



"Living The Christian Life!"

Booklet 13

"Effective Christian Living" Series

By

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THE BIG QUESTION

#13

"PERSONAL SIGNIFICANCE!"

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1.

*"WHY IS ACCUMULATED WEALTH SO
ALLURING TO ME?"*

Man's soul, unattended and ignored, becomes shriveled and starved.

The materialist is one who values temporal things more than spiritual things.

Materialism may fatten the body, but it starves the soul. It may gratify the senses, but it will rot the fiber of moral character.

It may outwardly give fame and fortune but inwardly it imprisons the poverty-stricken spirit.

The result of conforming to cultural standards is mediocrity.

To be squeezed into the world's mold is to be formed into a stunted, dull, and manufactured person.

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

The greedy materialist, who has grown fat on the accumulation of material goods, remains dissatisfied because of the leanness of his soul.

To his bitter disappointment, he learns that life does not consist in the abundance of things that a man possesses.

His riches have only given ulcers to his stomach and taken peace from his mind.

His false friends stand by to mock him, and his sad delusion turns to suicidal despair.

The crackle of the dollar and the glitter of the coin have lost their appeal, for he finally learns that not everything has its price and that there are qualities that have no monetary value.

Sliding down the slope of life on his bed of perpetual pain, caused from his indulgent living, the disillusioned secularist realizes that he has been the subject of a cruel tyrant.

The sweet wine of frivolous living has left a bitter taste in his mouth. The swinging music of his youth remains as a strange echo in his mind to mock him as a fool.

Too many learn too late that "the lover of money shall not be satisfied with money nor the lover of wealth with his gain; this, too, is futility". "He who loves money shall

never have enough. The foolishness of thinking that wealth brings happiness!"
Ecclesiastes 5:10

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"O God, deliver me from the futility of materialism! Help me to know from observation of others rather than from bitter personal experience, that accumulated wealth, instead of giving happiness, oftentimes is the chief thief of happiness! Enable me to have an 'open hand' of giving and generosity, forgetting myself as I give to the needy ones, and finding personal pleasure in living a 'simple lifestyle'. Do not ever allow me to become 'greedy and grasping'. Rather, help me to be graceful, gracious, and giving—in all I do and say, and in all my relationships at home and abroad. Help me always to remember that 'it is better' to give than it is to 'receive'. In Jesus' Loving Name. Amen!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

Never forget what one great thinker said: "Material things are regarded as the chief good in life only by those who do not have them." (William Sangster)

2.

"CAN I USE MY MANY PROBLEMS TO FACILITATE MY PERSONAL GROWTH?"

There are several advantages in having problems and suffering:

- A. *Helps to see God more clearly: 'The vision of God can be seen more clearly through a tear'.*
- B. *Causes one to depend more on God's Power: 'God's strength is made perfect through human weaknesses.'*
- C. *Produces Growth and Maturity. "Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. (James 1:2-4) Problems can produce beauty.*
- D. *Enables one to develop ministry through suffering: Those who are most effective in ministry are those*

who minister in the area where they have suffered most.

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

- E. *“Grace and peace to you from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, the God of all comfort. Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion. The God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in your patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer.”*

“May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ mightily bless each one of you and give you peace. What a wonderful God we have—he is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the source of every mercy,

and the one who so wonderfully comforts and strengthens us in our hardships and trials. And why does he do this? So that when others are troubled, needing our sympathy and encouragement, we can pass on to them this same help and comfort God has given us. You can be sure that the more we undergo sufferings for Christ, the more he will shower us with his comfort and encouragement. We are in deep trouble for bringing you God's comfort and salvation. But in our trouble God has comforted us—and this, too, to help you: to show you from our personal experience how God will tenderly comfort you when you undergo these same sufferings. He will give you the strength to endure.” (II Corinthians 1:2-6)

- F. *Can result in making you strongest where you have been weakest!*

I cannot believe the saying about the eagle, as it applies to the restored Christian who had backslidden. 'An eagle with a broken wing which has been healed can never

fly as high again!' Who can limit the power and possibilities of grace, which heals the broken and backslidden Christian, who had succumbed to problems but who learned his lesson well from the spiritual reversal?

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"Heavenly Father, give me strength to make the right decisions in the realm of morality, for I know that there are terrible consequences which (eventually) come when your Holy Laws are deliberately violated! Give me a 'holy hatred' of all sin, and create within me a 'right spirit'! Keep me free from the 'snares of the enemy', that I may live above 'the world, the flesh, and the evil influence of crafty men'! Make and keep me pure within, and may my outward conduct be pleasing to you, and 'above reproach' among my fellow men! Lord, there are so many problems I face in my everyday life, and in my delicate human relationships. I know you are able to make me a more godly person if I cooperate with you, in the creative use of these many problems. I know that the problems, which are caused because of the just consequences of my

wrong moral decisions, are the most devastating and hurtful problems (to me and to those around me). I want to be delivered from those needless (sin-caused) problems, by your grace. But allow me to creatively use all other types of problems—for growth!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

It is during the crisis moments of life, that God is present. God is surely the God of the routine, but He is also the God of the crisis. God specializes in things that seem impossible. God loves the word 'IMPOSSIBLE'.

3.

*"WHY IS MATERIALISM A DEAD-END ROAD
FOR ME?"*

"We did not bring any money with us when we came into the world, and we can't carry away a single penny when we die! Therefore, we should be well satisfied without money if we have enough food and clothing. But people who long to be rich soon begin to do all kinds of wrong things to get money, things that hurt them and make them evil-minded and finally send them to hell itself."

"After all, we brought nothing with us when we came into the world, and we can't take anything with us when we leave it. So if we have enough food and clothing, let us be content. But people who long to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many foolish and harmful desires that plunge them into ruin and destruction". (1 Timothy 6:7-9, Living Bible)

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

Firstly, The Road of Materialism is a dead-end road, because of the inheritability of laboriously gained riches. Wrote Solomon (in

the Old Testament), *"And I am disgusted about this that I must leave the fruits of my hard work to others."* (Ecclesiastes 2:18)

Second, The Road of Materialism is a dead-end road, because riches often cause sleepless anxiety. *"The man who works hard sleeps well whether he eats little or much, but the rich must worry and suffer insomnia."* (Ecclesiastes 5:12)

Third, The Road of Materialism is a dead-end road, because riches can be easily lost. *"There is another serious problem I have seen everywhere—savings are put into risky investments that turn sour, and soon there is nothing left to pass on to one's Son."* (Ecclesiastes 5:13)

Fourth, The Road of Materialism is a dead-end road, because money cannot be taken with you when you die. *"Do not be dismayed when evil men grow rich and build their lovely home. For when they die they carry nothing with them. Their honors will not follow them."* (Psalms 49:16-17)

Fifth, The Road of Materialism is a dead-end road, because material possessions do not have the ability to satisfy the inner

longing of man's soul. Said Jesus, "Real life and real living are not related to how rich we are." (Luke 12:15)

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"God, help me never to worship money, and the things which money can buy. Because this world is a material world, let me never despise the material blessings which you have granted to me. I want to use and to enjoy them and to give things away to others. With all my material blessings, help me never to abuse or to misuse them. Help me to live simply, in your world, to enjoy greatly your abundance in my world, and to use all material things as opportunities to bless those who are in my 'circle of influence'. Thou God of abundance, help me to both live abundantly myself, and also to be your 'channel' to give away abundant blessings to many others! In Jesus' generous name! Amen!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

May you enjoy God's abundant material 'things', but never allow yourself to become ensnared by the 'god of materialism'! Remember John Wesley's wise counsel: "Make all you can; save all you can; give all

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you can!"

4.

"HOW BENEFICIAL IS WISDOM IN MY LIFE?"

