

A framed chalkboard with a dark surface and a light-colored border. The text "God's Classroom" is written in a white, serif font. The word "God's" is on the top line and "Classroom" is on the bottom line. There is a small white mark in the bottom right corner of the chalkboard.

God's
Classroom

***CONQUERING THE ENEMIES
WITHIN!***

BOOKLET 14

Effective Christian Living" Series

By

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BOOKLET 14
"CONQUERING THE ENEMIES
WITHIN!"

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1.

"WHAT VALUE SHOULD I PLACE ON
MONEY?"

"And He said unto them, "Take heed, and keep yourselves from all covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. And he spake a parable unto them, saying, the ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: and he reasoned within himself, saying, what shall I do, because I have not where to bestow my fruits? And he said, this will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry. But God said unto him, thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee; and the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." (Words of Jesus)

There was no crime in the rich man having large possessions. In fact, some of the great characters of the Bible were very wealthy: Abraham, Job, Solomon, etc. The rich man had great opportunity of providing for the physical and spiritual needs of his fellowmen, but he failed in his opportunity. Instead of transforming his money into things that last forever, he used his money to satisfy his selfish desires and to inflate his ego.

Money is not to be despised, but it is to be used for the good of man and the glory of God. This the rich man failed to do. The Christian is to make his money work for things that last forever. Giving money to the work of God is changing money from the tangible to the intangible, from the material to the spiritual, from the temporal to the eternal.

The rich man in Jesus' parable was called a fool for he reasoned that everything had its price tag. He failed to realize the limitations of money. Like many others, he failed to realize that there are many things in life that

money cannot buy. Jesus called few persons' fools, but this man was called a fool! He tried to find his security in money and in material, temporal things.

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

Money cannot buy health. In fact, the striving after wealth sometimes robs one of health.

Money cannot buy love or personal acceptance. There have been those who have had an abundance of money, but who have died a suicide death for lack of personal love and acceptance.

Money cannot buy personal peace of mind. Saith the Scriptures, "The sleep of a laboring man is sweet, whether he eats little or much; but the fullness of the rich will not let him sleep." (Ecclesiastes 5:12)

Money cannot buy national peace. The country which is biggest and strongest militarily, may still lack peace.

The Christian must not fall into the trap of the Rich Fool, thinking that all things have monetary value. Rather,

the Christian must clearly see the limitations of money and things. While money is not to be despised, money has its great limitations. For instance, money cannot buy character. Money, on the other hand, sometimes destroys character.

Money cannot buy eternal life. The rich man in Jesus' parable (Luke 12:15-21) is called a fool because he failed to realize that his money could not purchase eternal life for him.

"Beware! Don't always be wishing for what you don't have. For real life and real living are not related to how rich we are. Then he gave an illustration: A rich man had a fertile farm that produced fine crops. In fact, his barns were full to overflowing—he couldn't get everything in. He thought about his problem, and finally exclaimed, 'I know—I'll tear down my barns and build bigger ones! Then I'll have room enough. And I'll sit back and say to myself, "Friend, you have enough stored away for years to come. Now take it easy! Wine, women, and song for you! "But God said to him, 'Fool! Tonight you die. Then who will get it

all?' "Yes, every man is a fool who gets rich on earth but not in heaven." (This sober story from the lips of Jesus is worth reading often)!

The scripture is only stating the obvious, and well-known, but little-acknowledged, fact, when it says: "We brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world." (I Timothy 6:7) "As he came forth from his mother's womb, naked shall he go again as he came, and shall take nothing for his labor, which he may carry away in his hand." (Ecclesiastes 5:15)

TIME FOR A PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"Father, I realize that man cannot live without bread, but neither can man live by bread alone. Let me never despise material things, for 'the earth is the Lord's and the fullness therein'. Yet, help me never to fall down and worship material things. May I always see your purpose in giving me things - to use things as a means to the end of advancing the Kingdom of Heaven!"

"Father, help me to know true con-

tentment - a contentment based not on my financial standings before men, but based on my personal relationship with Christ! Help me to be rich in good works, giving generously of myself to those in any need."

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

Do not be the slave of things; live masterfully by always using things to serve eternal purposes! You brought nothing into this world, and you can take nothing out of this world - except a Christ-like character, which shall live forever!

2.

"WHY SHOULD I SEEK FOR-
GIVENESS FROM THOSE I HAVE
HURT?"

Every Christian is called to follow the example of Christ who was kind, compassionate, and forgiving.

Paul wrote to the Ephesian believers, "Quarreling, harsh words, and dislike of others should have no place in your lives." (Ephesians 4:31)

One of the most important and essential qualities of the sincere Christian is the ability to confess his shortcomings and sins to his fellow men. Why say, 'I'm sorry'? Simply because I, as a believer, am only a Christian in the Making!

I am subject to weaknesses in the body and mind, and I am subject to the possibility of sinning in the spirit. Both weakness and sins can adversely affect human relationships and Christian fellowship.

Even among fellow believers, there is a need to forgive and to be forgiven. Extending and receiving forgiveness

is the 'oil in the machinery of human relationships'. No machine can run without oil, and no human relationship can long be maintained without the ability to extend and to receive forgiveness!

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

Believers need to ask forgiveness because, even though their motives may be pure, their actions can, at the same time, be faulty and misunderstood. This can be illustrated with some common examples.

