is the Lord Jesus Christ. We have the same divine resources that He used in His humanity. If you choose to follow God's system and use His provisions, you will replicate the thinking of Christ and grow to spiritual maturity.

Jesus Christ gave us the template to know Him and to live our spiritual life. The "how" is found in the Bible.

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)

There is a System to Living Your Spiritual Life

GOD'S SYSTEM

Your spiritual life requires growth. You must learn and follow God's game plan. You cannot figure it out for yourself or make it up as you go along. You might compare this to college football players who never get in the game because they depend on their own athletic ability rather than on the coach's formula for success. At the University of Alabama, football coach Nick Saban was famous for talking about the system and how the athletes he brought to the team needed to buy into the system. If they didn't, they were not going to play. His process developed the whole man, not just the athlete, and made for a winning team.

Get with God's System

God has a system too. Jesus Christ developed and demonstrated the process for living the spiritual life during His earthly ministry. As a believer in Him, you are told to "put on Christ." You are to become Christ-like, "imitators of God." When you get with His system and mature spiritually, you glorify the Lord Jesus Christ which is your purpose for being here.

The analogy of God's game plan doesn't imply that the spiritual life is trivial or just playing at being a Christian. It is a process. **It is a continuous way of living every day from the moment of salvation until physical death.** It is a system of divine provisions and procedures for growth from spiritual infancy to spiritual maturity, gaining divine wisdom, staying aligned with God's standards and executing His plan for your life. It is how you "put on Christ." All of this begins with your positive volition and faithfulness to learn God's truth in the Bible.

The Filling of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God Power Your Spiritual Life

God is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us. (Ephesians 3:20)

The Lord taught and reassured His disciples (and us) that they were not going to be left powerless when He ascended to heaven. In Acts 1:8, *“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.”* These men and a few others *“turned the world upside down”* (Acts 17:6) with the empowerment of the Holy Spirit and the message of the Gospel. This same power lives in you.

The filling of the Holy Spirit gives you the ability to learn spiritual matters and live the spiritual life. **But when you sin, you come under control of your sin nature and your spiritual life stops.** This is why you must use Rebound as soon as you realize you have sinned.

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

The goal is to maximize your time in fellowship with God. This can be difficult at first. As a baby believer you sin frequently and you commit sins you don't even know are sins. The spiritual life of the immature believer is limited by lack of Bible knowledge.

The Bible

The Bible, God's Word, is the second source of power for your spiritual life. **This is how God speaks to you - through His Word.** This is where you get guidance and encouragement for your spiritual life.

“The Word of God is living and powerful” (Heb 4:12). You derive the power of God’s Word when the written pages of Scripture are learned and implanted in your soul.

Just as your body needs food for physical nourishment, so also your soul needs God’s Word for spiritual nourishment and growth. This is why Bible study is so important. *“Let him who boasts, boast of this, that he understands and knows Me ... for I delight in these things, declares the Lord”* (Jeremiah 9:24).

You must study the Bible to understand what the spiritual life is and how to live it. You need an understanding of the sense and the meaning of Scripture. The Holy Spirit gives you the sense of Scripture and the ability to comprehend it through the teaching of a well prepared communicator who has the spiritual gift of pastor-teacher and instructs you in its meaning and application. This is how you gain an understanding of Scripture. **Be sure you are studying under the ministry of a pastor who knows the Word of God and teaches it accurately.** Otherwise, you are going to be confused or misled. The pastor’s job is to give you full course meals, not just appetizers.

As you study God’s Word, the Holy Spirit enables you to understand Biblical principles and store them in your soul as useful divine wisdom through your positive volition and faith perception (“I believe it”). He also helps you recall and apply it.

You will be able to understand more complex spiritual matters as you mature spiritually. Expanding your inventory of divine viewpoint rationales doesn’t happen overnight. It takes daily commitment.

Your power comes from God the Holy Spirit and God’s Word working in tandem inside of you

These divine provisions give you the ability to grow to spiritual maturity and persevere in the devil’s world.

Love for God is Your Motivation

Advancing in the spiritual life is not difficult if you obey God's instructions as revealed in the Bible. If you love God, you will obey Him. Your personal love for God is the motivation for your spiritual life.

Knowledge, love and obedience are linked and will keep you aligned with His system.