The Book of Proverbs highlights the great benefits of finding God's Wisdom: Knowledge of God; *"Then you will discern the fear of the Lord and discover the knowledge of God."* *"Protection from God He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk in integrity, Guarding the paths of justice, And He preserves the way of His godly ones. Discretion will guard you, understanding will watch over you."* (Proverbs 2:11)

Guidance from God; *"Then you will discern righteousness and justice and equity and every good course."* *"He shows how to distinguish right from wrong, how to find the right decision every time."* (2:9)

Prosperity and pleasure in your soul, for wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul. *"For wisdom and truth will enter the very center of your being, filling your life with joy."* (2:10)

Rescue from wicked ways and wicked men:

"To deliver you from the way of evil, From the man who speaks perverse things, from those who leave the paths of uprightness to walk in the ways of darkness; who delight in doing evil and rejoice in the perversity of evil; whose paths are crooked, and who are devious in their ways; to deliver you from the strange woman, from the adulteress who flatters with her words; that leaves the companion of her youth and forgets the covenant of her God. For her house sinks down to death and her tracks lead to the dead; none who go to her return again, nor do they reach the paths of life." (2:12-19)

Steadfastness in righteous living: *"but the wicked will be cut off from the land and the treacherous will be uprooted from it." "...evil men lose the good things they might have had, and they themselves shall be destroyed." (2:22)*

Physical health from the Lord. *"Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the Lord and turn away from evil. It will be healing to your body and refreshment to your bones." (3:7-8)*

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

True riches (financial and spiritual riches alike): *"the man who knows right from wrong and has good judgment and common sense is happier than the man who is immensely rich! For such wisdom is far more valuable than precious jewels. Nothing else compares with it. Wisdom gives a long, good life, riches, honor, pleasure, peace. Wisdom is a tree of life to those who eat her fruit; happy is the man who keeps on eating it."* (3:13-18) True Knowledge, Wisdom, and Understanding are God's gifts!

Paul wrote to the Colossians, *"Don't let others spoil your faith and joy with their philosophies, their wrong and shallow answers built on men's thoughts and ideas, instead of on what Christ has said."* (Colossians 2:8)

However, knowledge is not to be despised, for all truth is God's truth. Noted the warm-hearted, yet tough-minded John Wesley, "You are in danger of enthusiasm (i.e., fanaticism) every hour—if you lightly esteem reason, knowledge, or human learning; every one of which is an excellent gift of God, and may serve the noblest purposes."

"I advise you never to use the words, wisdom, reason or knowledge by the way of reproach. On the contrary, pray that you yourself may abound in them more and more. If you mean worldly wisdom, useless knowledge, false reasoning, say so; and throw away the chaff, but not the wheat".

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"God, give me a sensitive spirit which is intolerant to falsehood and error, and a diligent mind which is pursuant of truth and knowledge. Help me to throw away the chaff of worldly philosophy and cherish the wheat of divinely-inspired wisdom!" Amen!

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

Seek to be teachable without being gullible. Broad-minded without being shallow-minded! Often read the powerful Book of Proverbs in the Bible, which clearly describes the way and the desirability of Wisdom.

Here is one of those great references: "Determination to be wise is common sense and good judgment. If you exalt wisdom, she will exalt you. Hold her fast and she will lead you to great honor; she will

place a beautiful crown upon your head.”
(Proverbs 4:7-9, Living Bible)

5.

"IS IT IMPORTANT FOR ME TO REVERE
GOD?"

The writer of Ecclesiastes could find meaning in nothing except God. God, he declared, was his only hope. *"To sum up the whole matter, all that was heard; revere God and keep his commandments, for this is every person's duty. For God shall bring every work into judgment, even everything hidden, whether it be good or bad."* (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14)

To revere God is to profoundly venerate, worship, adore, and respect HIM. The ways of God and the happenings of life are sometimes past finding out—incomprehensible.

Nevertheless, man is to submit to God and to serve Him. *"...and I saw every work of God, I concluded that man cannot discover the work which has been done under the sun. Even though man should seek laboriously, he will not discover; and though the wise man should say, 'I know', he cannot discover."* (Ecclesiastes 8:17); *"Just as you do not know the path of the wind and how bones are formed in the womb of the pregnant woman, so you do*

not know the activity of God who makes all things." (11:5)

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

The Christian knows that there are many injustices, that right too often goes unrewarded and wrong often goes unpunished. However, God is still Ruler and He ultimately directs circumstances! Be assured that God will redress wrongs and that He will 'balance the books'.

"Again I observed under the sun the place of judgment—there was wrong; and the place of righteousness—there was wickedness. I said to myself, 'God will judge the righteous and the wicked, for there is a time there for every purpose and for every work.'" (Ecclesiastes 3:16-17)

"Although the sinner commits evil a hundred times and his life is prolonged to him, even so I know that it will be well with those who revere God, who are in awe before Him. It shall not be well with the evildoer; he shall not prolong his days as a shadow, because he does not revere God." (Ecclesiastes 8:12-13)

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"I am a 'Lost and undone sinner' - a sinner who has broken both your Holy Laws and your Holy Heart! I am a sinner, both by nature and by choice—by what I have done, and by what I am. Save me from my sins (actions), and save me from what I am (corrupt nature). Cleanse me, and I shall be clean! Deliver me from my bondage to sin and I shall be free indeed! I want You to be both my Savior and my Lord! Teach me about Your holiness—that You are so pure that You cannot even look upon sin! Teach me about both your mercy and your judgment—that You want to save all from hell, but that You will surely judge anyone who 'Spurns Your Mercy' and who refuses your gracious offer of eternal life! God, help me to find faith amidst my doubts, to find your truth amidst the world's falsehoods, to accept your mercy despite my sins, to believe in your justice despite the moral inequities in the world. I revere You, loving God." Amen!

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

Remembering the awesome fact of final moral accountability will motivate you to

live morally, responsibly, and righteously!

6.

"WHY SHOULD I BE DILIGENT IN SEEKING WISDOM?"

Because of man's moral responsibility, God has given responsibility to humanity to search out and to explore wisdom. Wisdom is available to all and makes its appeal to all, but each person must heed wisdom's ways.

"Wisdom Warns: Wisdom shouts in the street, She lifts her voice in the square; At the head of the noisy streets she cries out; At the entrance of the gates in the city she utters her sayings: "How long, O naive ones, will you love being simple-minded? And scoffers delight themselves in scoffing and fools hate knowledge!" "Turn to my reproof, Behold, I will pour out my spirit on you; I will make my words known to you". "Because I called and you refused, I stretched out my hand and no one paid attention; And you neglected all my counsel, and did not want my reproof; I will also laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your dread comes, when your dread comes like a storm. And your calamity comes like a whirlwind, when distress and anguish come upon you." "Then

they will call on me, but I will not answer; They will seek me diligently but they will not find me, because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the LORD." "They would not accept my counsel, they spurned all my reproof. So they shall eat of the fruit of their own way. And be satiated with their own devices. "For the waywardness of the naive will kill them, And the complacency of fools will destroy them. "But he who listens to me shall live securely and will be at ease from the dread of evil." (Proverbs 1:20-33)

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

Diligence in seeking God's wisdom involves wholehearted concentration, devotion to truth, and honesty. The truth of God objectively has been revealed to humanity, but the truth subjectively enjoyed involves the teachable spirit and the disciplined search for wisdom.

There is no substitute for patient persistence. We ought to fear God, for God has laid upon each human being the responsibility to search out and to find the truth, and those who fail to apply themselves to that task of searching for wisdom will be held responsible before God someday.

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"O thou God of wisdom, I know I cannot be half-hearted and double-minded and lazy if I am ever to discover the wonders and the powers of God-revealed wisdom! I know that 'the mind of God' (the treasures of divine wisdom) will not be found by the casual and careless and undisciplined and indifferent and unfocused person, but only by the serious-minded, wholehearted, devoted, diligent, and teachable person! O God let my search for your ways (the ways of divine wisdom) be enthusiastic, determined, persistent, and life-long! May the things of earthly, transitory matters fade into insignificance, and please enable me to use my enlightened mind and my emotional heart and my inflexible will as stable 'tools' to establish my total life on the lasting foundation of eternal truth - found and enjoyed in Christ alone! For Christ is the 'Wisdom of God', given to needy humanity! Help me always to reverence and to respect your will and ways - the very essence of true wisdom! In Jesus' name! Amen!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

Always seek God's wisdom! To spurn the

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counsel and reproof of God is to court the wrath of God; to submit to the will of God is to enjoy the wisdom of God!

7.

"CAN I BE A CHRISTIAN AND KEEP SINNING?"

Neither Paul nor John (in the New Testament) deny the possibility, and many times the reality, of an occasional isolated sinful action of a person who is in union with Christ, but listen to Paul, in Romans 6:1-2: "What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?" In addition, John (1 John 3:4-6) declares that, "Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. You know that He appeared in order to take away sins, and in Him, there is no sin. No one who abides in Him sins, no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him." "No one who lives in Christ keeps on sinning!"

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

The one who is united to Christ is the one whose spiritual condition is increasingly improving.

As Christ hates sin, so the believer in Christ increasingly learns to hate sin. How shall

one continue in sin if he has died to the reign of sin in his life? He no longer practices rebellion and willful transgressions against God's known laws and God's revealed will. Whatever Christ hates, the believer learns to hate.