A parent looks not only at a child's actions and performance as evidence of a child's love for the parent, but also at the child's motives. Does a mother despise the crude, child-like drawing, which her small child gives to her on Mother's Day? Never! The good mother sees the love behind the act. And the drawing (be it ever so imperfect) is cherished because of the child's love.

In addition, a loving husband does not judge his wife's love for him on the basis of her perfect performance.

The wife's devotion and love for her husband may be total and complete, but her actions and words may be very imperfect and at times even crude.

The same is true in any genuine human relationship. Fellow Christians ought to see behind every action and word, to the intention, the motive, and the desire. However, because we Christians cannot always see 'below the surface' to the motives, but instead become preoccupied with the imperfect actions and words, we need to confess to each other when actions and words are misunderstood by our fellow Christians. One's actions and words do not always reflect the true motives of the heart, but when one realizes that their actions and words are misunderstood, they need to communicate the true meaning and intention of their actions and words.

"Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honest clear through. Don't quarrel with anyone. Be at peace with everyone, just as much as possible." ***(Romans 12:17-18)***

TIME FOR A PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"Lord, when I slip and unintentionally say the wrong thing, help me to have the humility, sensitivity, and courage to say: 'I'm sorry' to the person or persons whom I have hurt or offended. In Jesus' charitable name! Amen!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

You cannot claim perfect behavior or perfect words, but you can claim to serve a perfect God who can perfect your motives within and who can enable you to harmonize your relationships without!

3.

"HOW CAN I EFFECTIVELY
CONTROL AND USE MY POWERFUL
ANGER?"

The Bible speaks of at least two kinds of anger. There is the lightning-quick, agitated outburst of temper 'Thumos', what we might call 'flying off the handle'. There is also the subtler, abiding, revengeful type of anger that results in nursing grudges 'Ogre'. It is more lasting and devastating in nature.

Anger is dangerous because it can motivate one to dangerous action. Most anger is born out of deep insecurity and is evidence of an unsundered ego. James and John were called, 'Sons of Thunder' in their early lives, for they apparently were often filled with anger. Even as followers of Christ, they found themselves wanting God to exercise His divine powers to destroy God-rejecters.

"And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go

to Jerusalem, and sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. In addition, they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem. In addition, when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village." *(Luke 9:51-56).*

But Jesus cleansed and rechanneled their anger and the day came when they were love-filled disciples. John is now known, not as a 'son of thunder', but as the 'Beloved Disciple'!

Let us not forget that Jesus was angry with a holy indignation on occasion. "And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God. And he straightly charged them

that they should not make him known. And he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto him whom he would: and they came unto him. And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, And to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils: And Simon he surnamed Peter;..." .
(Mark 3:11-16)

"And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. And He made a scourge of cords, and drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables; and to those who were selling the doves He said, "Take these things away; stop making My Father's house a place of business."
John 2:14-16)

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

The apostle Paul was angry on one occasion with the apostle Peter, because the latter betrayed the basic principle of 'salvation by faith', and attempted to bind Gentile converts

with Jewish Law.

"But when Peter came to Antioch I had to oppose him publicly, speaking strongly against what he was doing, for it was very wrong. For when he first arrived, he ate with the Gentile Christians who don't bother with circumcision and the many other Jewish laws. But afterwards, when some Jewish friends of James came, he wouldn't eat with the Gentiles anymore because he was afraid of what these Jewish legalists, who insisted that circumcision was necessary for salvation, would say; and then all the other Jewish Christians and even Barnabas became hypocrites too, following Peter's example, though they certainly knew better.

When I saw what was happening and that they weren't being honest about what they really believed and weren't following the truth of the Gospel, I said to Peter in front of all the others, "Though you are a Jew by birth, you have long since discarded the Jewish laws; so why, all of a sudden, are you trying to make these Gentiles obey them? You and I are Jews by birth,

not mere Gentile sinners, and yet we Jewish Christians know very well that we cannot become right with God by obeying our Jewish laws but only by faith in Jesus Christ to take away our sins. And so we, too, have trusted Jesus Christ, that we might be accepted by God because of faith—and not because we have obeyed the Jewish laws. For no one will ever be saved by obeying them." (*Galatians 2:11-16*)

When Abraham Lincoln, as a young man, saw the slave market at New Orleans for the first time, he is reported to have said, "Let's get out of this, boys. If I ever get any chance to hit this thing, I'll hit it hard".

Aristotle once said, "Anyone can become angry; it is easy. But to be angry with the right person to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose, and in the right way - that is not easy!"

'Warm anger' is healthy and is the kind of anger God Himself expresses. Little time elapses between the stimulus (anger) and the expression (proper treatment with the subject). There is no vindictiveness, and there

is a willingness to listen to the other person's responses and viewpoints. In this anger, there is a warm emotional exchange in an atmosphere of self-control. There is no exchange of malicious words and there is no coercion. There is no grudge carrying. This anger is short-lived, and it results in a cleansing effect in loving relationships. It is followed by forgetting and forgiving, and results in increased confidence between the parties involved. Warm anger builds relationship and is an expression of love. It is reaction against the bad things in a loved one, and it works for the removal of that which is hindering the fuller development of the loved one.

Jesus' anger was always a 'warm anger'; He was always seeking to bring conviction out of complacency; to bring insight out of spiritual blindness; to restore righteousness where evil was rampant!