Whoever keeps His Word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. (1 John 2:5)

Learn - Study - Grow - Apply

Along with staying filled with the Holy Spirit, these mandates, if obeyed, will deepen your love for God and accelerate your push to spiritual maturity:

Take My yoke upon you and **Learn** from Me ... for My yoke is easy and My burden is light. (Matthew 11:29-30)

Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed rightly dividing the Word of truth. (2 Timothy 2:15)

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

If you know these things, you are blessed if you do [**Apply**] them. (John 13:17)

**His way is perfect
The Word of the Lord is proven
He is a shield to all who trust Him
(Psalm 18:30)**

God's Problem-Solving Devices

God gives you ten problem-solving devices to learn and use for living your spiritual life. **To reach spiritual maturity they must be implanted in the mentality of your soul and used.** These problem-solving devices were taught to me by my pastor, R. B. Thieme, Jr:

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

We have seen that the first two, **Rebound** and the **Filling of the Holy Spirit**, are requirements. Your spiritual life does not function unless you are filled with the Holy Spirit through the use of Rebound.

Faith-Rest Drill

This solves the problems of fear and anxiety in times of turmoil and stabilizes your thinking.

As you claim the promises of God and apply Biblical rationales to situations you encounter every day, your faith and trust in the Lord increase. You become spiritually stronger each time you exercise your faith in Him. Exercise builds spiritual muscle. *"I will strengthen you, surely I will help you"* (Isaiah 41:10).

Adversity is inevitable
Stress is optional

Grace Orientation

This solves the problems of pride and arrogance and thinking you have the ability to gain God's favor by your own works.

You have a relaxed mental attitude as you realize that everything you are and everything you have depend on God's grace. *"By the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me"* (1 Corinthians 15:10). Grace orientation and humility go hand-in-hand. *"God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble"* (James 4:6).

Doctrinal/Biblical Orientation

This solves the problems of wrong thinking.

You recognize that God's truth is necessary for your life. It is absolute truth. Learning God's Word transforms thinking as the world thinks to thinking with the "mind of Christ," from human viewpoint to 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).

Personal Sense of Destiny

This solves the problems of self-absorption, insecurity and uncertainty.

You know that God has a perfect plan for you in time and in eternity. No matter what happens to you, you relate all of the good and all of the bad to the fact that God has a purpose for your life. Acquiring your personal sense of destiny takes some spiritual maturity. *"We know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God [are advancing spiritually], to those who are called according to His purpose"* (Romans 8:28).

Personal Love for God

This motivates you to obey God and to grow to spiritual maturity.

You love God when you come to know Him through the consistent study of His Word. This is your reciprocation for His love for you as demonstrated by His plan for your salvation and His amazing provisions for living the spiritual life. *“Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget none of His benefits”* (Psalm 103:2).

Impersonal Love for All Mankind

This solves people problems. It is a distinction of Christians.

You have virtue love based on the integrity in your soul, not on the character or qualities of the objects of your love. This gives you the ability to love a person who is unloving, unlovable, or unlovely. It means treating people with tolerance, kindness, compassion and forgiveness. It includes behaving properly toward WOJs (weird obnoxious jerks) and not judging others. *“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another”* (John 13:34-35).

Sharing the Happiness of God

This frees you from slavery to the details and circumstances of life.

When you share the attitude and thinking of Christ you can face every situation in your life with a maximum amount of inner happiness. Problems will not steal the tranquility of your soul. The more of the Word of God you hear, metabolize and apply, the more mature and happy you will be. *“Happiness belongs to the person who finds wisdom and gains understanding”* (Proverbs 3:13).

Occupation with Christ

This eliminates human viewpoint thinking, corrects unrealistic expectations and sets the priorities for life.

You are not preoccupied with yourself, and you don't have to depend on other people for love, happiness or support. With your eyes on the Lord, you have the right focus. You have objectivity, divine viewpoint perspective and stability under pressure.

You show your love for Jesus Christ in re-presenting Him to others. *"I have set the Lord continually before me; because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoices; my flesh also will dwell securely"* (Psalm 16:8-9).

**Used together, God's problem-solving devices
form a FLOT line (forward line of troops)
in your soul to handle every circumstance in life**

Here's the truth about Christian problems and God's problem-solving devices. Every problem in life has a solution stated in the Bible. You find the solutions by learning God's Word.

He [God the Holy Spirit] will guide you into all the truth. (John 16:13)

We have just touched the surface. There is much more to God's problem-solving devices. This is why I encourage you to get under the ministry of a prepared pastor. He can teach you the accurate details you need to optimize them.

God gives you an abundance of divine resources to use, all based on the power of the filling of the Holy Spirit. **Your unique Christian spiritual life can't be lived apart from God and His provisions.** If you try, you will be miserable.

Divine Resources

God gives you everything you need to live and develop your spiritual life. It's up to you to choose to follow His system. These resources include:

Logistical Grace - God's provision of everything you need to live and function, from food, shelter and clothing to a job, transportation and even the air you breathe. *"God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus"* (Philippians 4:19).

Guardian Angel - An elect angel assigned to protect and watch over you. *"Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?"* (Hebrews 1:14).

