

A CRASH COURSE *in* CHRISTIANITY



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

RICK HUGHES



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EVANGELISTIC MINISTRIES

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WHAT IS CHRISTIANITY

Christianity is a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. It is not a religion. To live the Christian way of life you need to use the supernatural resources God has given you. Specifically this requires the filling of the Holy Spirit and the dynamics of God's Word in your soul. This demands a unique way of thinking called divine viewpoint.

Think with the Mind of Christ

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

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

The Christian life requires execution based on thought not emotions. In this book I will give you basic principles from the Bible to help you acquire divine viewpoint thinking and understand God's unique plan.

God has a system for doing this and it is called the protocol plan of God. Protocol means doing a right thing in a right way. God has given you the playbook for living your spiritual life. The playbook is His Word, the Bible. Learn and execute the protocol plan of God and you will have the most incredible life imaginable.

God gives you unique problem-solving devices. They are all found in the Bible and we will discuss them throughout this book. If you learn them and use them, they will act as an invisible barrier to stop the outside

sources of adversity from ever becoming stress in your soul. Adversity is what circumstances do to you. Stress is what you do to yourself.

Adversity is inevitable, stress is optional

These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world. (John 16:33)

Yes, you can live a life stress-free, worry-free, free of fear and free of anger. This is the life God designed you to live, and it's wonderful. Our Lord demonstrated it while He was here on earth. **You have the same assets available to you that Jesus Christ used to persevere through adversity and be sustained on the cross.** You have the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, the living Word of God, and the indwelling of Jesus Christ in your life. Consider the advantage you have.

As in any field of study, there is a vocabulary that goes with understanding God's Word. I encourage you to take notes as you read and have your Bible nearby so you can look up referenced Scripture. Then review your notes so the information sinks in thoroughly. Concentration is key to learning. If you can't concentrate, you won't comprehend. To be the man or woman God intends you to be, make studying the Word of God a daily habit.

This book addresses basic principles of Christianity and is organized by the three phases of a Christian's life:

Phase 1 - Salvation

Phase 2 - Time

Phase 3 - Eternity

PHASE 1 SALVATION

The Christian life starts with salvation. The most important decision you will ever make in life is to accept or reject the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior.

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

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

Salvation is receiving Jesus Christ as your Savior by believing in His finished work on the cross. Belief is an act of faith. Silently, you can pray something such as this, "Father, I believe Your Son Jesus Christ died on the cross for me. I accept Him as my Savior. Thank you. In Christ's name I pray, Amen."

Salvation

Salvation is God's grace gift to all. Note it is a gift. You don't deserve it and you can't do anything to earn it.

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)

Works won't get you into heaven, neither will being good, going to church or following some taboos such as don't drink, don't smoke, don't do this or that. **There is nothing you can do to get yourself into heaven.** Many don't understand this. So let me repeat it. Nothing you can

do is good enough. You must have God's righteousness to have eternal security. God gives you His righteousness at salvation and this allows His justice to accept you. Now you have a permanent relationship with God. How is this possible?

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

The only perfect person who ever existed or will ever exist was sacrificed for you. God the Father laid on God the Son the sins of the world. The sins of the entire human race were judged on the cross. You must understand why it is so important that Jesus Christ went to the cross. **Jesus Christ took your place. He died as a substitute for you.** When you believe in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross, God's righteousness replaces your unrighteousness.

For the wages of sin is [spiritual] death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)

No one in the world is qualified to go to heaven. The entire human race is sinful. *Through one man [Adam] sin entered into the world (Romans 5:12).* Adam chose to sin in the Garden of Eden. At that moment he died spiritually. Because of Adam's spiritual death, we are all born physically alive but spiritually dead, with a sin nature passed down directly from Adam through our biological father. All of us are unrighteous because we are born spiritually dead with a sin nature. The only way to get to heaven is to have God's righteousness. ***“Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God’” (John 3:3).***

To each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. (Eph 4:7)

**Salvation is God's grace gift to you
Nothing you do can earn it**

I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me [the Lord Jesus Christ]. (John 14:6)

For whoever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world: our faith. (1 John 5:4)

Eternal life is God's promise of salvation to those who have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior. It requires faith alone in Christ alone. Salvation is an absolute.

Be confident in your eternal security. Many people don't know for sure if they are saved. They hope they are saved. They are striving and working to be good enough to be saved.

**If you are in Christ you are saved
Have no doubt**

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

Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. (1 John 5:1)

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

You are a member of God's Royal Family forever

He who believes in Me has everlasting life and does not come into judgment but has passed out of death into life. (John 5:24)

Eternal Security

Once saved, always saved. You will not lose your salvation.

I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. (John 10:28-29)

In eternity past God loved you so much He provided you a Savior. That love was expressed in time when Christ came to earth and went to the cross. As you make the decision to believe in Christ, God's love extends to you, now and into eternity. Nothing can separate you from Him.

I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39)

Once you accept Jesus Christ as your Savior, God's righteousness is given to you. You have eternal security. It is permanent. Just as you were born into your human family and can't be unborn from your family, at the moment of salvation you were born into God's Royal Family. You can't be unborn. Once in the family of God

you can't be removed. God's righteousness is in you and He cannot deny Himself.

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

Maybe you went down the My Way Highway and your life has taken a terrible direction. Maybe you've failed and done some miserable things. Maybe you've asked, "Can God cancel my eternal life if I really mess up?" The answer is No! God is immutable. He cannot and will not cancel any commitment He makes to you.

If you didn't do anything to earn salvation, how can you do something to lose it? You can't. Even if you deny your salvation, you are going to heaven. God will not deny you. Even if you commit the horrible sin of taking your own life it won't cancel your salvation. You may turn your back on God but God will continue to love you. **God will never abandon you.** He won't throw you under the bus. God's love is perfect and unconditional.

I will never desert you nor will I ever forsake you. (Hebrews 13:5)

Once Saved - Always Saved

Eternal security is having absolute confidence you are going to heaven in spite of your flaws and your failures. You have a permanent relationship with God.

These things I have written to you who believe in the person of the Son of God, so that you may be confident you have eternal life. (1 John 5:13)

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

Salvation starts your permanent relationship with God. To help you begin to understand God, here is an overview of God's essence.

God's Essence

God exists as three distinct persons who are coequal and coeternal, and possess the same nature. Each member of the Godhead, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, is a separate person. They have identical attributes. God the Father is the author of God's plan. God the Son (Jesus Christ) is the agent through whom the plan is executed. God the Holy Spirit reveals the plan to us.

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. (Hebrews 13:8)

God's attributes are qualities of His essence. These attributes never change and they work in complete coordination. God's attributes include:

Sovereignty. God is sovereign. He is absolute authority. He is the Supreme Ruler of the universe and King of the heavens and the earth.

*Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, indeed everything that is in the heavens and the earth; Yours is the dominion, O Lord, and You exalt Yourself as head over all.
(1 Chronicles 29:11)*

Righteousness. God is absolute righteousness. He is perfect and sinless.