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

Heavenly Father, deliver me from oversensitivity and touchiness which oftentimes become the bridgehead for

sin - the sin of carnal anger. Let me be so enraptured by your love that I will be oblivious to the hurts and insults others inflict upon me. Unleash my anger in defense of the weak and oppressed, not in defense of my own rights. Father, many times I have felt the turmoil of inner anger, and have seen that anger either well up into outrage or harden into a bitter grudge. O God, cleanse me from all carnal anger. Rechannelling my anger into constructive channels of expression, and may my anger be motivated by unselfish considerations and focused on righteous causes. Through the cleansing power of Christ!" Amen.

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

Your anger can be a powerful force either for good or for evil causes. Allow the Holy Spirit to use your anger for His Holy Cause!

4.

"IS IT EVER PROPER FOR ME TO BE
ENGAGED IN DOUBTING?"

Once You Have Staked Your Entire Life On God and His will and His revealed nature, then, using this commitment as your stable center, go as far afield in doubt as you need to in seeking a satisfying intellectual and soul answer to your questions.

Develop a reasoned faith. Struggle to understand. Ask any honest question. Fear not to probe. Develop a tough inquiring mind. Never be fearful to ask any question. Only as you question will the answers be forthcoming.

God encourages this process: "Come, let us reason together, saith the Lord." (Isaiah 1:18)

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

Ask God for a tender heart and a tough mind - a heart tender in response to God's love and a mind tough to grapple with life's mysteries.

We are not meant to understand all of God's ways or all of life's perplexities, but we would understand many more of them if we but had the courage to think and to ponder! The tender heart of faith and receptivity must accept those mysteries that will never be unraveled by the reasoning process.

"But, 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." *(I Peter 3:15)*

An intellectual understanding of Christianity is vital, for Jesus commanded us to love God with all our minds as well as with all our hearts. As one said, "My heart cannot rejoice in what my mind rejects."

An unexamined faith is not a faith worth having - and is indeed dangerous. One must know that his beliefs are based on objective truth, for it is the object of belief that determines the value of belief. To accept anything in an unthinking way is possibly

to accept error.

Also, to accept truth on the basis of dogmatic authority, without thinking it through yourself, is to accept a second-hand faith. A second-hand faith is a dying faith!

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"Father, I see now that even doubting can be an ally rather than an enemy of my Christian Faith. Help me to work out my salvation with the aid of honest doubts which will lead me to the outcome of honest beliefs!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

You must have a reasoned faith, for, although Christianity goes beyond reason, it is not unreasonable. Your honest intellectual doubting will lead you to the adequacy of the evidence, which will result in the assurance of the heart!

5.

"IS MY SURRENDER TO CHRIST
TRULY LIFE-TRANSFORMING?"

Surrender to Christ leads to a right relationship with God, with yourself, and with others.

FIRST, you are freed from the bondage of self-worship to worship of God alone. The irony is this: the more you worship yourself, the more you loath yourself, for you are not made to worship yourself. You are made to worship God alone. Self-worship leads to self-loathing!

SECOND, when you transfer your worship from self to God alone, you automatically find that you have a new love for yourself. Loving God Supremely, you find that you love yourself subordinately. So, surrender to Christ gives you a freedom from self-despising and enables you whole-somely to love yourself. "Since you are able to live with God, you are able to live with yourself, to be at home with yourself, and rather like yourself. For loving Someone beyond yourself,

and more than yourself, you are now free to love yourself." (How to Be a Transformed Person; E. S. Jones; pg. 196)

THIRD, full surrender to Christ sets up a right relationship to people. On the one hand, you are delivered from self-preoccupation. On the other hand, you are delivered from herd bondage—bondage to the group. You are delivered from yourself, in order that you may serve God. You are delivered from peer pressure, in order that you may serve people.

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

Steps to Full-Surrender:

First, recognize that God is the Center and not you. You must remember that you are creature, NOT Creator; son, NOT Father; subject, NOT Master; steward, NOT Lord; man, NOT God!

Second, draw near to God, and determine with your will to make a full surrender of yourself to God, in spite of your hesitation and fears. Remember, when you surrender to God you are surrendering to a Christ-like God.

Third, surrender yourself fully to God's cleansing and creative love. Your 'self' has been frustrated because you have tried to accept an unacceptable 'self'. Now accept yourself as a cleansed 'self' - cleansed of guilt's, frustrations, inferiorities, cynicism, fears, etc. Your 'self' is cleansed by Jesus! There is power in the blood of Christ—power to cleanse the deepest stains of 'self-centeredness' from your soul! You can accept a new 'self', which increasingly is becoming Christ-like!

Your 'self' has been frustrated because you have expressed yourself in a social setting which has been competitive and comparative. This has led to jealousy and strife. Now accept yourself, no longer in horizontal competition with your peers, but as a 'self', which is in the process of vertical development - upward and onward toward the unique standard which God has designed for you. You no longer need to compare and to compete with others—outwardly. God is now your standard, not others. Now you grow and develop with God—

upwardly.

The fact that God is your standard, releases you, on the one hand, from the contentious and contemptuous atmosphere of peer competition and stress. The fact that God is your standard releases you, on the other hand, from the complacent attitude of self-sufficiency and easy contentment with your present attainments. You are delivered from the stress of carnal competitions, and delivered to the creative pursuits of 'divinely given goals'.

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"Father, cleanse me from all self-centered living, in order that I may be creative in God-centered living. Cleanse me from the negative in my carnal selfhood, in order that I may be creative in your consecrated selfhood. Release me from all horizontal competition and give me your energy to pursue God-given goals. In Jesus' name, Amen."

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

What Christ cleanses, He also fills.