Ministry of the Holy Spirit - Key aspects of His ministry are the recall of relevant Biblical principles stored in your soul and His intercessions on your behalf. *"The Holy 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).

Complete Canon of Scripture - God's revelation of Himself and His truths to mankind. When God's Word resides in your soul, it is the source of *"sound wisdom and discretion"* (Proverbs 3:21).

Promises - God wants you to live a life free of stress. He gives you daily grace provisions and wonderful promises for your spiritual life. The Bible contains over 7,000 promises. Learn some so you can stand on them and build your faith muscle. *"He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature"* (2 Peter 1:4).

Pastor-Teacher - God's delegated authority to teach His Word. The Bible is a textbook designed by God to be taught by a man with the spiritual gift of pastor-teacher. You can't teach yourself to spiritual maturity.

Local Church - The classroom where believers assemble to learn God's Word as taught by their pastor. The teaching may be in person or by other means such as streaming on the internet or audio recordings or in books.

Royal Priesthood - As a believer priest, you have the responsibility to grow spiritually and to think and apply Biblical precepts for yourself. You also have the privilege of direct access to God the Father in prayer.

Spiritual IQ - The Holy Spirit gives you the ability to understand the teaching of God's Word. Your human IQ is outweighed by your spiritual IQ so you can learn the realm of Biblical truth under the teaching of a prepared pastor. *"We also speak, not with words taught us by human wisdom, but with those taught by the Holy Spirit, combining spiritual things with spiritual words"* (1 Corinthians 2:13).

Spiritual Gift - You received this at salvation. Be patient and focus on growing spiritually and the Holy Spirit will reveal this unique ability at the perfect time and direct you in serving in it.

Divine Protection - You have God's protection in the devil's world. *"God is our refuge and strength; a very present help in trouble"* (Psalm 46:1). *"I am with you always"* (Matthew 28:20).

Unfortunately many believers never tap into God's divine provisions and therefore never gain momentum in their spiritual advance.

DERAILMENTS

How easy is it to get off track in your spiritual life? It is a matter of your volition. Progress in your spiritual life depends on the decisions you make each day.

Keep these **Don'ts** in mind to help you stay on track in your spiritual advance.

Don't Drift from Grace

Grace orientation is fundamental to living your spiritual life. Not only have you been graced with God's gift of salvation, but you've been graced with divine resources such as the Holy Spirit, the Bible and a qualified pastor to teach you.

For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it. (Hebrews 2:1)

When you drift from grace, you lose the anchor of your spiritual life. You allow yourself to be pulled off course by the currents of human viewpoint thinking and human solutions. I suggest you check to see if you are drifting. It starts out by not confessing your sins, justifying that it is okay to do things your way rather than God's way, neglecting daily Bible study ("I'm too busy, too tired, my kids need me") and rationalizing that you can make it up the next day.

Heed this mandate daily to stay on course with God's plan and to maintain your spiritual momentum:

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

Don't Deviate from Sound Bible Teaching

It is the metabolization of God's Word in your soul that gives you divine viewpoint, a Biblical frame of reference thinking with the mind of Christ. Human viewpoint attacks this. You must be very careful about what you buy into. Peter warned about false teaching in 2 Peter 2:1-2, *"There will be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them ... Many will follow their destructive ways, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned."*

Don't Humanize God

Don't Bend to the Demands of the World

Don't Blend God's Word with Your Ideas

Don't Equate Your Desires with God's Will

Don't Be Discouraged by Discipline

"Harsh discipline is for the one who forsakes the way" (Proverbs 15:10). God is going to discipline you when you get off the rails. Expect this as a child of God. Don't get discouraged. You are not defeated. Rebound, take your discipline and move on in your spiritual life. Divine discipline is intended to get your attention so you choose to get back on track. God disciplines you because He loves you and wants the very best for you.

Don't Doubt God's Timing and His Provisions

Doubt is a sin. Trust God and His provisions. He has a purpose for everything He allows in your life and His timing is perfect. Be faithful to study and grow and you will be prepared for whatever comes. *"Being fully assured that what God has promised, He is able also to perform"* (Romans 4:21).

Satanic Attacks

If you are neglecting your spiritual growth by failing to consistently take in God's Word, Satan isn't going to bother with you. He has bigger fish to fry. But when you get serious about your spiritual life, Satanic forces will try to disrupt and corrupt your mentality like a virus corrupts a computer. Remember that Satan *"prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour"* (1 Peter 5:8).

Let's take a look at some of Satan's tactics and the Biblical rationales to counter them.

Recapture Your Thoughts

Satan will seek to neutralize your impact by recapturing your thoughts. Satanic forces use Scripture and distort it to confuse and mislead you. *"Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves"* (Matthew 7:15). The objective of the spiritual life is for every thought, every motive, every action to be in obedience to Jesus Christ. *"We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ"* (2 Corinthians 10:5).