He who has the mind of Christ within him, is he who understands increasingly the hellishness of sin. Sin smashed the most beautiful life of the universe on a cross!

TIME FOR A PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"O God, if I fall into sin, let me always 'fall toward the Cross'. Help me honestly to confess, and gladly to grasp your saving Hand of Restoration. Put me quickly back on the path that leads to heaven—the 'path of holiness'! I know that Jesus came to earth to save me from my sins, not in my sins. I recognize that a 'sinning Christian' is a 'contradiction in terms'! I cannot be both united to sin and united to the Savior at the same time. I will either hate the one or love the other, or the other way around. I know that I am called to holiness. Only you, loving and powerful God can make me holy in my inner nature. Please destroy all sin in my life—now and in my future earthly life! Thank You! Amen!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION

Remember, what God has called you in name, He intends (through His grace and your cooperation) to make you in reality— A Holy Person!

8.

*"WHY SHOULD I USE MY MOUTH FOR
RIGHTEOUSNESS?"*

*"O Lord open thou my lips; and my mouth
shall show forth thy praise!" (Psalms
51:15)*

*"He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his
life; but he that openeth wide his lips shall
have destruction!" (Proverbs 13:3)*

*"If a man can control his tongue he can
control every other part of his personali-
ty!" (James 3:2)*

Said Jesus, *"I tell you, on the Day of
Judgment men will render account for
every careless word they utter; for by your
words you will be justified, and by your
words you will be condemned!" (Matthew
12:36-37)*

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!"

*"We Create Our World by Our Words!"
Negative words create a negative environ-
ment. Positive words create a positive en-
vironment. Words can elevate or words*

can destroy! Words can build up or words can destroy friends during adversity! Words can sooth or words can sear!

"As A Man Speaketh, So Is He!" Words are powerful weapons for either good or for bad! Bad words have devastating consequences; good words have powerful results!

The mouth can be a powerful weapon for righteousness, or a powerful weapon for wickedness!

TIME FOR A PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"O God, I know that I cannot be truly tongue-controlled, unless I am a truly God-controlled person. As Isaiah of old pleaded, 'I too plead with you! I am a person with unclean lips. Purge my lips, and make me a person with not only pure lips, but a pure heart!' For Jesus said, "That out of the depths of one's heart, the mouth speaketh." I identify with David's prayer: 'Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my rock and my Redeemer.' (Psalms 19:14) Help me daily to guard my heart from all evil, that I might consequently have pure lips which praise my Savior

and which edify my fellow men. Thank You! Amen!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

Remember what the Bible says about proper speaking: "A soft answer turneth away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger!" (Proverbs 15:1) Ask God to enable you always to create a peaceful world through peaceful words.

9.

"IS GOD HELPLESS WITHOUT ME?"

"Human Beings!" are either a 'Weapon 'in the hands of God' or a 'Weapon in the hands of sin'! Have you ever thought that both sin and God are helpless without human weapons?

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

If God wants a word spoken, whom will He get to speak that WORD? If God wants a good deed to be done, whom will He get to do that good DEED?

If God wants a discouraged one to be cheered, whom will He get to be an Encourager?

Remember: God has no hands but our hands, God has no feet but our feet, God has no voice but our voice, God has no money but our money, God has no talent but our talent! Are you willing to be an 'Instrument' in God's Hands?

"Human Beings!" Every person can make a choice as to whether he will be a Weapon for Sin or a Weapon for God. Every man has the power to exercise great influence for good or great influence for evil. Every

man must choose to yield himself to either God or to Sin. Both God and Satan are helpless unless they get persons through whom they may work!

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"O God, I see that every person is mastered by someone or by something. I choose to be mastered by You! I place myself in Your mighty hands to be used as a WEAPON for righteousness and holiness! I yield the sanctity of my inner spirit to You. I yield the decisions of my will to You. I yield the content of my relationships to You. I yield the effects of my influence to You. I yield the productivity of my talents to You. Use me as Your instrument for untold good! Thank You! Amen!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

Remember, God is so mighty that He has chosen to be 'helpless' without you! How humbling and yet how ennobling to you!

10.

*"HOW CAN I CHRISTIANIZE
MY CHRISTIAN LIFE*

When you made your surrender (in faith) to follow Christ (i.e., to be Christian), you died to the reign of sin, and you were transferred to the reign of grace. It was your intention (when you were converted) to put away all sin from your life, and you determined to learn how to live a Godly (Holy) life!

Righteousness, Peace, Love, and Holiness—describe the new life-style of the Children of the Kingdom!

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

Are you daily asking the Holy Spirit to enable you to "Christianize" your total life – to bring glory to God, and good to others and to yourself?

- 1. What About Your Thoughts? Every thought must be captured and brought under the authority of Christ. This means learning to know 'the mind of Christ', thinking Christ's thoughts after Him.*

2. *What About Your Emotions? Every emotion must be brought under the control of Christ. This means experiencing Christ's compassion with Him, sharing in Christ's sufferings for His world.*

3. *What About Your Will? Every decision of your will must be made under the direction of Christ's Lordship. You must be a 'co-laborer' with Christ in realizing Kingdom purposes in a world which needs to be redeemed.*

TIME FOR A PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"O God, you have called me out of the 'world of sin', now take the 'sin of the world' out of my heart. You have separated me from outward sins; now separate me from inward sin! You have called me a 'saint'; now make me each day more like a 'saint'! Help me to be very open to the wonderful cleansing ministry of the Holy Spirit. Fill me with your divine love, and guide me in the process of 'Christianizing' my emotions, and my will! Give me patience, as I cooperate with you, to see 'Christ formed within me'. Forgive me when I fail (Sin), and keep me encouraged as I learn to surrender my body, soul, and spirit to you—for correction, for cleans-

ing, for renewal, for empowerment. Thank You for Your faithfulness! Help me to faithfully respond to your 'Call To Holiness'! Amen!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

Remember that He, who has made you a citizen of the Kingdom, will enable you to become a Soldier of His Cross! Move on with Christ, to deeper levels of Spirituality! BE "CHRISTIANIZED"!

11.

*"WHY SHOULD I LIVE UNDER THE
DOMINION OF GRACE?"*

If you have made a true commitment of your heart and your Life to Christ, then you must recognize that the whole object of grace is to destroy Sin and all of its work within you.

As a member of the Kingdom of Truth and Godliness, it is your responsibility to bring your will, your emotions, and your mind under the Lordship of Christ.

Remember: You are only a 'Christian-in-the-Making'; you are not yet fully made! Someone said that you are simply a 'Christian under Construction'. Plan to spend the rest of your Christian life, learning the ways and the will of Christ for You!

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

It is your part to work at being a Christian, being careful to do those things which are compatible with your profession of Christianity. It is God's part to work within you, helping you to know the right and to do the right.

As you seek God's wisdom, He will progres-

sively impart more and more wisdom to you, throughout your lifetime journey as a believer. The Apostle Paul shared this truth in his own testimony: "I don't mean to say I am perfect. I haven't learned all I should even yet, but I keep working toward that day when I will finally be all that Christ saved me for and wants me to be."

TIME FOR A PERSONALIZE PRAYER!

"O God, I see now that Truth subjectively experienced is Jesus Christ who will enter my heart immediately upon my true confession and belief. Truth objectively understood is the Word of God (Bible) which can only enter my heart gradually through a lifetime of prayerful and disciplined inquiry. I am a Christian, and I am becoming 'Christianized'! Glory! Amen!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

Always remember that the person of truth—THE HOLY CHRIST—will lead you progressively to the propositions of truth - The Holy Scriptures! There is NO thrill like the 'Thrill of Becoming'!

12.

"WHAT DOES A CO-OPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST REALLY MEAN TO ME?"

Just as you must eat and drink to stay alive physically, so you must eat and drink spiritual food to stay alive in your relationship with God.

Physically or spiritually, you do not automatically stay alive! Your co-operation with God is all-important, if you are to stay alive and grow dynamically as a Christian.

Said Jesus to His followers, "Take care to live in Me, and let Me live in you. For a branch can't produce fruit when severed from the vine. Nor can you be fruitful apart from Me." (John 15:4, Living Bible)

Union with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection does NOT mean the end of the Christian's personal moral effort, cooperation, and striving.

Those who are 'In Christ' presently have standing and position in Christ. We have been transferred from the Kingdom of Darkness to the Kingdom of Light.

From that moment on it is our responsibility to walk by faith. We have become united in the Vine; as branches we are now to stay attached to the Vine and grow as healthy branches. We have been saved from sin; we are now to serve righteousness.