*Cleanses from sin, and fills with Him-
self!*

6.

"WHAT ARE THE REVEALED
TRUTHS THAT I MUST NEVER
DOUBT?"

There are times when it is right to doubt and other times when it is wrong to doubt. There are some doubts, if exercised that are always destructive. There are other doubts, if exercised that are productive of belief. There is some doubting which dishonors the truthful character of God. There is other doubting which comes in the very process of discovering the exciting truths about the character of God.

What determines whether doubt is destructive or constructive? One cannot honestly believe unless he has honestly worked through his intellectual doubts. Thus, there are two types of doubting; one positive and one negative; one good and one evil; one constructive and one destructive; one motivated by basic submission and one motivated by basic rebellion.

To doubt the revelation of God's na-

ture as given through the Cross and the Resurrection, is to bypass the road to eternal life. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." "And all who trust him—God's Son—to save them have eternal life; those who don't believe and obey him shall never see heaven, but the wrath of God remains upon them." (John 3:36)

Saving truths (truths concerning God's love, wisdom, power, justice, and mercy) are vividly revealed in the death and resurrection of Christ and are the very foundation of life.

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

Let us look at the personal application of the truths, which were revealed by the Cross and the Resurrection - truths that dare NOT to be doubted!

1. God's character of love: If God loved you so much that He died for you, surely God continues to love you so much that He will not allow anything to happen to you but what will

accomplish good in your life.

2. God's character of wisdom: If God is wise enough providentially to make the wrath of men to praise Him, and wise enough to produce order out of disorder, surely, He is wise enough to manage your life.

3. God's character of power: If God is powerful enough to vanquish death by raising Christ from the dead, thus using the greatest tragedy of history (the crucifixion) to accomplish the greatest triumph of history (redemption), then God is powerful enough to use all your circumstances to serve redemptive purposes in your life!

4. God's character of justice: If God vindicated His righteousness by raising His Sinless Son from the grave on the third day, expressing His vengeance on sin, then God is able in due time to reward unrecognized good and to punish unchecked evil. Therefore, you have no need to fret yourself because of evil doers. "Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of

iniquity." *Psalms 37:1. Evil has already been defeated.*

5. God's character of mercy: if "... God so loved you in that, while you were still a sinner, Christ died for you (But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8), will not that kind of God have mercy upon you when you confess your sins and short comings to Him? You can be assured that the blood of Jesus cleanses you from all unrighteousness ("The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe." (John 1:7) and daily delivers you from the guilt and power of sin.

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"Father, when I cannot understand with my mind, I will learn to trust with my heart. When my doubts assail and my fears annoy, I thank You that You are totally in charge of my world, and that You will withhold no good thing from those who walk uprightly. I am in safekeeping when I am in Your mighty hands! Father, regardless of

those happenings in my life, which seem to defy reason, help me never to doubt the integrity of Your person and purpose. Thank You for the revelation of Yourself in the death and resurrection of Your Son. Help me always to organize my life upon the foundational truths of that historical revelation!" Amen!

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

There are two kinds of doubters in the world - those who are honestly seeking the truth, and those who are dishonestly running from the truth. Let your doubts drive you to the truth!

7.

"SHOULD I SEE CHRISTIANITY AS A RIGID DEMAND OR FULL OF DELIGHTFUL RESOURCES?"

There are far too many believers who are negative and joyless, thinking that negativism is a sign of spirituality. The Bible commands Christians to be sober, so some Christians interpret this to mean joyless, serious-minded, and even miserable!

Jesus is the YES—the divine YES. "A great many people today would like to choose Christianity, but they think it is a NO to living." "You cannot do this." "You cannot do that." "You cannot do this." "You cannot do the other", - if you are a Christian. This is in fact a denial of the will to live. It is the will to surrender and die." (The Divine Yes; pg. 13; E. Stanley Jones))

How ironical that Christianity, which is to be the most positive and affirmative way to live, has been used as a defense for negativism and legalism!

The mind of Christ is gloriously positive! His teaching is life affirming, not

life denying. Jesus never taught self-denial as an end within itself, but only as a means to the end of self-realization.

The last word of Jesus is not losing, but finding. Christianity is not rigid discipline, but glorious freedom of which discipline is the handmaiden.

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

Those who see Christianity as a list of demands will be driven to negative despair, but those who see Christianity as a reservoir of limitless resources will be leaping with positive joy! Holiness is health and wholeness and ultimately happiness, not a series of negative prohibitions, as some have taught! The impure disease of self-centeredness must be destroyed in order that the wholeness and health of Christ-centered living may be actualized!

Christianity teaches that love transcends law, that delight replaces drudgery, that the liberty of the Spirit replaces the bondage of the flesh!

Jesus came that man may have life and have it more abundantly! Nothing forbidding or forlorn about Jesus! Jesus said, "I am not come to destroy, but to save men!" Any destroying that Jesus does is for the purpose of saving. He destroys sin in order to impart salvation! The yoke that Jesus places on the neck fits, and therefore it is pleasant and productive. His yoke is easy and His burden is light! His work is our happiness! Pain, endured for Jesus, becomes our pleasure! His laws are not burdensome or grievous. We delight to do his will, for His way is the way we were meant to live! Therefore, His commands of love turn out to be the same as the demands of our human nature. There is a glorious compatibility between man's needs and God's resources!