My righteousness will be forever and My salvation to all generations. (Isaiah 51:8)

Justice. God is justice. He judges with perfect fairness. His justice executes what His righteousness demands.

Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; unfailing love and truth go before You. (Psalm 89:14)

Love. God is perfect love. His love is eternal and unchangeable based on His righteousness and His justice.

We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God and God abides in him. (1 John 4:16)

Eternal Life. God is timeless. The great **I Am**, without beginning or end.

'I am the Alpha and the Omega,' says the Lord God, 'who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.' (Revelation 1:8)

In the beginning was the Word [God the Son], and the Word was with God [the Father], and the Word was God. (John 1:1)

Omniscience. God is all-knowing. He has always known all past, present and future events.

His understanding is infinite. (Psalm 147:5)

Omnipotence. God is all-powerful. He is unlimited in His ability and can do all. He is The Almighty.

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

Omnipresence. God is present everywhere while not limited to any specific place in the universe.

'Am I a God who is near,' declares the Lord, 'and not a God far off?' 'Can a man hide himself in hiding places so I do not see him?' declares the Lord. 'Do I not fill the heavens and the earth?' declares the Lord. (Jeremiah 23:23-24)

Immutability. God is unchangeable. He is absolute stability. No attribute can operate independently of His other attributes.

For I, the Lord, do not change. (Malachi 3:6)

Veracity. God is absolute truth. He can't lie.

He who sent Me is true. (John 7:28)

God is one in essence with many attributes

His lovingkindness is everlasting, and His faithfulness to all generations. (Psalm 100:5)

God is Light and in Him there is no darkness at all. (1 John 1:5)

Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world. (1 John 4:4)

The counsel of the Lord stands forever, the plans of His heart from generation to generation. (Psalm 33:11)

Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass. (1 Thessalonians 5:24)

PHASE 2

THE CHRISTIAN IN TIME

This is your opportunity to fulfill God's purpose, will and plan. Your objective is to grow to spiritual maturity by staying filled with the Holy Spirit. You are to learn and apply the living Word of God. Do this and you will glorify God to the maximum.

Fight the good fight, take an interest in eternal life to which you were called and make a good witness. (1 Timothy 6:12)

Since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every incumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us. (Hebrews 12:1)

Forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:13-14)

Live life in the light of eternity

Living the Christian life is a process. **Too many Christians do not realize they need to learn how to execute the protocol plan of God for their lives.** Protocol means a right thing must be done in a right way. That's why learning the basics is so important.

Many Christians attend church and leave with an emotional high, believing they have really worshipped.

This is not executing God's plan. Emotions are normal in life. There is nothing wrong with them. But the plan of God functions on what you think (your mentality) not on what you feel (your emotions).

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

This verse does not say, "Let these emotions be in you." Many who attend churches that don't provide sound teaching of the Word of God only know how to function on their emotions. Emotions will not sustain you. Emotions will not carry you through adversities. This is why developing divine viewpoint thinking is vital.

**Winners acquire the mind of Christ
and execute with thought not emotion**

*Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.
(Matthew 11:29-30)*

What Jesus Christ is saying to you is, "Submit to the authority of My Word. I will not require a lot from you." Executing the Christian way of life takes diligence. It requires staying filled with the Holy Spirit and submitting to the authority of the Word of God by learning it, believing it through faith and applying it in your life.

Jesus Christ's mandate is *Learn from Me*

*How blessed is the one who fears the Lord, who greatly delights in His commandments.
(Psalm 112:1)*

STAY FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

Now that you have accepted Christ as your Savior, what does God expect from you?

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

Spiritual maturity is the goal for every Christian

Reaching spiritual maturity requires three things: stay filled with the Holy Spirit, study under a well-qualified pastor and consistently learn and apply God's Word.

The Sin Nature

One of the great falsehoods in Christianity today is the idea that Christians do not sin.

If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves. (1 John 1:8)

Do you know why you sin? It's because you have a sin nature. There will never be a time in your life when you enter into what is often called sinless perfection. As a result of spiritual growth, you will succumb less to the temptations of the sin nature, but you will always be susceptible to sin.

You received the sin nature from Adam. When you were born, you were born physically alive but spiritually dead. At the moment of salvation, God the Holy Spirit comes to live in you. This sets up an ongoing battle for control of your thoughts between the Holy Spirit and the sin nature.

I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. 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 5:16-17)

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

You may be thinking, How do I contain my sin nature and keep the Holy Spirit in control of my life? Great question!

After I became a Christian, it took me over a year before I even knew I had a sin nature and then I needed to be taught a solution. The sin nature will be with you until you transfer from this life. Don't be ignorant of this because Satan and his cosmic system will use the sin nature to distract and discourage you and to lure you into human viewpoint thinking and sin.

Handling Sin - Rebound

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)

There are two points in this Scripture to learn. **First, never try to hide your sin from God. Second, admit your sin to God immediately.** As soon as you recognize you have sinned, name it to God.

When we commit sin in our lives, we often have guilt. It's natural to feel ashamed. However the worst thing to do is to try to hide the sin from God. Maybe you can hide it from those you love but not from God.

Jesus taught Peter a wonderful lesson when He said, "Peter, I know you are going to sin. I know you are going to deny Me three times. I'm going to teach you a marvelous lesson that in spite of your sin I love you and I will forgive you." This is found in John 13.

Like Peter, we have a tendency to shock ourselves. Sometimes we do what we think we are not capable of doing. God can't be shocked. Admit your sin to God the Father. This is God's grace provision for you to handle your sin:

Rebound **God's problem-solving device #1**

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)

When you know you have committed a sin, immediately confess it, name it to God through silent prayer. Something like this, **"Heavenly Father, I name my sin of arrogance. Thank you for your forgiveness. In Christ's name I pray, Amen."**

God promises, *"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).*

Sin begins with a thought and moves to your volition where you make a decision. Do I want to do it, Yes, or should I follow what is in God's Word and say No. Once you choose Yes and you act on it, you commit the sin.

Your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear. (Isaiah 59:2)

There are three categories of sin:

Mental attitude sins - sins we think, such as anger, arrogance, bitterness, covetousness, envy, fear, guilt, hatred, implacability, inordinate competition, jealousy, judging, malice, mental adultery, pride, self-absorption, self-pity, self-righteousness, vindictiveness and worry.

Sins of the tongue - sins we say, such as bullying, criticizing, cursing, deceiving, gossiping, hurtful speech, judging, lying, maligning, retaliation, slander and having temper tantrums.

Overt sins - things we do, such as abuse, addiction, civil disobedience, crime, destruction of property, drunkenness, murder, pornography, stealing, suicide and violence.

This list of sins isn't inclusive. I just want to give you an idea of the things God identifies as sins. These are all found in the Bible. When you confess your sin, God is not dismayed. He knew in eternity past what you would do. God gives you the grace provision of problem-solving device #1 Rebound so you can get the Holy Spirit back in control of your life. If 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)

Keep a short account of sin in your life

God's grace provision, as promised in 1 John 1:9, solves our dilemma of personal sin. The acrostic NICE may help you remember God's process for handling your personal 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. Rather it is an acknowledgment.