The light has come to us; we are now to arise and shine in the world. We have been separated unto Christ; we are now to separate ourselves from worldliness in our daily life-style.

Because union with Christ on the earthly plane is not experienced without opposition from Satan, this means that Faith, Prayer, Watchfulness, and Obedience must maintain this union!

TIME FOR A PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"Just as the branch receives its sap from the vine, so let me receive my strength from thee, O God! Thou art the Vine. All life resides in Thee alone. All life is received from thee. I do not grow by tense trying, but by simple trusting! O the bliss of abiding in You! I know that I must cooperate with You, O God, as you work in my life to develop my mind, spirit, heart, and will - to make me more like Christ. A dynamic relation-

ship, not a static state! A voluntary union, not a coercive union! Amen!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

Your powerful Lord explains the 'KEY' to experiencing victory in living the Christian Life! Just as the branch surrenders itself to the vine for continual life, so you must surrender your little life to your big God to receive His Inexhaustible Life!

13.

*"HOW CAN I BETTER UNDERSTAND TRUE
HAPPINESS IN CHRISTIAN LIFE?"*

Happiness is doing God's will, regardless of the pleasure or the pain, which accompany that commitment. Happiness is full-surrender of one's will to God's will, one's mind to Christ's mind, and one's emotions to Christ's emotions. Happiness is death to self-centeredness, with a consequent resurrection to Christ-centeredness. Happiness is living responsibly in relationships, giving God supreme place in one's affections, will, and intellect, and giving preference to other's needs before one's own needs

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

Happiness is living a holy life—a life forgiven of sins and delivered from self-centeredness. Happiness is loving yourself genuinely because you love God supremely. Happiness is living responsibly, being faithful to one's commitments to God, to the church, and to others, regardless of the pain or afflictions, which such commitments incur. Happiness is being faithful in performing the God-given tasks—daily, routinely, yearly, with or without the recognition of

fellow humans. Happiness is serving others and in the process finding yourself deeply fulfilled.

Happiness is seeking to make others happy, comforting the sorrowing, cheering the fainting, and loving the loveless. Happiness is living a God-focused life, living fully to meet human needs and living dependently to appropriate divine resources.

TIME FOR A PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"Father, help me not to be afraid of life with its stringent demands and responsibilities. Help me to fall in love with life with its pains and pleasures alike, because I have fallen deeply in love with you. Make my joy complete because I am completely committed to you. In Jesus' name. Amen."

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

May you experience the daily 'intake' of God's powerful love into your heart, and may that love bring uncontained joy to your inner being.

May you be 'on tiptoe with God's joy' – a joy that is God's gracious gift, a gift that you regularly give away, as seen on your countenance and as seen in the edifying words of your lips. Minister today to everyone out

“The BIG Question!” - “Effective Christian Living”. Series

of the overflow of your life — overflow of joy!

14.

*"AM I SIMPLY A CHRISTIAN-IN-THE-
MAKING?"*

*Is Your Supreme Desire in Life To Become
More And More Like Christ?*

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

*Is God's Goal for You, the Same as Your
Goal for Yourself?*

TIME FOR A PERSONALIZED PRAYER:

"O God, Thou art the Author and the Completer of My Faith. Thou art the Ground of my being, the Source of my life. Thou wilt complete what You have begun in my life. Your goal for me will take all eternity to fully accomplish. However, while on earth, I pursue the worthy goal. 'I FOLLOW ON!'"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

Remember that He who chooses to call you a 'saint' will work in you to make you saintly—in actions, attitudes, and relationships!

15.

"HOW SHOULD I RESPOND TO LIFE'S MANY INJUSTICES?"

Faith in God Is Greatly Challenged When It Seems That Evil Triumphs!

One sinner or a small group of sinners (God-rejecters) can cause so much suffering in our world!

Faith in God is challenged when it seems that so many times righteousness goes unrewarded and evil goes unpunished.

"In this silly life I have seen everything; including the fact that some of the good die young and some of the wicked live on and on. There is a strange thing happening here upon the earth; Providence seems to treat some good men as though they were wicked; and some wicked men as though they were good. This is all very vexing and troublesome!" "All this have I seen in my days of vanity: there is a righteous man that perisheth in his righteousness; and there is a wicked man that prolonged his life in his evil-doing." (Ecclesiastes 7:15);

"There is a vanity which is done upon the earth; that there are righteous men unto

whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked; again, there are wicked men to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous. I said that this also is vanity." (Ecclesiastes 8:14)

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT

In light of life's injustices and evil's seeming triumph, it is important to remind ourselves that eventually the righteous man will be vindicated and the evil man will be punished.

"But though a man sins a hundred times and still lives, I know very well that those who fear God will be better off unlike the wicked, who will not live long, good lives—their days shall pass away as quickly as shadows because they don't fear God." (Ecclesiastes 8:12-13, Living Bible)

"Stop your anger! Turn off your wrath. Don't fret and worry—it only leads to harm. For the wicked shall be destroyed, but those who trust the Lord shall be given every blessing." (Psalms 37:8-9, Living Bible)

TIME FOR A PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

*"O God, when wrong seems oft so strong;
convince me (during my doubts) that you*

are still the Ruler. Help me not to fret myself because of evil doers. You have shown me that as surely as You Are God, just as surely will all evil doers be punished and all righteous persons be eternally rewarded! Help me to remember that the evil, which is now hidden, will someday be shouted from the 'housetop'. Your Light of Truth will expose all deception! All evil things shall be open unto the all-seeing and all-knowing God, who judges rightly, fairly, and righteously! The day will come (if not on earth, surely in eternity) when unrewarded godliness will be honored, and when unpunished evil will be exposed and destroyed! Justice, Righteousness, Integrity and Holiness will ultimately triumph! Amen!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

Always remember that You serve a perfectly Just God! A God who will 'right all wrongs' and who will morally 'balance the books' in the end!

16.

*"CAN I BE HOPEFUL IN A DESPAIRING
WORLD?"*

Without the resurrection of Christ, there would be no hope for any person or for the world as a whole. When a person accepts Christ as his/her personal Savior, new life and authentic hope is wonderfully experienced! "Now we live in the hope of eternal life because Christ rose again from the dead." (I Peter 1:3, Living Bible).

The Resurrection of Christ is the foundation for all hope. By rising from the dead, Christ showed that there is hope beyond the grave – in the future! Because Christ arose from His grave, we too will conquer death, and we shall live eternally with Christ.

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

Christ's resurrection is the basis for believing that the future of the world is in the hands of an all-powerful God who will bring hope to our despairing world. 'Though wrong seems often so strong, God Is Ruler yet' – and the resurrected Christ will ultimately overcome all evil in the world! Evil will be destroyed, and righteousness will triumph!

The resurrection is proof that nothing – not even death – can destroy history's goal, which is the ultimate triumph and reign of righteousness and peace by Christ. The death warrant for evil has been signed by the resurrection! Remove the resurrection hope and all that is left is present despair and futility and future doom! Hope is elusive and unfounded if it is not founded upon the One who conquered death and who is forever alive, and who offers that quality of life which outlives the inevitable grave of every person!

Put your faith strongly in Christ alone, and you will enjoy not only an 'abundant' life here, but also 'eternal' life hereafter. A hope that is sure and a hope that will have a glorious fulfillment— in time and in eternity!

TIME FOR A PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"O God, in the midst of all my feelings of despair and fear, can You give me any hope for my life—for my immediate life, and for my distant future here on earth? Can You give me hope that there will be a future home, after my death, a home of eternal happiness? What can You do for me, with Your knowledge of all my sins, which I have sinned against You, my Maker?"

Is there any true fulfillment of my deep hope—for new life here and eternal life hereafter? Is it true (as I been told) that the resurrection of Christ is the foundation for all human hope? If that is true, then right now I place my faith (trust) on Christ, the resurrected ONE! I believe, right now, O Christ, that You are the One who can give me hope: hope because You can give me new life, in place of my old life of sin! Hope because You can give me a new perspective for my despairing life!

You can give me 'resurrection power' to live a loving and a compassionate life—a life all centered on Christ who is fulfillment of all my deepest hopes. I have long hoped that I could live a new, others-oriented and loving life, but I know now that it is only the powerful (resurrected) Christ who can give me the power that enables me to live that new life. He is my power for realizing all my hopes and dreams! It is His power working within me! Give me that power daily!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

Always realize that it is the blazing light of the resurrection that dispels your darkness and that makes your future bright and hopeful!

17.