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"Father, you only subtract sin from my life in order that you may multiply joy in my life! I delight to surrender to you, for through surrender I find freedom—freedom from the bondage of self-centeredness! Bowing low at

your feet, I can stand tall before everything else. Thank you for enabling me to say 'Yes' to life. In Jesus' name Amen."

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

You have a right to run out, embrace life, and enjoy it fully, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom!

8.

"AMIDST LIFE'S HEAVY BURDENS,
HOW CAN I LEARN TO BECOME A
POSITIVE TYPE OF PERSON?"

There are many people who are seeing all of life through a dark lens! Everything in life is colored by their dark evaluations. Yet, many of these same negative people would like to be positive, radiant, optimistic people. It is true that some people enjoy their negativism. They enjoy being different, obstinate, disagreeable, and troublesome. They live by negative reaction, and their perversion is further seen by their enjoyment of negativism. Life's most positive experiences they interpret negatively. But most people would like to be more positive, even though they would admit that many times they are basically negative.

The causes of negativism are multiple. A person's contrary attitude may be caused by fear, or by jealousy, or by inferiority, or by wounded pride. Who is able to discern the thoughts,

intents, and motives of a man's heart? Only the Great Discerner—the Holy Spirit!

There is a radical cure for negativism. That cure is partly found in the initial work of the Holy Spirit, through His cleansing and empowering Presence. When the Holy Spirit sheds abroad God's love in our hearts by faith, we find life automatically becoming more positive in outlook.

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

Human suffering will either make or break a human being. The sun can either melt water or harden clay. Suffering can make the heart tender or tough, drive a person to God or drive a person from God. Human suffering, either personally experienced or personally observed, can cause one to react negatively to all of life.

With every type of suffering, there is an accompanying peril. The sufferings of infirmities (2 Corinthians 12) can cause one to be plunged into despair.

Hebrews 12:5-9 pictures the suffering of chastisement. "And have you quite forgotten the encouraging words God

spoke to you, his child? He said, 'My son, don't be angry when the Lord punishes you. Don't be discouraged when he has to show you where you are wrong. For when he punishes you, it proves that he loves you. When he whips you, it proves you are really his child.' Let God train you, for he is doing what any loving father does for his children. Whoever heard of a son who was never corrected? If God doesn't punish you when you need it, as other fathers punish their sons, then it means that you aren't really God's son at all—that you don't really belong in his family. Since we respect our fathers here on earth, though they punish us, should we not all the more cheerfully submit to God's training so that we can begin really to live?"

The suffering of persecution (2 Corinthians 11) can cause one to develop hatred for his enemy. The suffering of temptation can result in one falling into sin. The suffering from life's losses can cause one to become bitter towards God and towards people.

Yes, suffering has destroyed many persons. It has caused some to grow

hard, or bitter, or cynical, or negative in their viewpoint of life.

Problems and suffering can cultivate Christ-like character in a person. Problems and suffering successfully met are a powerful witness to unbelievers. Suffering can cause one to fix his focus and attention on heavenly glories instead of on earthly concerns. One sometimes sees reality more clearly through a teardrop! The trivial things of time and space grow strangely dim in the light of eternal values, made more real through suffering. Problems cause one to depend more heavily upon God's power and resources. When one is on his back, it is much easier to look up! Man's weaknesses provide opportunity for God's power and glory to be manifested. God glories in using weak men to do mighty things for Him. Many times those who are most effective in ministry are those who minister in an area in which they have personally suffered most.

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"Father, just as Jesus took the worst that could have happened to him—a death on a Roman Cross—and turned it into the greatest symbol of victory—through the Resurrection—so help me to turn my little daily crosses into symbols of victory. Make me creative in the transforming of my failures into successes, my hurts into healings, and my disadvantages into opportunities.

Father, you have cleansed my heart from the sin of deliberate disobedience, now cleanse my mind from the subtle presence of negative thoughts. Fix my mind upon what is true, good, and right. Help me to face all of life with a positive 'YES', not with a negative 'NO'.

"Father, help me to see the hidden blessings in my sufferings. I see that it is a Christ-like work to sooth and to sympathize, but how can I myself sympathize if I have never really suffered? Help me to minister out of the wounds of my life. Use my sufferings to develop in me a tender heart, more

responsive to God's love and to human needs."

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

You may be a voice for positive action, not an echo of negative reaction! God will help you to turn every one of your problems into projects of Divine Grace, and God's projects are always Successful!

When Jesus said, "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on". He was not advocating carelessness or indolence.

The word used to translate 'Take no thought' is a word, which indicates something which divides, separates, or distracts. Thus, to 'take no thought' means that we are not to have a distracted, separated, double mind. Such a mind is a worried and fretful mind. There is no peace or integration, but such a mind is divided into sections and compartments. Such a mind keeps a person from seeing things as they really are. No cool, objective thinking can be engaged in

when there is a worried, divided mind.

Jesus wants us to be delivered from a care-worn, fretful, worried life, which takes away all joy and delight. Christians are to be people with a long view, people who plan well and work hard, but people who also throw all their energies into serving God, not wasting their energies needlessly on worry. Look fear in the face and desire deliverance. Running from fear only complicates the problem. Do the very thing that you fear most, and fear will soon take wings. One must genuinely desire deliverance.

Remember that Christ overcame all sin, including the sin of worry, on the cross, and that He is thus able to help you overcome your nagging fears and worry.

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

Remember, not only Christ's victory over your sins through His resurrection, but also remember your own past victories over frustration and adversity. It is a good practice to keep a diary or journal in which you record God's daily blessings in your life.