Reclaim Your Affections

Satan will attempt to reclaim your affections by luring you to focus on what the world offers. Thinking that people, experiences or the details of life are the key to happiness is a lie straight from the devil. Satan would have you switch your love and allegiance from God to the world. There is nothing the world has to offer that is lasting. Only the Word of God endures.

Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (1 John 2:15)

Redirect Your Focus

Satan will try to redirect your focus to things which are seen. The Bible tells us to *“Look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal”* (2 Corinthians 4:18).

This is where faith comes in. When you concentrate on God’s Word, the power of your faith overcomes circumstances and human viewpoint thinking.

Redefine Your Values

Satan would like nothing better than to redefine your values so you place undue importance on the things of the world. Don’t depend on your earthly treasures. Your money, your property, your health can disappear overnight. *“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth ... But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven”* (Matthew 6:19-20). Your worth has nothing to do with your physical assets or anything of this world. Your value is your impact for Jesus Christ. Your treasure is the unfailing Word of God in your soul and it goes with you to heaven. What matters is your spiritual life.

Reorder Your Priorities

Satan will entice you to reorder your priorities if you allow him. What should be the number one priority in your life? God and His Word.

“Run in such a way that you may win” (1 Cor 9:24). Paul is warning the Corinthians about the intense dedication needed to become winner believers. Christians who fail to learn and execute God’s game plan wind up wandering in the wilderness of life being led astray by Satan and the lures of this world. Deceived and discouraged, they search for happiness they will never find. They deviate from God’s Way and waste their spiritual lives through self-deception that ends in self-destruction on the My Way Highway.

Self-Induced Derailment

Your two worst enemies are arrogance and emotion.

Arrogance

“God is opposed to the arrogant” (1 Peter 5:5). Arrogance is preoccupation with self, unreasonable conceit, rejection of authority, exaggeration of your own importance. You start thinking you had something to do with who you are and what you have. You forget that God is the Source of everything.

Has it ever occurred to you that when you are fearful or panicky or even anxious, that you have succumbed to arrogance? You have failed to trust God. You have made your troubles more real than God’s power and love to protect and care for you.

**God has not given us a lifestyle of fear
but of power and love and sound judgment.
(2 Timothy 1:7)**

Emotion

Emotion is part of your organic makeup as is the sin nature. When your emotions take over, you are not thinking rationally. Arrogance often causes an emotional overload. **Because your spiritual life is centered in your thinking, it is vulnerable to being hijacked by emotionalism.** When emotions dominate the thinking, you lose touch with reality. You can easily fall prey to the emotional sins of fear, anxiety, guilt, anger and hate.

Your emotions make you impulsive and gullible. Unqualified pastors may draw you in with emotionally appealing happy-clappy “praise and worship” programs. But all too often they teach the milk of God’s Word at best, and that is not sufficient for spiritual growth. Without accurate in-depth teaching you will be confused about what the Bible really says, and you will not grow.

Signs You May Be Out of Fellowship

You are grumpy and out of sorts.

You are having trouble concentrating on God's Word.

You are irritated with others.

You are arguing with your spouse or your friend.

You feel depressed and lonely, even around other people.

You are hypersensitive and over-reacting.

You are anxious for no obvious reason.

You want to retaliate when maligned or unjustly treated.

You worry, anticipating the worst.

You blame your problems on others instead of taking responsibility for your own bad decisions.

You are not being objective.

You are preoccupied with yourself.

If you recognize any of these symptoms you may need to use God's divine provision of Rebound (1 John 1:9).

At the very least, you need an attitude adjustment. Romans 12:3 and Philippians 2:5 are just two of many verses that will help reorient your thinking:

**Stop thinking in terms of self
Think as Jesus Christ does**

With your mind cleared, push on to Spiritual Maturity!

BENEFITS OF SPIRITUAL MATURITY

God wants you to grow spiritually. This is your goal. The Bible describes a number of attributes you will acquire as you advance to spiritual maturity.

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. (Galatians 5:22-23)

In these two verses, Paul gives us a sampling of nine characteristics of the believer who stays filled with the Holy Spirit and has a substantial knowledge of God's Word. Paul called these traits "fruit" meaning production.

The source is the Holy Spirit. He produced fruit in Jesus Christ during His time on earth, and He will enable you to produce these attributes in your life if you choose to grow to spiritual maturity:

Love - Is an attitude. Notice that it is listed as the first fruit. Your two greatest virtues in life are personal love for God (your motivational virtue) and impersonal love for others (your functional virtue). 1 Corinthians 13:13, *"Faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love."* These virtues originate from your reciprocal love for God. *"We love, because He first loved us"* (1 John 4:19).