"IS GOD WILLING TO GUIDE MY PERSONAL LIFE?"

The Holy Spirit Guides the Believer into All Things. No greater or wiser Counselor can be found than the Holy Spirit. God has promised to guide the earnest seeker of Truth: "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye."

The Christian life is not a static life; rather, it is a dynamic life with new depths to reach, new horizons to find, and new capacities to develop. It is the Holy Spirit who helps the open-minded Christian to find truth, to recall truth, to understand truth, to defend truth, and to spread truth.

A stubborn will and a closed mind destroy all receptive powers and make it impossible to receive God's communications.

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him; and he shall direct thy paths." (Proverbs 3:5-6)

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

There are several ways by which the Holy Spirit communicates God's will to the believer.

There is the counsel of others. Consulting a wise, experienced, and tested friend and counselor will oftentimes save one from many a pitfall and from many a heartache.

"Where no wise guidance is, the people falleth; But in the multitude of counselors there is safety." (Proverbs 11:14); "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes; But he that is wise hearkeneth unto counsel." (Proverbs 12:15)

The Holy Spirit often works through circumstances to reveal God's will to the sensitive Christian. Because God is sovereign, the Christian knows that God controls nature with its laws and history with its events. If the Christian knows that God is big enough and powerful enough to control the laws of nature and the events of history, the Christian also knows that God is loving enough and Fatherly enough to control the circumstances of life which determine personal destiny.

There is prayer. It is the Holy Spirit who enables the true believer to pray effectively.

"And in like manner the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity: for we know not how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.." (Romans 8:26)

The Bible is another means that the Holy Spirit uses to give guidance and counsel to the Christian. Every believer should regularly read the Bible, for practical guidance!

TIME FOR A PERSONALIZE PRAYER!

"Father, help me to be open-minded to receive your truth, tender-hearted to experience your love, and strong-willed to obey your commands. In Jesus' name, Amen."

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

Although life, admittedly, is sometimes confusing (even for a sincere believer), you can take comfort that the blessed Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Divine Wisdom. He knows what is best for the life of each person. In addition, He is the Spirit of Love, and that means that He has your welfare 'at heart'. He is also the Spirit of Power. This means

that He has the ability to give you what is best for you—that is, He has the ability to work through life’s circumstances to bring about ultimate good for you. The all-wise, all-loving, all-powerful Spirit will not guide you into hurtful (Selfish) situations, but only into situations that will bring glory to God, blessings to others, and genuine enhancement to you!

18.

"IF I AM FAITHFUL WILL I ALWAYS BE SUCCESSFUL?"

That faithfulness is a description of love should come as no surprise to us.

Look at the groom and bride at the marriage altar. The groom is deeply in love with the bride. However, love is more than a temporary feeling. Love is a lifetime commitment to fidelity!

"Wilt thou love her, comfort her, honor, and keep her in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all others, keep yourself only unto her, so long as you both shall live?"

Faithfulness, fidelity, loyalty—these are inseparably connected with true love. The person who is Spirit-controlled is the one who is Faithful in his relationships and responsibilities. Faithful in obeying his Master. Faithful in serving his world; Faithful in fulfilling his personal ideals.

He, Who Loves Truly, Is He Who Serves Faithfully.

TIME FOR A PERSONALIZE PRAYER!

"O God, do not allow me to prostitute my divinely given call on the altar of worldly

success. Close my ears to the world's call to power, prestige, wealth, and fame, and open my ears to the voice of the Spirit who is calling me to follow in the footsteps of the Master, whose glory followed His suffering."

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

I know you wish to be 'successful' in your life - and God wants you to be 'successful'. But remember, Jesus said, "Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these other things will be added unto you." As God's child, you are to focus your energy and talents on the purposes and plans of your Master! In God's Way and in God's Timing, He will richly reward you for your 'labors of love'. To have the 'smile of God's approval' on your life because of your faithfulness to God's call in your life—this constitutes true success in life! God will never be 'in debt' to any person! He will richly reward you! True Success!

19.

*"HOW SHOULD I MEASURE MY MATURITY
IN THE CHRISITAN LIFE?"*

The Goal of Christian Growth Is Supreme Love for God, Sincere Love for Others, and Subordinate Love for Yourself. Growth in the Christian Life is measured by growth in Love. Love is the Essence of Maturity!

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

Maturity is both a Present Condition and a Progressive Process. He whose life is guided by love is, scripturally-speaking, a mature person. However, while one may be fully loving at any one moment and therefore be considered mature, the increase in love's capacity in a believer's life is limitless. Therefore, growth in maturity is limitless!

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"O God, help me to make a deeper surrender of my life, in order that I may experience a deeper appropriation of Thy love. The breadth of my love for Your children will manifest the depth of Your love in my life. Pour out Your love into my heart! Thank You! I am forever satisfied with the gift of

God's love, but I am also dissatisfied with the smallness of my capacity for Your Holy Love. I know that I am only mature to the extent that I am mature in the possession and practice of Holy Love. Open my heart to more of Your Love - everyday! Amen!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

I pray that you will grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ! I pray that the wonderful love of God may be shed abroad in your heart each new day. Remember the famous prayer: "Love divine, all loves excelling; joy of heaven to earth come down; fix in me thy humble dwelling; all thy faithful mercies crown." God is love, and if you are to be like God, you must be a person who is possessed of divine love! Make this your desire and goal!

20.

*"SHOULD I BE HEAVENLY-MINDED WITH
EARTHLY CONCERNS?"*

Are you a 'holistic' Christian? That is, 'both - and' Christian? Both doctrine and ethics? Both creed and life? Both inner experience and outer conduct? Both individual salvation and social action? Both devotion and service?

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

He whose head is in heaven ought to have his hands and his feet most actively at work on earth! A Christian is a man who is living in two worlds. He who is most alive to spiritual visions ought to be most responsive to human needs, for the man with the heavenly vision is seeing Reality from a broader perspective. Being alive to the spiritual realm ought to automatically include the entire material realm.

One said to John Wesley during his search for spiritual reality, "Sir, you wish to serve God and go to heaven? Remember that you cannot serve Him alone. You must therefore find companions or make them; the Bi-

ble knows nothing of solitary religion".

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"O God, I feel Your call upon my life, the call to open the eyes of the blind and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of Sin, and inheritance among those who are cleansed by faith."

"...to open their eyes to their true condition so that they may repent and live in the light of God instead of in Satan's darkness, so that they may receive forgiveness for their sins and God's inheritance along with all people everywhere whose sins are cleansed away, who are set apart by faith in me." (Acts 26:18)

Help me to fulfill my call in the society of needy persons. Here am I, dear Lord! Send me wherever You wish—to my next-door neighbor or to a foreign country. Wherever there is human need, use me if You wish. Just give me strength, wisdom, and courage—and above all, Christlike love for the Loveless! In Jesus' conquering Name."

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

It is my earnest prayer for you that you will be a person who is committed to translating

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*a clear heavenly vision into a most practical
Christian ministry!*

21.

*"WHAT HAPPENS IF I SHOULD LOSE MY
GRIP IN LIFE?"*

Have you ever failed morally, spiritually, or socially, and after your failure wondered if God still cared for you?

*Have you ever felt so guilty that you had a hard time thinking that you could ever "love yourself again"? Have you ever had a hard time looking at yourself in the mirror after you did, or said, or thought something that was ignoble? Have you ever had an experience when you felt, like Simon Peter, that you had denied your Lord? ***"The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him, 'Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times'. And he went outside and wept bitterly."*** (Luke 22:61, 62)*

It is comforting to know that God will not despise a broken and contrite heart of repentance. Peter sinned grievously and he wept bitterly, but he also repented and turned to God wholeheartedly. Peter's sins were forgiven and his dignity was restored. He became a great leader in the Early

Church.

He who climbs the highest, may fall the hardest. Jesus warned us to watch and to pray, lest we fall into temptation. He said that the spirit of man is willing but that the flesh is weak. Everyone is vulnerable at one time or another. Wrote Paul to the overly-confident Corinthian believers, "So let the man who feels sure of his standing today be careful that he does not fall tomorrow." (I Corinthians 10:12)

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

After God awakens a person to his true spiritual condition, he must repent of his sins. When Nathan confronted David with his heinous sins, David did not try to rationalize his sins or deny them or scapegoat responsibility upon someone else. "Then David said to Nathan, 'I have sinned against the Lord.'" In Psalms 51:1, David recalls God's merciful disposition: "Have mercy on me. O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions." The sinner, who finds himself helpless and hopeless, has no claim to make on God except God's mercy. The sinner, whose awakened conscience intensifies his sense of total unworthiness, never

demands God's justice (which would result in the execution of the death sentence), but he pleads for God's mercy (which results in pardon and forgiveness).