When you tend to worry, refresh your memory and encourage your spirit of faith by reading of God's recorded victories in your diary.

Realize that fear itself is usually worse than the thing you fear or are worried about. Said a great father to his son as his son was leaving the nest of the home, "Johnny, the thing to do, my lad, is to hold your own end up, and to do it like a gentleman, and please remember the biggest troubles you have got to face are those that never come."

Relax in God's presence. There is nothing that will relax the mind and relieve the nerves like meditating upon the greatness of God. Transform worry energy into prayer energy. Take your gaze off the object of fear, worry, and fix the gaze on the object of love. Relax in God and don't try to hold up the world by your own strength. Meet troubles one day at a time. Said Jesus, "Don't worry at all then about tomorrow. Tomorrow can take care of itself! One day's trouble is enough for one day." (Matthew 6:34, Phillips) Become involved in tasks. Those who

are most involved in loving projects, are those who think and worry less about their own problems. There is great energy generated within you when you are creative and outgoing in your loving involvements with others.

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"Father, as I seek to live a sacrificial life within the context of a society that has a high standard of living, I find myself becoming either anxious or covetous of worldly possessions. Do not allow the cares of my daily life, with its consequent worry, to choke out the good seed of your Word in my life. Help me to live contentedly. Father, sensitivity to life and to people and their needs is both my greatest asset and my greatest liability. It is my asset, for sensitivity to people gives me a selfless drive to reach out receptively to help others. It is my liability, for sensitivity to people's needs often causes me to become worry-worn and fretful, as I become deeply involved with people and their problems. Keep me released from anxiety and worry. Father, you work providentially, not ac-

identally; purposefully, not fatalistically assuringly, not uncertainly. Then why should I worry? Help me no longer to worry, for worry contradicts my faith in a God of infinite love, power, and wisdom. Help me to rest assured that all circumstances are used by you to bring about my good and your glory!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

While planning carefully, God will help You not to be full of care in the present! You do not have to hold the world together through your worrying, for God sovereignly rules the world from His eternal throne!

10.

"HOW CAN I LEARN TO RELAX
AMIDST LIFE'S VARIOUS
STRESSES?"

Find a place of solitude. Establish a daily quiet time, preferably in the early morning.

Speak to your body parts and tell them to relax before prayer. Let go of your inner soul frustrations and let God renew your mind. "And be not fashioned according to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God." (Romans 12:2)

Pray through a Scripture (a Psalm of praise like Psalms 145-150 or a prayer like John 17). The ACTS formula is helpful as a guideline in praying. ACTS stands for Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication (i.e., intercessions—prayers for others; petition—prayer requests for yourself). In addition to prayer, be sure to read some verses from the Bible and underline ones you intend to

memorize. Allow the Holy Spirit to daily cleanse you from anxiety and worry. Confess all sins.

Throughout the day, when worry arises and bids for your attention, turn your attention to God—thus turning worry energy into prayer energy. "Rejoice in the Lord always: again I will say, Rejoice. Let your forbearance be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:4-7).

Remember, what gets your attention, gets you! Learn to stay your mind on God, and you will be kept in perfect peace. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee." (Isaiah 26:3)

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"Father, help me to translate my worry energy into prayer energy, for pray-

er is the way of peace and poise and purpose. Break the tension of my nerves, by speaking peace to my troubled heart. Unscramble my thoughts and help me to stay my mind upon you alone. In thy constant presence is my perpetual peace! 'Father, in quietness and confidence shall be my strength'. In the quietness of my present contemplation, speak peace to me with your still small voice. In the face of disquieting circumstances, give me confidence that there are no troubles too great, but what your strength is greater yet! My troubles, surrendered to You, become your triumphs! Glory and praise to your power! Father, I am made by you and for you—not for fear, worry, and anxiety. Help me to cast all my cares on you, knowing that you care for me. Deliver me from that nagging fear which makes me tremble on the brink of an unknown future. Cleanse me from the acid of anxiety that erodes away my sense of security and well-being. Give me a childlike trust that cancels my paralyzing worries. Release me and set me free—free to enjoy life in all its fullness."

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

With Christ at the helm of your little 'ship', you will make it safe to the harbor of Heaven!

11.

"AMIDST LIFE'S HEAVY BURDENS,
CAN I BECOME A POSITIVE-MINDED
PERSON?"

There are many people who are seeing all of life through a dark lens! Everything in life is colored by their dark evaluations. And yet, many of these same negative people would like to be positive, radiant, optimistic people. It is true that some people enjoy their negativism. They enjoy being different, obstinate, disagreeable, and troublesome. They live by negative reaction, and their perversion is further seen by their enjoyment of negativism. Life's most positive experiences they interpret negatively. But most people would like to be more positive, even though they would admit that many times they are basically negative.

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intents, and motives of a man's heart? Only the Great Discerner—the Holy Spirit!

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With every type of suffering, there is an accompanying peril. The sufferings of infirmities (2 Corinthians 12) can cause one to be plunged into despair. The suffering of chastisement (Hebrews 12:5-9) can cause one to harden his heart against God. "And have

you completely forgotten this word of encouragement that addresses you as a father addresses his son? It says, 'My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son'. Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father? If you are not disciplined—and everyone undergoes discipline—then you are not legitimate, not true sons and daughters at all. Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of spirits and live!"