Joy - Is inner happiness, pleasure and contentment. Because you trust God and His Word, you are never dependent on people or circumstances for your happiness. *"Satisfy us in the morning with Your lovingkindness that we may sing for joy and have inner happiness all our days"* (Psalm 90:14).

Peace - Is experiencing a relaxed mental attitude and tranquility of soul, no matter what is happening around you. God's peace is a lifestyle of contentment in God's plan and His divine resources. *"The peace of God which surpasses all comprehension will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus"* (Philippians 4:7).

Patience - Is steadfastness and longsuffering toward others and with circumstances. You don't impose your standards on others. You don't complain when problems arise or adversity strikes. *"Strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously"* (Colossians 1:11).

Kindness - Is an expression of mercy, grace orientation and concern for fellow members of the Royal Family of God. You are thoughtful of others, have empathy and appreciate their perspective. *"The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged"* (2 Timothy 2:24).

Goodness - Is benefitting others by demonstrating grace motivation in your thought, speech and example. *"Now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light (for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth)"* (Ephesians 5:8-9).

Faithfulness - Is loyalty to obeying God and following His system. *"I have chosen the faithful way; I have placed Your ordinances before me"* (Psalm 119:30). It is being trustworthy *"It is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy"* (1 Cor 4:2). It is appreciating God.

**Blessed [happy] are those
who hear the Word of God and observe it
(Luke 11:28)**

Gentleness (humility) - Is having no illusions about yourself. You understand that you are here only because of the grace of God. Grace-oriented, you gladly submit to God's authority. Because you are humble you willingly obey God and His Word. *"As those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience"* (Colossians 3:12).

Self-Control - Is exercising self-discipline and restraint. You have poise and can think under pressure. You are not impetuous or impatient. You wait for the Lord and stay aligned with His plan and will. *"Make me know Your ways; lead me in your truth and teach me; for You are my salvation; for you I wait all the day"* (Psalm 25:4-5).

Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.
(2 Peter 1:2)

As you advance in your spiritual growth through Bible study, you will learn about many more benefits enjoyed by the spiritually mature believer. Here are a few:

Confidence - You have a personal sense of destiny from trusting God that your salvation is guaranteed and that He has a plan for you in time and for eternity. God holds you securely in His hands. *"I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand"* (John 10:28).

Trusting that God has your best interests in mind and that He will never leave you or forsake you gives you marvelous confidence, not in your own abilities but in God's perfect character and system. *"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).

Spiritual Independence - You are self-motivated to apply God's Word from the content in your soul and are guided by it. You do not have to seek counsel, run to other people for advice or talk to the pastor. *"So that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God"* (1 Corinthians 2:5).

Mental Stability - You think in terms of what the Bible says and apply it to every circumstance in your life. *"You will guide me with Your Word in my soul"* (Psalm 73:24). You measure your decisions by God's standards. You aren't swayed by the lies and lures of the cosmic system. *"Rejoicing to see your good discipline and the stability of your faith in Christ"* (Colossians 2:5).

Courage - You have fortitude to stand up for your Christian faith and enthusiastically re-present Jesus Christ to others. Strength to withstand Satanic assaults and prevail in his world. *"Be strong and let your heart take courage, all you who hope [have confidence] in the Lord"* (Psalm 31:24).

Right Priorities - You are here to please the Lord, not your family or buddies. You live your life as unto the Lord placing your volition in subordination to His will. *"Not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart"* (Ephesians 6:6).

Insight - You have insight and discernment in all situations. I call this spiritual x-ray vision. You are able to accurately appraise what's happening to you and around you because your values are based on Biblical standards. This allows you to focus on the invisible, not the visible. *"But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil"* (Hebrews 5:14).

Divine Wisdom - You live by divine principles. Knowing what is true and right from having maximum Bible doctrine stored in your soul, you exercise good judgment. *“Wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy”* (James 3:17).

Spiritual Maturity Glorifies God

These qualities glorify God because they are produced in you by God the Holy Spirit when you immerse yourself in the Word and think with the mind of Christ. It is not your accomplishment; it is the result of the ministry of the Holy Spirit and God’s Word saturating your soul.

Spirituality and Spiritual Maturity - They are different. Spirituality is the absolute state of being filled with the Holy Spirit. Maturity is a relative status that progresses as you learn and apply God’s Word.

Momentum - Momentum is a volitional decision. Momentum develops as you consistently study God’s Word, building Biblical principle upon principle, and apply what you learn to your circumstances. You must make daily decisions to attend Bible class or listen to a lesson. When you use divine resources in times of hardships or prosperity your momentum is accelerated.