*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)*

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, and by it many be defiled..
(Hebrews 12:15)*

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

*One thing I do, forgetting those things which
are behind and reaching forward to those
things which are ahead. (Philippians 3:13)*

E - Execute. Move on in executing your spiritual life. If you are not progressing, you are regressing.

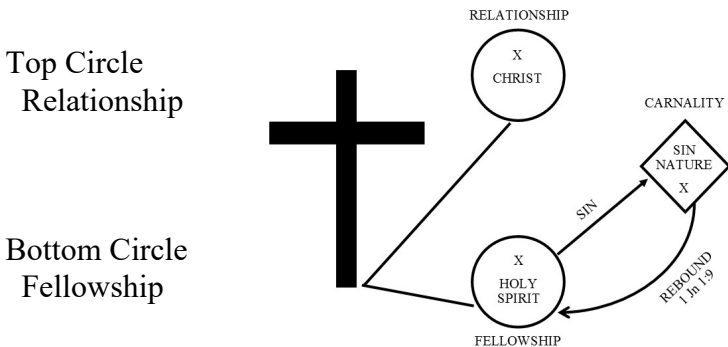
*I press on toward the goal for the prize of the
upward call of God in Christ Jesus.
(Philippians 3:14)*

God's grace provision for us to handle personal sin is NICE. Actually it is fantastic!

The Filling of the Holy Spirit

When you believe in Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit places you into union with Christ and you share the destiny of Christ. You are permanently in the family of God. Part of the Holy Spirit's ministry is to convict you of your personal sin. When you sin, you break fellowship with God and are in carnality. You are no longer filled with the Holy Spirit. You have put the sin nature in control.

To help you understand and remember this, let me use an illustration taught by my pastor, R.B. Thieme, Jr.



As a Christian, the permanent **relationship** you have with God is shown here as the top circle. You can't get out of the top circle. You have eternal security.

Your relationship with God is permanent

The bottom circle represents your **fellowship** with God. You will go in and out of fellowship throughout your life. When you are in fellowship, in the bottom circle, you are filled and controlled by the Holy Spirit. **The Filling of the Holy Spirit is God's problem-solving device #2.**

When you choose to sin, you break fellowship with God and then your thinking is controlled by your sin nature. This is carnality. You are no longer filled with the Holy Spirit and therefore out of the bottom circle.

Using Rebound allows the Holy Spirit to cleanse you of your sin, reinstate the filling of the Holy Spirit and return you to fellowship with God. Now you are back in the bottom circle, with the Holy Spirit in control.

**Fellowship with God is an absolute
At any moment of time you are either controlled by
the Holy Spirit or controlled by the sin nature**

Think of it this way. You're in a room without any windows. You sin, causing the power to go off and now you are in pitch darkness. This is you being out of fellowship with God and under control of your sin nature. When you use Rebound, the power and lights come on. This is you back in fellowship with God and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

*That God would grant you to be made strong
by means of the Holy Spirit. (Ephesians 3:16)*

*The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father
will send in My name, He will teach you all
things and bring to your remembrance all
that I said to you. (John 14:26)*

Here's the point. You cannot learn spiritual matters and you will not grow to spiritual maturity if the Holy Spirit is not teaching you. The Holy Spirit must control your life to teach you, to guide you, to protect you and to recall relevant principles from God's Word for you to apply.

Stay Filled with the Holy Spirit

Divine Discipline

When you sin and do not confess it, you quench and grieve the Holy Spirit. Quenching the Holy Spirit means to shut off His power. It's like taking a garden hose and crimping it so the water doesn't come out. You no longer have the power of the Holy Spirit to sustain your spiritual life and to guide you. You have surrendered control of your life and thoughts to your sin nature. This grieves the Holy Spirit.

Note these two negative mandates in the Bible:

*Do not quench the Holy Spirit.
(1 Thessalonians 5:19)*

*Do not grieve the Holy Spirit by whom you
are sealed for the day of redemption.
(Ephesians 4:30)*

Staying out of fellowship is called prolonged carnality and will result in divine discipline. Maybe you decide you don't need God's fellowship and the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit and you're speeding on down the My Way Highway toward self-destruction.

Watch out!

You can expect divine discipline as a child of God

*For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines
and He scourges every son whom He
receives. It is for discipline that you endure;
God deals with you as with sons; for what son
is there whom his father does not discipline?
(Hebrews 12:6-7)*

Divine discipline comes from the integrity of God and is administered with the same divine love as is His divine blessing. God disciplines you to get your attention, to correct you and get you back in line with His plan. God loves you. He wants only the best for you.

Those whom I love I reprimand and discipline; therefore keep on being motivated [by the love of God]. (Revelation 3:19)

Divine discipline comes in three stages:

Warning discipline. God warns you with something to get your attention, alerting you to the need to get back in fellowship filled with the Holy Spirit. The warning may come from your pastor, your spouse or a Bible study. You will hear information from the Scripture that God uses to send you a very simple message. It usually sounds something like this, "Stop! Stop what you are doing. You're on the wrong path. It will destroy you." You now have a choice to make. Positive volition will respond "Yes" and stop. Negative volition reacts "No" and keeps doing things your way. If you don't listen to warning discipline, stand by for intense discipline.

Do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord nor faint when you are reprov'd. (Hebrews 12:5)

Intense discipline. God intensifies the warning. This is His way of taking you to the wood shed. God will discipline you in a way that hurts to get your attention. He will introduce pain in your life, physical or emotional, for you to wake up before you destroy yourself. For example, if you partake in communion with unconfessed sin in your life you are going to get disciplined. If you keep doing it, the discipline could be severe.

Let a man examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and a number of you are dead. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged.
(1 Corinthians 11:28-31)

Dying discipline. God removes the Christian from this life. This is the final stage of divine discipline. One receives dying discipline as a result of arrogance toward God, ignoring God's discipline and rebelling toward God. Then God says, "OK, that's it; you're gone from life in time." The Christian will go to heaven, but his time on earth is cut short. Dying discipline is also called the sin unto death.

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

You are disciplined by God when you don't use the divine solution of 1 John 1:9, problem-solving device #1 Rebound. Admit and name your sin to God and you will be restored to fellowship and be back in the plan of God.

Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you at the proper time.
(1 Peter 5:6)

Here is encouragement:

**As long as you are alive
it's never too late to recover**

LEARN GOD'S WORD

The Bible, God's Word, is the other unique resource you need to live the Christian way of life. You grow to spiritual maturity by staying filled with the Holy Spirit and learning God's Word under the ministry of a qualified pastor. God speaks to you through His Word. If you want to get close to God, heed Jeremiah 29:13:

***You will seek Me and find Me
when you search for Me with all your heart***

This is positive volition. This is hunger to know God's Word and what He has for you. Do you want to know His direction and His will for you? Then make studying the Bible a daily habit. The Bible is the mind of Christ. God's Word is absolute truth and encouragement. Everything in the Bible is inspired by God for a reason.