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Yes, suffering has destroyed many

persons. It has caused some to grow hard, or bitter, or cynical, or negative in their viewpoint of life. Problems and suffering can cultivate Christ-like character in a person. Problems and suffering successfully met are a powerful witness to unbelievers. Suffering can cause one to fix his focus and attention on heavenly glories instead of on earthly concerns.

One sees reality often times more clearly through a teardrop! The trivial things of time and space grow strangely dim in the light of eternal values, made more real through suffering. Problems cause one to depend more heavily upon God's power and resources. When one is on his back, it is much easier to look up! Man's weaknesses provide opportunity for God's power and glory to be manifested. God glories in using weak men to do mighty things for Him. Many times those who are most effective in ministry are those who minister in an area in which they have personally suffered most.

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responsive to God's love and to human needs."

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

You may be a voice for positive action, not an echo of negative reaction! God will help you to turn every one of your problems into projects of Divine Grace, and God's projects are always SUCCESSFUL!

12.

"CAN I FIND DELIVERANCE FROM MY
CRITICAL ATTITUDES?"

When you clearly see your personal need of forgiveness and mercy, you will be motivated to be forbearing, forgiving and merciful towards others. (Ephesians 4:30-31)

Realize that the spirit of judgmentalism evaporates as soon as you become conscious of your own faults and when you are willing to speak freely of them. A humble spirit of confession is incompatible with a harsh spirit of criticism. The two cannot co-exist. So learn to practice sincere and humble confession.

James wrote, "Do not grumble, brethren, against one another, that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the doors. Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed." (James 5:9, 16)

*Confession is the way to healing—
healing both for yourself and for an-*

other. It is a good solution to the problem of a critical spirit.

Only when I hate sin intensely within myself, will I love and accept the wrongdoer unconditionally, and know, not to condemn him, but to share with him my own wrongdoings.

Only as I focus on taking the beam out of my own eye, will the wrongdoer be convinced of the beam in his own eye.

Only when I, as a believer, engage in self-incrimination, open sharing, and humble confession, will the wrongdoer be motivated to do the same.

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

To criticize a man is to drive a man into self-justification and thus away from repentance and away from God. We hinder, not help, a man by being his judge. By becoming his judge, we stand in the place of God who alone is Judge. The transgressor acknowledges wrongdoing in the quietness of personal contemplation or in the presence of a non-critical friend.

Confession is contagious! The cost of

being a counselor is to confess my own faults to the counselee. Healing of the troubled person takes place, not in the atmosphere of criticism or self-righteousness, but in the atmosphere of mutual caring and sharing. How are conflicts and problems in relationships solved? Not by exchange of logic and debate and arguments which are generally exchanged as if in the presence of two deaf men. But by exchange of heartfelt confession of personal weakness and needs, creating an atmosphere of true caring and sharing. When my attitude changes from one of judgmentalism to understanding and humble confession, I build a bridge of love and openness, creating healing in relationships.

Tolerance—the right kind of tolerance—seems to be a lost virtue. Not the tolerance of compromise and worldliness, but the tolerance that excludes judgmentalism and narrow-mindedness. Jesus condemned sin, but he never condemned the sinner. He was open and accepting and charitable, and forbearing. "His disciple

John came to him and said, 'Master, we saw someone using your name to cast out demons. And we told him not to. After all, he isn't in our group'. But Jesus said, 'You shouldn't have done that! For anyone who is not against you is for you'." (Luke 9:49-50) *There is no harshness of spirit in Jesus. Jesus is gracious, winsome, attractive, and loving. Jesus is not judgmental or condemning. The Son of God came not to condemn the world, but to save the world. "God did not send his Son into the world to condemn it, but to save it". (John 3:17) To the woman taken in adultery, Jesus said, "Woman, where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee?" She answered "No man, Lord." And Jesus said unto her, "Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more." (John 8:10-11)*

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"Father, take away my fear of personal vulnerability. Make me honest, open, and transparent. Tear down my walls of defense, and enable me freely to confess my sins, both to you and to those who love me. Then I

shall enjoy fellowship at the deeper levels. Lord, let me hold firm convictions without being harsh towards others who differ from me. Give me an open mind, a tender heart, a teachable spirit. Give me an expansive view of life, willing to learn from everyone everywhere. Give me that humility that welcomes correction and change throughout my entire life. In Jesus' name. Amen."

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

Have courage to confess your sins to others. This allows you to enjoy the healing of God and the reconciliation of men.

Do not allow your first impression to be your last impression of people. Direct your attention to the deeper qualities of people, which are discovered with increased time and deeper experiences!

13.

"DOES GOD CARE FOR ME WHEN I
FAIL MISERABLY?"

"Does Jesus care when I've tried and failed to resist some temptation; when for my deep grief I find no relief, though' my tears flow all the night long?"

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. Peter remembered the words 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)

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

Before a man can be right with God, he must experience a spiritual awakening. He must confront God and recognize his own personal, spiritual need. This 'Collision with God' or inner awakening to personal need, is the work of God's Spirit.

"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 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.

*"In my hands no price I bring,
Simply to thy cross I cling."*

*"The blood, the blood is all my plea,
O, hallelujah, it cleanseth me."*

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.

"Come, and He will give you rest;

Trust Him, for His word is plain;

He will take the sinfulness;

Christ receiveth sinful men."

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"O God, thank you for the work of the Holy Spirit, convicting me of the horror of my sins; convincing me that I have come very short of the divine expectations for my life; revealing to me the high and holy standards of righteousness which painfully shows me the depth of my own depravity and shows me the terror of my continuing to follow the pathway of sin which leads to perdition; drawing me (unworthy that I am) to the 'Foot of the

Cross' where alone there is hope for my deliverance!