Divine Good Production - Do you remember we started this chapter with Paul’s use of “fruit” to describe traits of a spiritually mature Christian? Let me expand on this. You produce divine good by your thoughts and deeds and fulfill the plan of God when you are filled with the Holy Spirit, using His divine resources, and staying within the boundaries of God’s Word.

It is possible for any of us to get sucked into a system that appears to be good, we think we are doing something

great for God, when in reality we are doing a right thing in a wrong way, thereby going against God's plan. This is really true of Christian activism. Wrong motivation parlays into evil. **We are not called to clean up the devil's world. We are called to lift up Jesus Christ.**

The Holy Spirit, your mentor, uses the Word of God you have stored in your soul to guide your divine good production. *"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work"* (2 Tim 3:16).

Whatever counts for God in your life must be related to the filling of the Holy Spirit and the content of God's Word in your soul. Otherwise, it's human good because it wasn't done within God's system, and it will be burned up at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

For we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good [while filled with the Holy Spirit] or bad [done in carnality]. (2 Corinthians 5:10)

Spiritual Growth Precedes Divine Good Production

The more you grow spiritually, the more you can glorify God by producing divine good. In heaven, God will recognize and reward this good of eternal value that you produced while executing your spiritual life.

Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. (Galatians 6:9)

Are you maximizing your spiritual life?

EVALUATE YOUR SPIRITUAL LIFE

How is your spiritual life? Are you progressing? It is worthwhile to take stock of your spiritual advance from time to time. Your measuring stick is the Word of God.

Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith;
examine yourselves! (2 Corinthians 13:5)

Looking at the fruit of Galatians 5:22-23 is one way to assess your progress to spiritual maturity. Another way is to consider the frequency and types of sin you commit and gauge your strong areas and your weak areas.

As part of your self-evaluation, I encourage you to ask yourself these questions:

Do I have a testimony to unbelievers? Are my words and Christian walk a witness for the Lord Jesus Christ? *“Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ”* (Philippians 1:27). **Do I readily represent God’s saving grace?** *“But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift”* (Ephesians 4:7).

Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person. (Colossians 4:5-6)

**For I am not ashamed of the Gospel
for it is the power of God for salvation
for everyone who believes. (Romans 1:16)**

Am I increasing in knowledge of Biblical truth? Am I faithful in daily Bible study under a qualified pastor, making it my top priority? Starting with basic concepts and advancing to more complex spiritual truth, I can build an inventory of knowledge that I understand, believe and use in my daily life. *“For precept must be upon precept, line upon line, a little here, a little there”* (Isaiah 28:10).

Am I genuinely humble? Jesus Christ set the example. *“He humbled Himself and made Himself of no reputation, taking upon Himself the form of a servant”* (Phil 2:7).

Am I free from arrogance? Do I submit to legitimate authority? Mindful that I belong in God’s plan rather than my own, I know that it’s God’s Way, not my way. By acquiring humility I am objective and teachable. *“Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord”* (James 4:10).

How do I handle adversity? And conversely, **how do I handle prosperity?** Do I maintain the divine viewpoint perspective? **The real test of my spiritual life is how well I make application of the knowledge I have when under extreme adversity.**

Do I keep emotions in check, trusting the Lord and relying on His plan and timing? By using His problem-solving devices I can maintain a relaxed mental attitude in affliction. Paul had this to say, *“So that no one would be disturbed by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we have been destined for this”* (1 Thess 3:3).

I can’t allow affliction to shake my faith and halt momentum. Trust will advance my growth.

Do I wait on the Lord? Am I patient? Have I mastered using God’s promises and provisions to faith-rest circumstances? Staying within God’s will, not being impetuous and getting ahead of it nor lagging behind, is a sign of maturity. Ps 27:14, *“Wait for the Lord; be strong and let your heart take courage; yes, wait for the Lord.”*

Am I grateful? Do I thank God for the bad as well as the good? When affliction hits, is my first response, “Thank you Heavenly Father for giving me this opportunity to trust You and apply Your resources to accelerate my growth. I know that You always have my best interests in mind?” *“In everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus”* (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

Do I keep open lines of communication with God the Father in prayer? Do I use the power of prayer? *“Pray without ceasing”* (1 Thessalonians 5:17). **It starts with keeping short accounts of sin by consistently using God’s problem-solving device Rebound (1 John 1:9).**

The effectiveness of prayer increases with spiritual maturity. *“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask what you desire [with proper motivation], and it will be done for you”* (John 15:7).

Do I use prayer to seek God’s guidance? *“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him”* (James 1:5).

Is my soul at peace? God’s peace grants harmony, security and safety. Jesus Christ told His disciples *“Peace I leave with you”* (John 14:27). I know He has not left me alone in the devil’s world. I am guaranteed daily provisions and care. Eternal peace with God is confidence in my eternal security and knowing that Jesus Christ controls history.