It is God's nature to be merciful, so the repentant one can be assured that he will receive what he needs - mercy - not what he deserves - justice! God's unfailing love and His great compassion is the source of hope for an otherwise hopeless and despairing situation of moral collapse.

If David believed that God was, by nature, a God of unfailing mercy and compassion, how much more should we affirm God's mercy, especially now that we see God's love personified in Jesus Christ! Jesus said He came to seek and to save the lost, that He came to heal the morally diseased, and that He came to restore the fallen. Jesus is filled with compassion for sinners.

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"My Heavenly Father, when a little child is walking across a rocky riverbed with his father and the child loses his grip on the father's hand when he slips on the rocks, does the father lose his grip on the child's hand? Never! So, You, Heavenly Father, will hold on to me when I stumble and lose

my grip! Thank You! A Thousand Thank 'Yous' For Your Strength and Kindness! Amen!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

Our loving and powerful God is able to secure you amidst the many changes and chances of life!

22.

*"CAN I PERSONALLY EXPERIENCE THE
FAITH VENTURE?"*

*"God, Help Me to Walk Boldly Into
The Future with You.*

*Take Away My Fear of The Unknown.
Help Me to Realize That What You
Promise, You Always Fulfill—
In Your Own Time and Way!"*

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

WHAT IS FAITH? "It is the confident assurance that something we want is going to happen. It is the certainty that what we hope for is waiting for us, even though we cannot see it up ahead. Now faith is assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen." (Hebrews 11:1, Living Bible)

Faith separates you from sin and from selfishness, in order to separate you to a sincere commitment to Christ and to service in God's Kingdom!

TIME FOR A PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"O God, help me to exercise true faith, the kind of faith which Abraham of old exer-

cised when he obeyed you when you called him to leave his homeland (i.e., his 'comfort zone') and to go to an unknown land. That took lots of courage—the kind of courage that I (a comfort-loving person) need. Help me faithfully and obediently to respond to Your call to action in my life. Help me to be a living embodiment of true faith, even if it takes me much time and practice to develop a robust faith in You. Thanks for your patience with me, when I feel so weak! I LOVE YOU! Amen!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

Allow me to kindly remind you that a 'Saving Faith' is an 'Obedient Faith'. I encourage you to take God at His Word today, and to courageously step out in faith to do His precious will! God bless you in your 'Journey of Faith'!

23.

*"HOW SHOULD I HANDLE MY CONFLICTS
WITH FELLOW CHRISTIANS?"*

We need each other's forgiveness because we are very fallible human beings.

One cause of misunderstanding among Christians is faulty judgment. The most sanctified Christian is subject to errors in judgment. With the best of intentions, a Christian can blunder and falter. Much misunderstanding among Christians is caused, however, because Christians make hasty judgments without sufficient knowledge even to form a judgment. What a different world this would be if only we were very slow to form judgments about others.

Christians sometimes expect more of people than what God Himself expects of them. Many Christians have pronounced judgments upon people, only to find out later that such judgments were unjust and the cause of much humiliation. How often we misinterpret someone's affection, facial expression, or overheard conversation. God help us to admit that we are sometimes faulty in our judgment.

Sharp differences in opinions sometimes sever strong-willed Christians. The contention between Paul and Barnabas was so great that they parted company. Christians oftentimes differ in outlook, tastes, and opinions, and from this alone, misunderstandings arise. It is very easy to talk but often hard to listen.

It is easy to be so convinced that one is right in his views, that he becomes closed-minded even to the suggestions or opinions of other Christians. The clash of strong-willed opinions oftentimes breeds misunderstandings.

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

A Christian must seek to understand the motives for people's behavior. How much easier it would be to forgive our fellow men, if we would seek better to understand the motives for their behavior. Impoliteness may be caused by worry or pain. Suspicion may be caused by misinformation. Bad nerves may cause impatience.

James Fraser, a missionary who worked hard and prayed intensely for his people, one day lost his temper in the presence of the very people to whom he was ministering. His problem was not primarily spiritual;

his problem was physical. He had worked so hard and had prayed so long that he had failed to get sufficient exercise and fresh air. To understand the cause for one's behavior is to be aided in developing the forgiving spirit. How much easier it would be to forbear with one another, if we sought to understand the personality make-up and the behavioral motives of those with whom we differ.

Each of us is unique and is born with differing temperaments that we will have the rest of our lives. People judge one another with such statements as these: "He's too progressive or he's too slow to change"; "He's too liberal or he's too conservative"; "He's too emotional or he's too staid"; "He's too visionary or he's too practical"; "He's too talkative or he's too quiet"; "He's too active or he's too passive."

These judgmental statements are made based on one's own temperament or one's own background. It would be much easier to accept or to forgive one another, if we all learned to accept each other's differing temperaments and each other's differing backgrounds. Learn to give and take. Learn to appreciate that which is different from

you!

TIME FOR A PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"O Loving Father, You have forgiven me of my many sins, so give me Your grace that enables me to forgive those who have sinned against me! Your Word teaches me that my continued fellowship with You and my continued forgiveness from You, is granted to me on the basis of my ability to forgive those who offend (hurt) me! Your Word declares (Jesus speaking): "Your heavenly Father will forgive you if you forgive those who sin against you; but if you refuse to forgive them, he will not forgive you." (Matthew 6:12, 14, 15)

"O God, Your Word further teaches that an unforgiving spirit in me, actually grieves the mighty Holy Spirit, and it destroys fellowship between Christians. The apostle Paul (in the New Testament) wrote these words: "Don't cause the Holy Spirit sorrow by the way you live. Stop being mean, bad-tempered and angry. Quarreling, harsh words, and dislike of others should have no place in your lives. Instead, be kind to each other, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, just as God has forgiven you be-

cause you belong to Christ." "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, in whom ye were sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and railing, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you." (Ephesians 4:30a, 31, 32; Living Bible)

Lord, grant me the grace (strength) to live at peace with every human being—even with those I have difficulty in understanding. Give me power to overlook the faults in those around me. Help me to love even the 'sandpaper-type' Christians. Love all, forgive all, pray for all, and serve all! To have a 'clear conscience' is worth more than the bank account of a millionaire! Thank You for Your powerful grace, Dear Jesus! Amen"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

Please always remember: "Has God deserted Heaven, and left it up to you, to judge if this or that is right, and what each one should do? I think He's still in business, and knows when to wield the rod, so when you're judging others, just remember, you're NOT - God".

24.

*"SHOULD I SEE MY LIFE AS A JOY RIDE OR
AS A JOY ROAD?"*

Seek holiness, and you will get happiness also. Seek happiness and you will not only lose holiness, but you will lose happiness as well.

"Whoever finds his life (i.e., seeks happiness as his primary goal in life) will lose it, and whoever loses his life (i.e., seeks God's will and way—His holiness—as his primary goal in life) will find it." (Matthew 10:38-39) "The hope of good men is eternal happiness. The hopes of evil men are all in vain." (Proverbs 10:28, Living Bible)

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

Happiness is being a channel—a channel to connect God's love with human 'lovelessness', a channel to connect God's transforming power to human impotence. Happiness is service. Delighting in creating. Implementing 'love projects' in the context of a love-hungry world.

Being God's little creators—creating new movements, new lives, and new hopes.

Happiness is fulfilling the purpose for which humans are created—to love God and to serve humanity. Happiness is the exciting process of 'becoming', forever 'becoming', but never fully arriving. Walking by faith here and seeing Christ face to face someday. Happiness is companionship with Christ, made nearer and dearer when death robs one of the body!

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"Father, knowing You truly is to possess within me a spring of living water, bubbling up with the joy of the Lord! Help me never to seek happiness but instead to seek holiness, and in experiencing Your holiness to find that I am permeated with happiness."

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

*Following Christ is not a 'joy ride', for a believer experiences 'bumps' and 'bruises' (trials and adversities) as he seeks to live a 'Godly Life'. **"In the world ye shall have tribulations, but be of good cheer, for I have overcome the world"**, said Jesus. Christians are those who have come through many tribulations. God gives "joy unspeakable" to His followers - in spite of trials. For trials are meant to prepare God's*

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*children for heaven! Christians are on a
'joy road'!*

25.