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

If the Word of God can be rightly divided, it can also be wrongly divided by inaccurate teaching. You need an understanding of the sense and the meaning of Scripture, what God is telling you. In other words, you need a translation and an application. The Holy Spirit gives you the sense of the Scripture through the teaching of a pastor who gives you the meaning and the application.

*For to us God revealed them through the
Holy Spirit. (1 Corinthians 2:10)*

*They read from the book from the law of God,
translating to give the sense so that they
understood the reading. (Nehemiah 8:8)*

Be sure you're studying under a pastor who knows the Word of God and teaches it accurately. Otherwise, you are going to starve spiritually. The pastor's job is to feed you a full-course meal, not just appetizers. Learning the Word of God is like a treasure hunt and the pastor's role is to identify where and what the treasures are. The plan of God for your life is extensive. Don't think you can understand it quickly.

**Growing to spiritual maturity requires learning
the Word of God on a consistent, daily basis
Make it a habit**

The Conventional Christian

Many Christians are what I call conventional. They want a preacher to marry them, bury them and the rest of the time leave them alone. They want a little inspiration when they go to church but not much more. What I call the nod-to-God crowd shows up in church, might sing in the choir, teach Sunday school, give money, but it's all an attempt to impress God. Then once the service is over, they are on with their lives. "Hi God. Bye God. See you next week God." Then there are the holiday Christians. The only time you see them at church is on Easter and Christmas.

Here is a list of some malfunctions in the spiritual life common among Christians. I want to point them out for awareness as you evaluate your life in the light of what God's Word teaches.

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

Malfunctions in the Spiritual Life

Emphasis on relationships with people and things over relationship with God.

Failure to keep a short account of sin and therefore spending more time in carnality than filled with God the Holy Spirit.

Attempting to execute the protocol plan of God by means of human power and human dynamics rather than through the supernatural divine resources God provides.

Trying to live the spiritual life your way instead of God's way, the protocol plan of God.

Failure to learn and use God's unique problem-solving devices.

Lack of humility needed for teachability and not understanding the pitfalls of arrogance.

Ignorant of basic Biblical principles.

Trying to teach yourself to spiritual maturity, rather than getting under the ministry of a well-qualified pastor.

Failure to recognize and submit to the authority of God's Word, the Bible.

Trying to be happy through people or circumstances rather than "*Happiness belongs to those who hear My Father's Word and keep it*" (Luke 11:28).

Failure to make executing the protocol plan of God the number one priority in your life.

The Divine Institutions

A serious issue in America is the fact that we've left our first love. We have turned away from God and are rejecting His divine establishment rules. God set up four divine institutions for the orderly function of a nation:

The Individual. God gives you volition, the freedom to choose. *What think you of Christ? (Matthew 22:42).*

Marriage. There is a contention about this today but God is very clear that marriage is a monogamy between one man and one woman (1 Corinthians 7:2). Marriage is the basis for stability in society.

Family. God established the family as the cohesive unit of parents rearing and training their children in a protected environment (Exodus 20:12).

Nationalism. God designed national entities to protect the human race from the destructiveness of a one-world state. Nationalism restrains man's sin nature through the rule of law (Genesis 10:5, 11:8).

We are under divine discipline as a nation because we are forsaking God and His divine institutions. We are allowing Satan's system of evil and human good to flourish. What once was good is now evil and what once was evil is now good.

You are the answer, not through politics or by being a crusader, but by growing to spiritual maturity and becoming an invisible hero. The Bible says:

If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, pray, seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear them and deliver them. (2 Chronicles 7:14)

There is no short-cut to learning the Word of God

The Study Procedure

Spiritual growth takes self-discipline and initiative to study God's Word daily in the filling of the Holy Spirit and under the ministry of a well-qualified pastor. God gives you volition, the freedom to choose. You must decide to become a student of the Word of God and stick with it. If you are hungry to understand the God you know, these are the requirements:

Bible. The Bible is your playbook from God. When I got to the University of Alabama as a freshman football player, I was given a playbook and told, "Learn these plays." You need to learn the plays for executing God's plan and the plays are found in the Bible. The Bible is not a novel. It is a textbook designed to be taught to you by a pastor. The Bible is not a collection of stories. It is divinely inspired. The Bible is the infallible Word of God.

Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will last forever. (Matthew 24:35)

Notebook, Computer, Tablet. Have a means to take notes. You can listen to your pastor for hours but will retain less than five percent of what you hear. I encourage you to take notes and refer to them often. This will dramatically improve how much you remember.

Pastor-Teacher. Find a qualified pastor-teacher who is well-prepared and willing to teach you God's Word on a consistent basis in a setting where you can learn in privacy. If your pastor doesn't teach the Word of God, don't try to straighten him out; that's not your job. Quietly leave the church and find a new pastor.

If you're thinking, "I don't know where to find a good pastor," bring your request to God in prayer. God has a pastor for you and He will lead you to him. I had to find my pastor and you will find yours.

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)

One 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 gypped. Many worship services are full of ritual with very little reality. This results in a lot of conventional Christians but few who are advancing spiritually and understanding God's plan for their lives.

I am an evangelist. I am not a pastor. This is an important distinction because I can take you only so far. **You must find a sound pastor-teacher and study under his authority and teaching. If you ever want to reach spiritual maturity, that's the way to do it.** My job is to present the gospel, teach accurate Biblical principles, encourage you and point you in the direction of a well-qualified pastor.

Study. Concentrate when you hear the teaching of God's Word. Review your notes frequently to help metabolize the information in your mind. Think of the process as similar to eating food. When you eat a steak, it does you no good until it is converted into energy. It's the same thing with God's Word. It needs to be metabolized in your soul so it is available for recall and application. I can't emphasize this enough. **You can't learn anything spiritual without being filled with the Holy Spirit.** If you have unconfessed sin in your life, studying is useless.

Application. Put what you learn to work in your life. This last step is called applying the Word of God you've learned, Bible doctrine. Put it into practice.

Spirituality and Maturity

Growing to spiritual maturity, which is your objective as a Christian, takes more than just being filled with the Holy Spirit. Let's look at the distinction between spirituality and maturity. One is an absolute and one is a process.

Spirituality is being filled with the Holy Spirit It is an absolute

At any given moment you are either spiritual or carnal. There's no sitting on the fence. You are either controlled by the Holy Spirit or controlled by your sin nature.

Maturity is not an absolute because it is based on the content of the Word of God you have learned and stored in your soul. Growth, maturing as a Christian, is a process of learning and applying the Word of God by means of the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

The more God's Word you learn and apply the sooner you will reach spiritual maturity

There is a distinct difference between being a spiritual Christian and being a spiritually mature Christian. For example, have you heard of Billy Graham, the great evangelist? This may shock you, Billy Graham wasn't any more spiritual than you. Why? Because we have the same Holy Spirit. He was not more spiritual than you and you are not more spiritual than he was, because you are both filled with the same Holy Spirit.

But what about maturity? Yes, there are differences among Christians because spiritual maturity is related to

the amount of God's Word that has been learned, metabolized and is now available for recall, to be used when needed. The more God's Word you know and have stored in your soul, the more mature you are.