Let the peace of Christ rule in your heart [mind] to which indeed you were called in one body and be thankful. (Colossians 3:15)

Do I trust God? The key to having God’s peace is trusting Him. *“The steadfast of mind You will keep in perfect peace because he trusts in You”* (Isaiah 26:3).

Do I exercise impersonal love and transmit God's grace to all people? Impersonal love is an attitude of God's grace flowing within my soul and relaying it to others. It solves all sorts of people problems. Do I obey this mandate, "*You shall love your neighbor as yourself*" (Matthew 22:39)? Do I treat others, even those I can't stand, with compassion, patience, tolerance and forgiveness? "*Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you*" (Ephesians 4:32).

What motivates me? Does my personal love for God motivate me to reach for spiritual maturity? "*If you love Me you will obey Me*" (John 14:15). This includes maximizing time spent in fellowship with God, controlled by the Holy Spirit, and consistently taking in His Word.

Whoever keeps His Word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. (1 John 2:5)

Now let me ask you a question. **How is your faith?** Is it strong? The questions above are not only meant to measure your spiritual life, but they also manifest your faith. As you mature spiritually, learning and applying God's Word, your trust in the Lord becomes unshakable.

Faith must be greater than circumstances

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

As a Christian, your spiritual walk is not merely a portion or aspect of your life, compartmentalized to church on Sunday or daily Bible reading. *It is* your life, to be lived 24/7, shaping your every thought, word and deed.

The Christian Walk

Walking is used as a metaphor for a behavior pattern, lifestyle or way of life. The New Testament often uses the word “walk” to describe the Christian’s spiritual life. Let’s take a look at how Paul uses walking to characterize the function of the mature believer.

And **walk in love**, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.
(Ephesians 5:2)

I implore you to **walk in a manner worthy of the calling** with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love. (Ephesians 4:1-2)

As Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might **walk in newness of life**. (Romans 6:4)

That you will **walk in a manner worthy of the Lord**, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. (Colossians 1:10)

For you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; **walk as children of Light**. (Ephesians 5:8)

Let us **walk honestly**, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts. (Rom 13:13-14)

For we **walk by faith**, not by sight.
(2 Corinthians 5:7)

Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so **walk in Him**, having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed. (Colossians 2:6-7)

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would **walk in them**. (Ephesians 2:10)

And from John:

If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we **walk in the Light** as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another. (1 John 1:6-7)

This is love, that we **walk according to His commandments**. (2 John 1:6)

I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children **walking in the truth**. (3 John 1:4)

I challenge you to take your spiritual walk seriously. Think about your walk as a Christian in the light of Paul's and John's descriptions. Ask yourself if your spiritual life is manifesting these qualities they emphasized.

Examine me, O Lord, and try me; test my mind and my heart. For Your lovingkindness is before my eyes, and **I have walked in Your truth**. (Psalm 26:2-3)

IMPACT ON YOUR NATION

As I write this, America is a nation in decline. There is widespread lawlessness, unsustainable debt, a struggling economy, corruption in government, a misguided education system and a crumbling cultural foundation. So much of what used to be called good in our country is currently called evil, and much of what was called evil is now seen as good. Our history is being erased and our traditions scorned. Immorality is rampant and human life is devalued. Many church services have become brief sessions of preaching with a lot of singing, a lot of emotion, and little if any sound in-depth teaching.

Who is to blame for the shift in values in America? Is it power-mad politicians, the lying media or the degenerate music and entertainment industry? Some say it is drugs and alcohol. How about unrestrained materialism? Is it the self-promoting social media and a deluded populace?

No. It is the failure of Christians to grow to spiritual maturity and glorify God.

As goes your spiritual life so goes your nation

Hosea warned the Jewish people of impending divine discipline and laid out the reason for it. **Hosea 4:1,6 is also an indictment of America:** *“Listen to the Word of the Lord, O sons of Israel, for the Lord has a case against the inhabitants of the land, because there is no faithfulness or kindness or knowledge of God in the land. **My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.** Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being My priest. Since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.”*

Today many replace the reality of Scripture with the ritual of church attendance and the enticement of emotional worship. Scriptures are not investigated, not hungered for, not taught, not explained. As a result, many believers never grow to understand the God they know and never reach spiritual maturity.

**At our Nation's founding, Patrick Henry warned:
"It is when a people forget God
that tyrants forge their chains."**

Do not think that electing the right person to the presidency or to any level of government is the solution to our national ills. Don't imagine that you can make the world a better place by your good works or protests or activism. If you believe that, then you are placing your bet on a losing proposition.