*"IS THERE ANY HOPE FOR ME IF I
FALTER OR FAIL SPIRITUALLY?"*

*IS IT NECESSARY FOR A BELIEVER TO YIELD TO
TEMPTATION? The simple and important an-
swer to that question is 'NO'. Jesus 'suf-
fered being tempted', and yet He never
once sinned! Hebrews 2:18 states; "For
since He (Jesus) himself has now been
through suffering and temptation, He
knows what it is like when we suffer and
are tempted, and he is wonderfully able
to help us." (Living Bible)*

*God promises to help us during temptation.
"And no temptation is irresistible. You
can trust God to keep the temptation from
becoming so strong that you can't stand
up against it, for He has promised this
and will do what He says. He will show
you how to escape temptation's power so
that you can bear up patiently against
it." (I Corinthians 10:13; Living Bible)*

*As believers, we need never to yield to
temptation. We can say 'NO' to Satan's al-
lurements. Because God controls even the
temptations that beset us, every believer
can handle temptation. God is strong, able,*

and willing to help every believer during his times of moral struggle and spiritual warfare. Jesus has already won the battle on Mount Calvary, and the power that raised Christ from the dead is the same power that is available to give Christians victory over temptation. We do not work for a victory; we work from a victory. The victory belongs to Jesus, and each believer has a right and a responsibility personally to appropriate that historic victory as his own personal victory.

Great is God's protection of his trusting children. "The Lord is faithful; he will make you strong and guard you from satanic attacks of every kind." (II Thessalonians 3:3, Living Bible) "He is able to keep you from slipping and falling away, and to bring you sinless and perfect, into his glorious presence with mighty shouts of everlasting joy. Amen." (Jude 24; Living Bible)

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

Have you ever failed morally, spiritually, or socially, and after your failure wondered if God still cared for you? Have you ever felt so guilty that you had a hard time thinking that you could ever love yourself again?

Have you ever had a hard time looking at yourself in the mirror, after you did, said, or thought something that was ignoble? Have you ever had an experience when you felt, like Simon Peter, that you had denied your Lord? "The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: 'Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times.' And he went outside and wept bitterly." (Luke 22:61-62)

He who climbs the highest may fall the hardest. Jesus warned us to watch and to pray, lest we fall into temptation. He said that the spirit of man is willing but that the flesh is weak. Everyone is vulnerable at one time or another. Wrote Paul to the overly-confident Corinthian believers: "So let the man who feels sure of his standing today be careful that he does not fall tomorrow". (I Corinthians 10:12; Phillips)

Our God is able to heal the broken-hearted. Our God is able to restore the fallen, to reclaim the lost, to revive the fainting, to strengthen the weak one, to forgive the guilty, to reconcile the alienated, and to give dignity for shame to the prodigal!

It is said that where a broken bone is healed, the bone at that point is stronger

than at the points where the bones have never been broken! Where one is weakest as a fallen believer, he can become, by God's grace, the strongest. God loves the backslidden believer. The Good Shepherd loves His Lost Sheep.

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"O God, You are so loving and compassionate. You are not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance! Yes, God, I have initially repented of all my sins, and I have assurance that You have forgiven me of my many sins. But, God, I am beginning to understand that repentance is not a 'one time' experience (at the time of my conversion)! I am now seeing that 'repentance' is an on-going attitude of my heart. Every day I must maintain an attitude of humility and contrition – turning my back daily against any sin that seeks entrance into my heart!

Life throws so many obstacles (temptations) on to my pathway - like the temptation to nurture bitterness in my heart (an unforgiving spirit), or like the temptation to lust or to envy or to worship money, and so much more! Your abundant resources (Bible, Church, Prayer, Counsel from others,

etc.) are available to me, but some way, O God, I have been unresponsive, negligent, slothful, disobedient! Moreover, it is when my mind has been closed, my heart hardened, my spirit ingrown, my will weakened, that I find myself 'losing out' spiritually. I feel myself 'backsliding', and my spiritual nature is no longer sensitive to Your 'still small voice' speaking to me! This is a dreadful 'state', and I want to be forgiven, restored, healed, renewed, reclaimed, reconciled, and empowered to live again for Christ—this time as a more careful, prayerful, obedient follower! Thank You! Amen!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

You can by God's enabling grace, live a consistently faithful life, as a follower of Christ. But, remember, if you fail morally, in humility get up and follow Christ Closely!

26.

*"HOW CAN I DEVELOP DISCERNMENT
AMIDST LIFE'S COMPLEXITIES?"*

Positively Speaking: The believer's outward life behavior is "filled with the fruits of righteousness". That is, action is linked with affection, fruit is linked with faith, doing is linked with being, and demonstration is linked with doctrine. Love is not passive, but active; love is not primarily negative, but positive. Love, to be proved, must practically manifest itself!

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

The love of God in the human heart not only perfects the motives within, but it guards and guides the actions without. It guards the actions in a negative sense, that is, it enables the believer's actions to be blameless. Blameless actions are actions that derive from a pure heart.

Love has no desire to hurt others. Love respects the rights of others. Love does not pursue selfish advantage when with others. Love respects the personal convictions of all. Love seeks to live at peace with all men, but does not pursue peace at any cost.

That is, love leaves no room for compromise with sin simply to gain the world's favor and peace. Love never gives birth to a cold, self-righteous type of goodness, which repels rather than attracts men to Christ. The love, which does not easily give offense, is the love that is open, understanding, warm, and compassionate.

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"Father, help me to change my religious creeds into practical deeds, to transform my religious words into powerful actions, to translate my good impressions into good expressions! Amen!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

Dear Loved One and Friend: "My prayer for you is that you will overflow more and more with love for others, and at the same time keep on growing in spiritual knowledge and insight. I want you always to see clearly the difference between right and wrong, and to be inwardly clean, no one being able to criticize you from now until our Lord returns. May you always be doing those good, kind things which show that you are a child of God, from this will bring much praise and glory to the Lord."

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27.

*"CAN I FACE THE FUTURE WITH ANY
OPTIMISM?"*

For All Eternity, Jesus Has Been 'King Of The Ages.' In time, Jesus remains as the King. But earth is filled with earthly sovereigns. How does Jesus compare with earth's powerful kings? The evil tyrants of earth may challenge his position, but Jesus continues to reign!

Jesus is rightly called 'King of Kings.' This title acknowledges His eternal and great continuing sovereignty in the midst of earthly kings.

As King of kings, Jesus' power is incredibly great and all other rulers, whether they acknowledge it or not, are subordinate to Christ.

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

Have you ever observed that kind of special picture which has two pictures within one frame? Looking from one angle the picture reveals Christ on the cross, suffering for lost humanity, and an apparent defeat. But move a short distance and look at the picture from another angle and the pic-

ture is no longer the crucified Christ, but rather the picture now reveals the resurrected, ascended Lord, accompanied by two angels, going up into glory with all the power of heaven and earth at His disposal.

From which angle are you looking at life? Do you see only suffering, or do you see victory over suffering and sin, as you view the resurrected Lord from the proper angle? Are you looking at life from the right angle?

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"Oh God, when wrong seems often so strong, I have faith that You have not abandoned Your world. You are still 'moving upon the deep darkness of the world!' Your Spirit is still 'striving with men'. Your hand of mercy is still extended to wicked men and your offer to forgive and to transform, to comfort, and to guide is still as real as ever it was in the past! Your miracle power is just as great as it was in the past great revivals. You still are the sovereign God and You can make even 'the wrath of men to praise You'. You resist the proud ones, and You give grace to the humble ones! Your ears are still open unto the cries of the hurting and oppressed ones! Your power to answer the prayers of the

'broken and contrite' ones is as great as it was in the days of old. Your promises of salvation are still fulfilled in the lives of those who find their place at the 'Foot of the Cross'! I know, O God, that You are still sovereign over the entire world—even the world of evil men. You still have control over the affairs of men and nations! Your all-seeing eye still discerns the 'thoughts and intents' of every person in the entire world! Those who follow Christ have a right to be optimistic about The Future!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

Jesus' Crown of Glory has replaced Jesus' Crown of Thorns! Jesus reigns, therefore you must serve!

28.

"HOW CAN I BE CONFIDENT THAT I AM INCLUDED IN CHRIST?"

There are those who appear to be very confident, very self-reliant, and self-assured ('towering like a cedar of Lebanon').

These persons seem to manifest no doubts, no fears, and often they are brash, bold, and brazen. They seem to have the 'world by the tail'. They enjoy intimidating others with their confident words and actions. It seems that such people make all the right decisions. They boast that they are self-made persons.

However, such confidence is an illusion! Such confidence is the product of spiritual ignorance—a lack of understanding of God's master plan for history!