'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)

Sadly, there are a lot of believers who are not very mature because they do not know much Bible doctrine or they fail to apply it. Think about it this way. If you are in the first grade and you only go to school an hour and a half a week, how long do you think it is going to take you to graduate? This is the same scenario many Christians manifest. They go to church and get about an hour and a half a week of Bible teaching and it's often not accurate. So if they are only learning God's Word for an hour and a half a week, how long will it take them to get out of spiritual first grade?

For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the actual words of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. (Hebrews 5:12)

This verse describes Christians who are not mature. They should be eating steak but they still need milk. They may understand how to be filled with the Holy Spirit but they will never reach maturity because they are not serious about learning the Word of God on a consistent, daily basis and following through with application.

**Spiritual maturity is the amount of God's Word
you have learned and stored in your soul
ready for recall and application**

A Christian who is not staying filled with the Holy Spirit and advancing in the spiritual life, ends up on the side of life's highway. He is at the mercy of others because of the inability to apply the Word of God to problems and circumstances. This person needs to call someone for help or guidance, "Preacher, what should I do?" He is not spiritually self-sustaining.

However, the Christian who has some maturity from taking in and applying Bible doctrine can handle his own problems and difficulties without relying on others. He is spiritually self-sustaining. He knows to go to God's Word for solutions and uses the ministry of the Holy Spirit for guidance.

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

If you want to glorify God now and in eternity, you better get serious about studying God's Word.

For the Word of God is alive and powerful. (Hebrews 4:12)

The Fantastic Four

Therefore, be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. (Ephesians 5:15-17)

Be careful how you walk is a mandate from God. The word for "walk" in the original Greek is translated "regulate." God is telling you to be careful how you regulate your life. This means redeem the time you have wisely. God wants you to make good decisions from a position of strength. Your position of strength is what the

Bible says. God wants you to think and act based on what is in His Word.

You do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. (James 4:14)

How can you regulate your life? By acquiring what I call **The Fantastic Four**:

*For when **wisdom** enters your heart and **knowledge** is pleasant to your soul; then **discretion** will guard you and **understanding** will watch over you. (Proverbs 2:10-11)*

Wisdom enters your heart [thinking] from the study and the application of the Word of God. This gives you direction and purpose in life.

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! (Romans 11:33)

Knowledge is pleasant to your soul. You have a hunger for learning God's Word. There is no greater joy and contentment in life than knowing you are in the center of God's will executing the unique plan He designed for you.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction. (Proverbs 1:7)

Discretion will guard you. You are able to discern the truth from the lies of Satan's cosmic system. I call this spiritual x-ray vision. You can identify human viewpoint thinking and discern the lures of the world. There is danger in experimenting with things the world offers.

Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.
(1 Peter 5:8)

Understanding will watch over you. Understanding requires you to have the right information. From who do you get your information? What your friends say, human viewpoint, or what the Word of God tells you, divine viewpoint? Divine viewpoint thinking will give you discretion and understanding.

The Fantastic Four **Wisdom ... Knowledge ... Discretion ... Understanding**

How blessed is the man who finds wisdom and the man who gains understanding. For her profit is better than the profit of silver and her gain better than fine gold. She is more precious than jewels, and nothing you desire compares with her.

Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor. Her ways are pleasant ways and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, and happy are all who hold her fast.

The Lord by wisdom founded the earth, by understanding He established the heavens. By His knowledge the deeps were broken up and the skies drip with dew.

My son, let them not vanish from your sight; keep sound wisdom and discretion.
(Proverbs 3:13-21)

The Four C's

I use the Four C's as a way to describe how you learn the Word of God and the importance of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the process. This is how you develop knowledge and understanding of God.

Communicate - God's Word is designed to be communicated by certain men who have the spiritual gift of pastor-teacher. The pastor-teacher's job is to study and teach the Word of God to you. Your pastor is mandated by God to shepherd your soul.

Capture - In order to capture the Biblical principles taught by your pastor, you must be filled with the Holy Spirit. You can't learn and retain what you are hearing without the empowerment and ministry of the Holy Spirit.

**The Christian way of life is supernatural
You need to use the supernatural power
of the Holy Spirit to live it**

Comprehend - The Holy Spirit enables you to understand and remember what the pastor teaches. The Holy Spirit converts the academic knowledge into full spiritual knowledge and recalls it when you need it.

Comply - God wants you to comply with and apply what you learn. When you believe by faith what you are taught, this full knowledge becomes metabolized in your soul and is now wisdom, phenomenal spiritual wisdom.

**To live a victorious Christian life
optimize the ministry of the Holy Spirit**

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.

For in Him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. (Colossians 2:3)

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 from my pastor, R.B. Thieme, Jr., years ago and he gave me permission to teach them to you. Learn and use them, and you can live a life stress-free, worry-free and free of fear and free of guilt. This is the life God intends for you! It's all about using divine solutions, not human solutions.

- #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

God's solutions are the only solutions

Rebound

Problem-Solving Device #1

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 previously discussed Rebound in detail. If necessary, go back and review it.

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)

Rebound

problem-solving device #1

Solves the problem of personal sin

Filling of the Holy Spirit

Problem-Solving Device #2

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 sin because you have a sin nature. What is critical is to use Rebound as soon as you recognize you've sinned. Then you can get back in fellowship and be empowered with the ministry of the Holy Spirit. We previously discussed in detail this problem-solving device. As necessary, review it.

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 Cor 6:19-20)

Filling of the Holy Spirit problem-solving device #2

Is essential to living the Christian life
Solves the problem of sin nature control

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

Faith-Rest Drill Problem-Solving Device #3

You develop your faith muscles 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 now focus on God and His solution rather than your problem.

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)

Faith is spiritual stamina

Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil ... In addition to all, 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. This shield protected him from enemy arrows and spears. The Apostle Paul tells us we also have a shield. Ours is not made of wood or steel. It is made of the Word of God. When you use God's Word, you can defend yourself against your three enemies: the world, the flesh and the devil. Lifting your shield is mixing the promises of God with your faith. Faith is confidence in things unseen.

My God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 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 and 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 promises, you need to know some. These are a few promises I encourage you to memorize, now.

Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you. (1 Peter 5:7)

Do not be afraid. Stand still and watch the deliverance of the Lord. (Exodus 14:13)

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

When I am afraid, I will put my trust in You. (Psalm 56:3)

Second, examine the Word of God to find relevant Biblical principles and rationales to apply to your circumstances. 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. He is perfect. God is love. Has He quit loving you? No! He is truth. Has He lied to you? Never! He is all powerful. Can God solve this problem you have? Of course He can! You see, by using Biblical principles and rationales, you can form options and answers from the Word of God.

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)

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.

What man means for evil ... God intends for good. (Genesis 50:20)

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

If you fail to use your shield of faith you will fall victim to your sin nature. You will 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. You must learn God's Word and pick up your shield of faith so you don't become a Christian casualty on the battlefield of life.