Thus says the Lord, 'Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart turns away from the Lord. For he will be like a shrub in the desert and will not see when prosperity comes, but will live in the parched places in the wilderness, in a land of salt without inhabitant.' (Jeremiah 17:5-7)

What Can We Do?

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

Note that it starts with humility. Then pray and seek His Word and His will. This was addressed to the people of Solomon's day. By application today, "*My people*" are Christians, believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ultimately believers in our nation have a choice. There are only two options. Hosea 4:6 or 2 Chronicles 7:14. The knowledge that Hosea speaks of is not academic understanding of the Bible. It is not about being able to quote Scripture or knowing the books of the Bible and the subject matter of each one.

This is Biblical knowledge that you have accurately learned, accepted by faith and put to work in your daily life. This knowledge builds and expands as you continue to learn. It brings you to a love for God, which, in turn, motivates you to obey His mandates and to serve Him. It is also knowledge that reaps magnificent rewards both in time and in eternity.

Blessed [happy] is the man who trusts in the Lord and whose confidence is the Lord. For he will be like a tree planted by the water that extends its roots by a stream and will not fear when the heat comes; but its leaves will be green, and it will not be anxious in a year of drought, nor cease to yield fruit. (Jer 17:7-8)

The problems in America are spiritual problems. We are in an unseen, spiritual battle which Satan desperately wants to win. And he is intensifying his attacks in every area of our national life. He is also stepping up his hatred and persecution of Jews and Christians. *“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places”* (Ephesians 6:12).

**God honors nations
whose citizens have mature spiritual lives**

**Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord
(Psalm 33:12)**

Blessings Overflow

The blessings that God pours out onto the spiritually mature Christian overflow to others. Family and loved ones, and organizations to which he or she belongs are blessed through association. Such blessings are extended nationally as well. Any believer who reaches spiritual maturity becomes an Invisible Hero having an impact personally and historically, and contributes to national prosperity and preservation.

Focus on Knowing Jesus Christ

‘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.’
(Isaiah 55:8-9)

Do not allow your spiritual growth to be deterred by what is going on in this country. Even if America fails, you can have absolute confidence that a nucleus of strong believers with souls full of God’s truth will be safeguarded by our omnipotent and loving Father.

God uses well-prepared Christians, not immature, unconcerned, distracted believers. If you want to help deliver this nation from the divine discipline that is surely coming, you must prioritize your spiritual life.

My times are in Your hand (Psalm 31:15)

God is looking for Christians with strong spiritual lives to stand in the gap. I pray you will be a part of a core of mature believers whose spiritual lives have tremendous impact. It may be an invisible impact but God knows.

**Let your light shine before men in such a way
that they may see your spiritual strength
and glorify your Father who is in heaven
(Matthew 5:16)**

I hope that through this study you have gained a greater appreciation of your spiritual life and the impact it can have personally, nationally and forever in eternity.

If you follow God's instructions and grow to spiritual maturity, you will glorify God and receive abundant blessings.

The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul;
the testimony of the Lord is sure,
making wise the simple.

The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart;
the commandment of the Lord is pure,
enlightening the eyes.

The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever;
the judgments of the Lord are true;
they are righteous altogether.

They are more desirable than gold,
yes, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey
and the drippings of the honeycomb.

Moreover, by them Your servant is warned;
in keeping them there is great reward.
(Psalm 19:7-11)

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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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Philippi Freedom Ministry presents the Gospel message of Faith Alone in Christ Alone and teaches Basic Bible Doctrines to those who are incarcerated. The purpose of this ministry is to make doctrinal Bible teaching available without charge or obligation.



RICK HUGHES, founder and President of Rick Hughes Evangelistic Ministries, Inc., communicates clear and concise Biblical principles for hearers to choose to use 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 authored several books and hosts a weekly radio broadcast and podcast, *The FLOT Line*, all available, for free, 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 set state records in the shot put and discus. The University of Florida signed Rick to 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, got a second chance, entered the University of Alabama as a football player under the training of prestigious coach Paul “Bear” Bryant, and 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 *bad decisions limit future options*, and *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 help to vividly teach 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).

YOUR CHRISTIAN SPIRITUAL LIFE

This book is a guide to living the Christian spiritual life. Its purpose is to clarify misconceptions and encourage you to grow to spiritual maturity. You will be challenged to align your thoughts and actions with Biblical truth, recognize derailments, deepen your understanding of God, and therefore, your love for Him, and evaluate your spiritual growth. God has designed a divine system for the spiritual life, one that operates through the power of the Holy Spirit and knowledge of His Word. When you live by this system, you not only glorify God, you also receive blessings that touch every area of life: personally, within your family, across your nation, and eternally. Your spiritual life matters more than anything else. Make it your highest priority.