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

How can you have confidence that you are included in Christ? You can have confidence that you are a Christian and on your way to heaven, if you have responded in faith to the Good News of salvation. (It is not enough to hear the Good News. You must also believe the Good News. That is,

you must put your faith totally in God whose plan for human salvation has been revealed through Christ.) Believing is trusting God, taking God at His word, transferring your trust from yourself to God alone, for God alone has a plan for human salvation.

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"O God, I see that my confidence does not originate in the fulfillment of my own self-centered will, but in the fulfillment of Your eternal will—the salvation of mankind through Christ. If one is not saved through Christ, he has no basis for confidence and every reason for doubt and fear. I put my trust in the Saving Christ alone!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

I encourage you to place your faith in God's provision for your salvation, through Jesus Christ your Savior - the only basis for confidence and assurance in your life, as you live daily and as you face eternity in your future. Remember, what God intended in eternity, and what Christ provided in time (on the Cross), you must personally appropriate by faith (trust) - to enjoy Salvation from all your sins and reconciliation with your blessed Savior! Look to Him alone, and you

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will live—and experience true and lasting confidence.

29.

*"IF I FAIL MORALLY, WHAT MUST I DO TO
BE SPIRITUALLY RESTORED?"*

The God who, through His Son, has made wonderful provision for the recovery of the fallen person, has certain expectations in regards to man's response to God's grace initiative. There are certain steps in the recovery process.

1. *Recognize the reality and the seriousness of sin.*
2. *Don't rationalize or deny your sins.*
3. *Accept personal moral responsibility for your failures and your sins. Remember, every temptation is resistible. No one needs yield to temptation. It is because one has become careless or over-confident*
s stronger at the point of the spirit than anywhere else.
4. *Recognize that forgiveness is always costly. It took Jesus' death to make possible your forgiveness!*
5. *Confess all your sins to God, and*

repent deeply of your sins. Humility and contrition is the door back to God. Peter, after his betrayal of Jesus, wept bitterly and repented wholeheartedly. Do not try to conceal your sins. If you yield to temptation, follow David's example! He wrote "Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover my iniquity. I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord' - and you forgave the guilt of my sin." (Psalms 32:5)

- 6. Accept God's forgiveness gratefully and humbly. Never take God's forgiveness for granted! One man was asked how he could sin so brazenly. He replied something like this: "O, I am not worried, for it is God's business to forgive!" Such blasphemy! Remember that God is not obligated to forgive anyone! Forgiveness is a gift of God's mercy. We cannot earn it, deserve it, or purchase it! We can only receive it with brokenness and humility. We all deserve to die! If God gave us what we deserved, we would all be in hell!*

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

7. *After you have confessed your sins to God, be willing, if necessary, to confess your sins to others.*

8. *Forgive yourself and learn valuable lessons from your moral failures. Simon Peter, after his dreadful fall into sin, wept bitter tears of regret and remorse. However, God's mercy made possible the forgiveness of Peter and, as a result, Peter was restored to dignity and usefulness. However, after Peter's terrible fall, caused largely because of pride and overconfidence, Peter forever thereafter maintained a spirit of deep humility and trust in Christ alone.*

9. *After you have accepted the forgiveness of God, and after you have forgiven yourself, then put yourself back under God's control.*

10. *Accept without complaint the God-allowed consequences from your past wrong moral decisions (sins), but expect God to continue to use*

*you even while you are suffering
from the consequences.*

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"Dear God, I am made by You, and I am made for You, and I can never be satisfied outside of fellowship with You! Lord, forgive me for my 'drifting' away from You! The world has many allurements, and I confess that I have become infatuated with some of the 'world's toys'! Consequently (and predictably), I wandered away from the God whom I love! Forgive me for my backslidings! Forgive me for my 'lukewarm' attitude towards spiritual (important) matters! Forgive me for my 'double-mindedness' - an attitude of trying sometimes to 'act' like a Christian, and many times 'flirting' with the evil things of the world! Even though there are, admittedly, 'pleasures in sin for a season', those sinful pleasures soon turn to disgust and misery! I have forsaken my 'holy vows' that I made to You—vows of faithfulness, and chastity, and exclusive loyalty, and the repudiation of all the false gods of the world! O my God, with a broken and contrite heart, I bow before You in deep repentance! Forgive me for all my sins! Restore unto me the 'joy of my salvation'. Re-

new a right spirit within me. Purify my heart, and give me motives that are worthy of Your cause and kingdom! Draw me again into Your loving fold, dear Loving Shepherd! I surrender my sin-twisted will to Your beautiful and holy will! Give me the strength daily to resist temptation, to withstand all persecutions from the world, to endure every hardship that my life shall give to me! Help me to forsake all my 'worldly idols', and to focus my attention alone on You. Shed abroad Your love in my heart that I might love You more and more!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

For any believer who has faltered and failed, spiritually speaking, the following prayer by David is most encouraging: Broken-hearted, repentant David prayed, "Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me." (Psalms 51:11-12)

30.

*"HOW CAN I BECOME A REALISTIC
OPTIMIST?"*

After God Awakens a person to his true spiritual condition, he must repent of his sins. When Nathan confronted David with his heinous sins, David did not try to rationalize his sins or deny them or scapegoat responsibility upon someone else. "The David said to Nathan, 'I have sinned against the Lord.'" (II Samuel 12:13)

In Psalms 51:1, David recalls God's merciful disposition: "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions."

The sinner, who finds himself helpless and hopeless, has no claim to make on God except God's mercy. The sinner, whose awakened conscience intensifies his sense of total unworthiness, deserves God's justice (which would result in the execution of the death sentence), but he, instead, pleads for God's mercy (which results in pardon and forgiveness).

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

Faith in God elevates all of life to a plane of exciting possibilities! To see life through the eyes of faith is to see life as a 'field brimming with countless opportunities'! The man of faith sees problems as projects, and he sees stumbling-blocks as stepping-stones. The man of faith believes that his God is in charge of all circumstances - good and bad. He believes that all things (happenings) "work into a pattern for good to those who love the Lord"!

So long as we believe that everything depends on our own efforts, we are bound to be pessimists, for experience has taught the grim lesson that our own efforts can achieve very little of lasting value.

TIME FOR A PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"O God, elevate my life to a new plane of exciting possibilities. Help me to raise my sights to see my potential in Christ. Give me and my fellow seekers 'the certainty that what we hope for is waiting for us, even though we cannot see it up ahead'. Give us the confident assurance that something we want is going to happen."

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

How amazing it is to realize that 'a child of sin' can become 'a child of love and goodness', in the 'twinkling of an eye' when faith takes hold of God's offered new life in Christ! At that moment of true spiritual conversion, you become an heir to all the promises of God!

Is this declaration a declaration of mere 'idealism', or is this a declaration of 'realism'? Ask the multiplied millions of persons in all ages who have 'taken God at His word' (faith) and who have found their lives changed – sometimes quickly and sometimes slowly! The greatest 'realistic optimists' are those who claim God's promises as their own! Remember, the vision which God gives

To you is the same vision, which God, through faith, will realize in you! 'Good News'!

*Booklets of
"Effective Christian Living" Series.*

<i>No.</i>	<i>Titles</i>
<i>1.</i>	<i>THE POWER OF PRAYER!</i>
<i>2.</i>	<i>THE CROSS OF JESUS!</i>
<i>3.</i>	<i>THE CHRIST OF EASTER!</i>
<i>4.</i>	<i>PREPARING FOR DEATH'S</i>
<i>5.</i>	<i>CHRISTIAN WITNESS TO OTHERS!</i>
<i>6.</i>	<i>LIFE IN THE CHURCH!</i>
<i>7.</i>	<i>GOD FOR ALL HOLIDAYS!</i>
<i>8.</i>	<i>THE SPIRIT FILLED LIFE!</i>
<i>9.</i>	<i>PERSONAL SIGNIFICANCE!</i>
<i>10.</i>	<i>OUR ETERNAL HOME - HEAVEN!</i>
<i>11.</i>	<i>CULTIVATING CHRIST LIKE CHAR- ACTER!</i>
<i>12.</i>	<i>CONFRONTING LIFE'S COMPLEXI- TIES!</i>
<i>13.</i>	<i>LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE!</i>
<i>14.</i>	<i>CONQUERING THE ENEMIES WITH- IN!</i>
<i>15.</i>	<i>GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION!</i>
<i>16.</i>	<i>THE CHRIST OF CHRISTMAS!</i>
<i>17.</i>	<i>COPING WITH LIFE'S HARDSHIPS!</i>