Faith-Rest Drill problem-solving device #3

Solves the problem of unforeseen difficulties
Get your focus back on God

Grace Orientation Problem-Solving Device #4

Grace is God's policy. Grace is God doing all the work, based on Who and What He is. Grace is undeserved and based on the subject not the object. It's compassion and mercy. Grace orientation is learning to exploit and enjoy the benefits of grace. God provides 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. Sometimes this is called logistical grace meaning the divine provisions, support, planning, resources and blessings God gives you to fulfill the protocol plan of God. God provides for all your needs. Logistical grace support comes from the justice of God and goes 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 exceedingly 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. It gives you the ability to see the unseen. The relationship of blessing in time with blessing in eternity is found in dying grace because this brings your eternal rewards into focus.

When the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. (1 Peter 5:4)

Blessed are those who die in the Lord. (Revelation 14:13)

Even though I walk through the death-shadowed valley, I will not fear harm [pain, suffering]; for You walk 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.

So that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us. (Ephesians 2:7)

**You have a mandate from God
to grow in grace and knowledge of Him**

Therefore, prepare your minds for action, be sober and fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 1:13)

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
to all in your spheres of influence**

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 4:6)

**Grace Orientation
problem-solving device #4**

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

Doctrinal Orientation

Problem-Solving Device #5

Doctrinal orientation is having God's Word in your soul and thinking with divine viewpoint.

Stop being conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Think with sound judgment, as God has assigned to each one of us a standard of thinking from His Word. (Romans 12:2-3)

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

**Every problem in life
has a solution stated in the Word of God**

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; Your Words became for me a joy and the delight of my soul. (Jeremiah 15:16)

Doctrinal Orientation
problem-solving device #5
Provides the solution to any problem

Personal Sense of Destiny

Problem-Solving Device #6

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

There are many plans in a man's heart but it is the Lord's purpose that will prevail.
(Proverbs 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 spiritual maturity. You can stand on your own applying the Word of God you stored in your soul. You don't have to rely on others to prop you up, counsel you or motivate you.

Personal Sense of Destiny **problem-solving device #6**

Solves the problem of wrong priorities,
self-absorption and "why am I here?"

Personal Love for God

Problem-Solving Device #7

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 Peter 1:8)

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

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)

The way you know you love God is if you obey Him. He 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 My mandates.
(John 14:15)*

*May the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the steadfastness of Christ.
(2 Thessalonians 3:5)*

This problem-solving device motivates parents and children to obey the mandates in this passage:

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother ... Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:1-4)

Love is a virtue. Personal love for God is the greatest motivational virtue you can have. This problem-solving device gives you capacity for life.

Personal Love for God problem-solving device #7

Is the motivation to be obedient to God's plan

Impersonal Love for All Mankind Problem-Solving Device #8

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)

Impersonal love is a fundamental virtue and is vital for dealing with people. Yes, people are imperfect, and all 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 WOJ's, weird obnoxious jerks. God says you must love WOJ's. It's not easy. It requires impersonal love, not personal love. This mandate from God makes Christians unique. 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 wrong. **The right thing to do is switch from personal to impersonal love.** Impersonal love is not based on the other person or his actions. It is based on

you and your integrity from the source of your personal love for God. Your personal love for God and use of impersonal love will resolve all sorts of problems in your life.

I pray your love may increase more and more in knowledge and wisdom. (Philippians 1:9)

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

Impersonal Love for All Mankind
problem-solving device #8
Solves people problems

Sharing the Happiness of God
Problem-Solving Device #9

This gives you the means to never be unhappy. Happiness comes from your relationship with Jesus Christ, not people or circumstances. The key to sharing God's happiness is to keep your focus on Jesus Christ and consistently learn and apply God's Word.

Satisfy us in the morning with Your unfailing love that we may sing for joy and have inner happiness all of our days. (Psalm 90:14)

How happy is the man who finds wisdom and the man who gains understanding. (Proverbs 3:13)

Keep on having happiness in the Lord at all times. (Philippians 4:4)

Be filled with the fullness of God. (Eph 3:19)

There are three concepts of happiness:

(-H) Negative H 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 doesn't last.

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

(+H) Plus H 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.

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. (Heb 12:2)

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

Jesus Christ told His disciples, and us, ***“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).***

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)

*When anxious thoughts multiple within me,
Your comforts delight my soul. (Psalm 94:19)*

Sharing the Happiness of God problem-solving device #9

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

Occupation With Christ Problem-Solving Device #10

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. You get your encouragement and confidence from your Lord and Savior, not from people or circumstances. Divine viewpoint has replaced human viewpoint.

It is no longer I but Christ in me. (Gal 2:20)

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 minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:7)

To Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, 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 1:24-25)

Occupation With Christ is one of the greatest treasures you can possess. It's available to you by acquiring the mind of Christ. You demonstrate it in the way you think and live your life, and in re-presenting Him to others.

**Occupation With Christ
problem-solving device #10**

Solves the problem of unrealistic expectations
and sets the focus for life on Jesus Christ

GROW TO SPIRITUAL MATURITY

God wants you to grow to spiritual maturity and bring Him maximum glorification in time and in eternity. This is your objective. Through His grace provisions you have everything you need to achieve this. Now it's up to you! Lift up Jesus Christ to those in your spheres of influence so that like a magnet, Christ can draw all to Him.

Your Pastor-Teacher

Studying under the ministry of a qualified pastor-teacher is an absolute requirement for spiritual maturity. Otherwise you may grow a little but you won't grow to full potential. **You can't teach yourself to be spiritually mature.**

The problem with many Christians today is they have been saved for quite awhile and yet they have wasted their time trying to reach spiritual maturity on their own.

Frequently folks tell me, "I've read the Bible from front to back." I'll ask, "Did it make you a better Christian?" No. Reading the Bible, memorizing Scripture, or starting the day with a devotional is not how you grow up spiritually. There is nothing wrong with this but it is not the process for accelerated growth, mandated in God's protocol plan.

The Bible is not a novel It is a textbook that needs to be taught

This is why God gives you a pastor. His job is to teach you the Bible. Pastors have an incredible responsibility to God to study, prepare and accurately teach the Word of God. When you get under the ministry of a Biblically

sound pastor-teacher, someone who is trained in the languages of the Bible (Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic), and has a background in Biblical history, and is able to exegete and categorize doctrine, this is the man who will lead you to spiritual maturity.

The spiritual gift of pastor-teacher is given to men who can dig out the information you need and then accurately teach it to you. It's absolutely necessary for you to sit still, listen and concentrate when learning the Word of God. Without this self-discipline, you will never grow up spiritually. It may be tough to prioritize Bible study over everything else but you need to do this if you want to glorify God to the maximum.

Prayer Protocol

At the moment of salvation, every Christian becomes a royal priest, able to pray and bring petitions directly to God the Father. God designed the correct way to come to Him in prayer. It is His protocol for how to enter His throne room of grace. If you don't follow God's protocol your prayers will not be heard or answered.

How to pray:

- Be in fellowship and filled with the Holy Spirit by confessing any known sins to God the Father.

- Sequence:

 - Address your prayer to God the Father.

 - In the power of the Holy Spirit.

 - Close in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father. (Ephesians 5:20)

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

What to pray:

Thanksgiving. Give gratitude, 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.

Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do; so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. (John 14:13)

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)

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

***Rejoice in hope, endure in affliction,
persevere in prayer. (Romans 12:12)***

Petitions and Supplications.

- Pray for yourself.
- Request sanctification of food.

If any man lacks wisdom, let him ask of God and it will be given to him. (James 1:5)

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)

Why you should pray:

- Mandate from God.
- Help in time of need.

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

Therefore 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)

The Holy Spirit makes intercession 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)

Reasons Why Your Prayer Is Not Answered:

- Unconfessed sin in your life.

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

- Failure to use the correct sequence for prayer. 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 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)

- 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)

God answers in His timing, not yours

- Arrogance in petition.

There 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 isn't a priority.

You will guide me with Your Word in my soul. (Psalm 73:24)

- You aren't a believer in Jesus Christ. The only prayer an unbeliever can pray is a prayer for salvation.

For whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved. (Romans 10:13)

He who believes in the Son has eternal life; he who does not believe in the Son will not see life but the wrath of God abides on him. (John 3:36)

A simple prayer changes your life and your destiny

"Father, I believe.
I want to receive Jesus Christ as my Savior."

Be patient and persistent in prayer

LAG

Winners acquire the Mind of Christ. **Learn** the Word of God. **Apply** it in your life. **Grow** to spiritual maturity. **Glorify** God as you replicate Jesus Christ's thinking and re-present Him to others in your spheres of influence.

Hear God's Word taught to you by a well-qualified pastor-teacher.

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)

Keep what you hear. God's mandates are not hard. Keeping them requires submitting to God's authority and consistently studying and applying His Word.

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

Grow to spiritual maturity. This is God's plan for you.

Give instruction to a wise man and he will be still wiser; teach a righteous man and he will increase his learning. Occupation with the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge is understanding. For by me your days will be multiplied and years of life will be added to you. (Proverbs 9:9-11)

LAG will make you a winner
Learn - Apply - Glorify

Whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. (1 Corinthians 10:31)

Spiritual Momentum

To grow spiritually, you need to have positive volition for the teaching of the Word of God. When you think, "I'm going after it, I don't care where it is, whatever it takes, I'm going to get God's Word in my life," you're positive! This is the start of spiritual momentum.

All momentum is related to the Word of God and revolves around two decisions on your part. First is hearing the Word of God on a consistent basis under the ministry of a well-qualified pastor. The second is keeping what you hear. Hearing and keeping is how you establish spiritual momentum in your life.

Spiritual momentum is hearing and keeping God's Word

Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win ... They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. Therefore, I run in such a way as not to run aimlessly. (1 Cor 9:24-26)

Spiritual momentum is what keeps you moving forward running the race. Stay focused on your objective which is to grow to spiritual maturity and glorify the Lord Jesus Christ to the maximum.

As you advance in your Christian life, you can expect Satan's cosmic system and the lures of this world will try to distract you, discourage you or defeat you. Don't let them. Be on the alert!

Be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour. (1 Peter 5:8)

The Armor of God

Put on the full armor of God so that you will be able to stand firm against the strategies of the devil.

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.

Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.

Stand firm therefore, having belted your waist with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness.

And having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace.

In addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Holy Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints.

(Ephesians 6:11-18)

Put on

You do this mentally through the use of God's problem-solving devices and the application of Bible doctrine in your soul. You can't put it on if you haven't learned it. You live the Christian life in your soul. This is where you win the battles of life.

So that you will be able to resist

You resist the attacks of Satan's cosmic system and the temptations of the world by using divine wisdom. You use spiritual insight, discernment and understanding.

Having done everything

You are consistent in learning the Word of God. You are thinking with the mind of Christ. You are doing your part to be prepared.

Stand firm

You stand firm. You hold your ground. You don't become a Christian casualty.

Having belted your waist with truth

You have the Word of God in your soul. This is truth. Using an analogy, everything the Roman soldier wore was connected to the belt. Likewise, everything in life is connected to the truth, the Word of God in your soul.

Having put on the breastplate of righteousness

You have God's imputed righteousness (+R) given to you at salvation. You are developing capacity righteousness from growing to spiritual maturity.

Having shod your feet with the gospel of peace

You understand the gospel and your responsibility to witness and re-present Jesus Christ to the world. You have a personal sense of destiny. Your peace with God comes through Jesus Christ.

Taking up the shield of faith

You use the faith-rest drill and it allows you to keep standing in spite of the attacks the enemy will throw at you. You stand on the promises of God. You link shields with other Christians.

Take the helmet of salvation

Your eternal security protects your head, your thoughts. Satan will seek to cause you to doubt your salvation.

Take the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God

You use doctrinal orientation and a divine viewpoint to stand firm and repel the attacks of Satan's cosmic system, as well as the lures of the world.

With all prayer and petition

You are patient and persistent in prayer knowing God answers in His timing, not yours.

Be on the alert

For whoever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world: our faith. (1 John 5:4)

You are in a spiritual war**Put on the Armor of God to be victorious**

Divine Good or Human Good

As you develop spiritual momentum in your life, you produce divine good and glorify God. This brings blessings in time and rewards in eternity.

Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay or straw, each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. If any man's work which he has built on remains, he will receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. (1 Cor 3:12-15)

The foundation in your life is your salvation. You can build on that foundation with gold, silver and precious stones, this is divine good, or you can build using wood, hay and straw, this is human good. There is a difference.

Human Good is all your production done out of fellowship, when you are in carnality because of unconfessed sin. These actions fall into the category of wood, hay and straw. Being busy in the energy of the flesh (out of fellowship) is worthless. It is called dead works or human good. Human good cannot glorify God because it is produced when you are under the control of your sin nature.

Divine Good is all your production while you are filled with the Holy Spirit and is the rewardable category of gold, silver and precious stones. Divine good glorifies God. It is called divine good because it is produced under the ministry of God the Holy Spirit.

When you are filled with the Holy Spirit whatever you do is divine good

With the filling of the Holy Spirit, you are producing gold, silver and precious stones. Bible study, witnessing, well-motivated giving, working your job, cleaning your house, helping your child with homework, caring for your grandkids or parents, are examples of divine good.

*It is God who is at work in you, both to will
and to work for His good pleasure.
(Philippians 2:13)*

Divine good glorifies God and can be used by God. Human good does not glorify God. He can't use it. Divine good has lasting, eternal value. In heaven you will be rewarded for divine good but you will not be rewarded for even one bit of human good. In fact, all your human good, your wood, hay and straw, will be burned up at the Judgment Seat of Christ. All that time you spent on good deeds performed out of fellowship was a waste.

**Will your production in time be a huge bonfire?
Or will it be rewardable and bring blessings now?
The choice is yours**

Your Spiritual Gift

Every Christian is given a spiritual gift at salvation. I'll use a football team as an illustration, there are guards, centers, tackles and quarterbacks. Quarterbacks usually get all the attention because they are often the pretty boys. The gift of pastor-teacher or evangelist might be considered a quarterback position. There are also people on the line who keep the ugly guys off the pretty boys. These are the guards, tackles and the center.

You are all one in Christ. (Galatians 3:28)

No one is greater than the other because we are “all one in Christ.” We are on the same team. Even if you don't know what your spiritual gift (position) is yet, it can function. Be patient and focus on growing spiritually. God the Holy Spirit will reveal your gift at the perfect time. You don't need to know your gift to be serving in it. God has designated a specific spot for you on His team. Prioritize progressing in your spiritual growth so you can serve to your maximum ability when you are called into the game.

**One of the most exciting things
about being a Christian is to discover
your spiritual gift, your position on Christ's team**

This requires patience and sticking with learning the Word of God. When you are filled with the Holy Spirit and learning God's Word under the authority of your right pastor, you begin to make good decisions based on God's Word. Divine viewpoint leads to good decisions and glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ.

**If you reduce the Christian life to its
utmost simplicity it is making good decisions
every day based on what the Bible says**

There are two ways to glorify God in your life. The first is to glorify Him with divine viewpoint thinking. The second is to be an invisible spiritual hero as a Christian advancing to spiritual maturity.

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

So that the name of our Lord Jesus will be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Thessalonians 1:12)

The Invisible Hero

I frequently talk about heroes. What is a hero? This is not the person who runs for a touchdown. I'm referring to an invisible spiritual hero who is growing to spiritual maturity. People in the community may not be aware of you as an invisible hero, but God certainly is.

Be an invisible hero

This is another way to glorify God. As an invisible hero you spiritually influence those around you such as your family, work colleagues, friends, casual contacts and members of your congregation.

Invisible heroes have an impact nationally and historically. God will use invisible heroes to deliver a nation. They are needed in each generation and of every age group.

*Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord,
the people whom He has chosen for His own
inheritance. (Psalm 33:12)*

As an invisible hero you will leave a heritage for those who follow you in the next generation. Be one.

Your legacy needs to be spiritual

In John 17:14 Jesus Christ reminded the disciples, and us, that **we are just sojourners on this earth.** “*I have given them Your Word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of this world.*” **Our citizenship is in heaven.**

As a Christian in Phase 2 Time you are here to represent Jesus Christ within your spheres of influence and to re-present Him to those who are lost and dying. You are here as a light, to be attractive to the unbeliever, to let the unbeliever see the advantage of having a new life in Christ - eternal life.

Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. (Mark 16:15)

Freely you have received, freely you must give. (Matthew 10:8)

Do you know why we are such a prosperous nation and still have many freedoms? It is because we stand on the shoulders of many spiritually mature Christians who have gone before us. They fulfilled their calling and glorified God to the maximum.

From everyone who has been given much, much will be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more. (Luke 12:48)

I challenge you to do the same so when you get to heaven you will hear the Lord say to you:

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)

PHASE 3

THE CHRISTIAN IN ETERNITY

To live is Christ and to die is gain. (Philippians 1:21)

God chooses the time and the manner and the place of your transfer to heaven. He will be punctual.

You will come to the grave at a full age, like the stacking of grain in its season. Behold this; we have investigated it, and so it is. Hear it, and know for yourself. (Job 5:26-27)

Knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord; for we walk by faith, not by sight; we are of good courage and prefer to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord. (2 Corinthians 5:6-8)

In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. (John 14:2-3)

This phase is living forever in the presence of God.

You are home!

Heaven

At salvation you are guaranteed an inheritance that will last forever. This inheritance includes heaven. I'm often asked what heaven will be like. It's going to be incredibly glorious, beyond expectations, and more wonderful than you can ever imagine.

The eye has not seen, nor has the ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man the things God has prepared for those who love Him. (1 Corinthians 2:9)

Now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully. (1 Corinthians 13:12)

Your Resurrection Body

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly bodies to be conformed to His glorious body. (Philippians 3:20-21)

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. (Revelation 21:4)

The minute you exit your human body, your body is physically dead but you aren't "dead." You are alive and face-to-face with the Lord. Your body has gone back to dust. You will receive a new body, a perfect body, a resurrection body in which you will live forever.

There is no sin nature corruption in heaven. Your sin nature doesn't go with you to heaven. It is left here on the earth when your body returns to dust.

You are free from your sin nature!

Blessings and Rewards in Eternity

*Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on! They may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them.
(Revelation 14:13-14)*

God wants to “grace you out” with blessings in time which lead to blessings and rewards in eternity. To receive these rewards you must complete your advance to spiritual maturity. As your spiritual life develops, God will bestow more blessings on you.

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

For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord gives grace and glory; no good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly. O Lord of hosts, how blessed is the man who trusts in You! (Psalm 84:11-12)

You have an amazing retirement plan in the Lord. Your production of divine good in time will be multiplied as rewards in eternity - gold, silver and precious stones.

In the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day. (2 Timothy 4:8)

He who believes in Me has everlasting life and does not come into judgment but has passed out of death into life. (John 5:24)

The Unbeliever in Eternity

Here is a description of what the unbeliever faces at The Last Judgment - The Great White Throne of Judgment:

Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:11-15)

You should thank God right now that because of the amazing grace of the Lord Jesus Christ you are going to heaven and not headed to the Lake of Fire. **Why do you have eternal life? Because you are in Christ.** You made the decision to believe in Jesus Christ as your Savior by faith alone in Christ alone.

CHRIST IN YOU

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

This is God's mandate to you. It is the Crash Course of Christianity. You are instructed to grow spiritually and this starts by learning the basics of God's protocol plan.

I hope this book is an encouragement to you. You have the process (information and opportunity) to develop your personal relationship with your Lord and Savior:

- Stay Filled with the Holy Spirit.
- Learn God's Word.
- Use God's Problem-Solving Devices.
- Grow to Spiritual Maturity.

*Happiness belongs to those who hear My
Father's Word and keep it. (Luke 11:28)*

Hear it and keep it. This is spiritual momentum. You are taking on the mind of Christ. You are thinking with divine viewpoint. You are advancing to spiritual maturity. You are glorifying Jesus Christ.

Christ in you, the hope of glory. (Colossians 1:27)

**Jesus Christ lives in you
He must shine through you
The world must see Him in you

This is Christianity!**

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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).

A CRASH COURSE IN CHRISTIANITY

Christianity is Jesus Christ living in you. It is a relationship with your Savior, not a religion. The Christian way of life is a supernatural life lived using the supernatural resources of the filling of the Holy Spirit and the dynamics of the living Word of God in your soul. Christianity is about changing the way you think. It is learning to think with a divine viewpoint, not a human viewpoint. “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” (Romans 12:2). God has provided us a playbook on how to live—the Bible. Through this study, you will learn basic principles from God’s Word to execute God’s plan for your life, including God’s 10 problem-solving devices. If you will learn them and use them, they will act as an invisible barrier to stop the outside sources of adversity from becoming stress in your soul. Adversity is what circumstances do to you. Stress is what you do to yourself. You can live a life free of stress, worry, anger or fear. It’s the Christian life and it’s a wonderful way to live.