Yes, because of the multiple and gracious works of the Holy Spirit, I reach up to thee, O God, and I plead the blood of 'The Lamb of God', given as an atoning sacrifice for me!

Even though all my sins have social consequences, and they need the pardon of my fellowman, against whom I have sinned (restitution), there is no sin that is not a violation of God's will, that is not a perverting of God's Ways, that is not a missing of God's Mark.

O God, I acknowledge that all sin is sin against You primarily, and only against others secondarily. Thank you, oh Savior, that there is 'no sin stain that goes so deep, but what your precious, cleansing blood goes deeper yet!'

There is no sinner so wicked, but what your grace (power) is greater yet to convict, convince, convert, cleanse, challenge, correct, comfort that sinner!

You are a mighty Savior - to forgive to

the uttermost, to convert to the deepest depth, to deliver from sin most thoroughly, to teach believers most clearly, to guide most gently, to guard most powerfully, to restore most mercifully, to befriend most warmly, and to sustain most consistently. Thank You, my Lord, for Your Love and Care"!

TIME FOR A WARM AFIRMATION!

In success or in failure, in joy or in sorrow, when you have clear guidance, when you don't, when you are happy or when you are sad - God loves you with an everlasting love! He deserves your praise, adoration, thanksgiving, gratitude, and worship! Spend your life learning to praise Him!

14.

"WHY IS MY UNGRATEFULNESS SO
GRIEVIUS TO A MIGHTY GOD?"

"From the lips of children and infants
You have ordained praise because of
your enemies to silence the foe and
the avenger."

*Who are the foes and the adversaries
of God? It is those whose lips are
sealed from praise and whose hearts
are hardened in ingratitude.*

*God's address is praise, and only
those who praise God can find and
know God. Ingratitude and a spirit of
complaining, not only grieves God,
but it also spiritually blinds man. God
is worthy to be praised! Repeatedly
the Psalms exhort us to lift our voices
in praise to God!*

"Praise the Lord. How good it is to
sing praises to our God, how pleasant
and fitting to praise Him!" (*Psalms
147:1*)

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

Adversaries of God compose that group of people who are so self-sufficient, proud, sophisticated, that they feel no need to recognize God.

They are thankless creatures who specialize in negative thinking and in critical conversation. They are like those religious leaders who, on the day of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, were skeptical of Jesus' ministry and critical of the shouts of the children who praised Jesus.

"And now the blind and crippled came to him, and he healed them there in the Temple. But when the chief priests and other Jewish leaders saw these wonderful miracles and heard even the little children in the Temple shouting, "God bless the Son of David," they were disturbed and indignant and asked him, "Do you hear what these children are saying?" "Yes," Jesus replied. "Didn't you ever read the Scriptures? For they say, 'even little babies shall praise him!'" (Matthew 21:14-16, Living Bible)

If sophisticated and critical adults will not praise the Lord, then God will find unpretentious and grateful children who will gladly raise their voice in praise to Him. Perhaps the praises of children will shame the criticisms of hardened adults!

Note the rendering of Psalms 8:2: "You have taught the little children to praise you perfectly. May their example shame and silence your enemies!"

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"O Loving God, your works of creation praise you, little children praise you, and the 'saints' of the ages, (some of whom died as martyrs) praise you in life and in death!

Why have I spent so little of my time praising you? Why have I found it too easy to 'look on the dark side of life', rather than on the 'bright side of life'?

Why have I trained my 'spiritual eyes' to focus on the few dark clouds, instead of on the vast spaces of cheery blue skies?

Why do I find it easy to complain during my occasional (and real) 'hard trials' and fail to praise you for these God-allowed (not God-caused) trials that You, O God, intend to use for my further spiritual growth?

"From: James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.

To: Jewish Christians scattered everywhere. Greetings! Dear brothers, is your life full of difficulties and temptations? Then be happy, for when the way is rough, your patience has a chance to grow." (James 1:1-3)

My lips should be full of praise for your own self-revelation to me (most importantly), but also because of the countless blessings, which you have bestowed to me every day I have lived.

In thee I live, move, and have my very being. Without you, I would have nothing, and certainly, I would be nothing! What have I that I have not received from you? Therefore, I have no basis for pride and no reason for ingratitude!

You have opened the windows of

heaven and poured out so many blessings, that I can't contain them all! I am eternally indebted to you! Thank you! I humbly praise your Holy Name! Amen!

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

In success or in failure, in joy or in sorrow, when you have clear guidance, or when you don't. When you feel well or when you don't. When you are happy or when you are sad. God loves you with an everlasting love!

He deserves your praise and adoration, thanksgiving and gratitude, and worship! Spend your life learning to praise Him.

15.

"HOW CAN I FIND DELIVERANCE
FROM MY PERSISTENT
DEPRESSION?"

What happens to the person whose sorrows seem to continue and whose depression seems to deepen? Such a person can become more introverted, or they can choose instead to become more persistent in their approach to God.

Never fear to be open, honest, direct and frank with God. There are many mysteries surrounding God's divine methods.

Never be fearful to ask God any question. Only as you question will the answers be forthcoming. "God's ways are higher than our ways, as high as the heavens are above the earth."

You will never know all the reasons for human suffering, but some of your 'question marks' will be straightened out into 'exclamation marks' if you earnestly and persistently inquire of

the Lord as to the 'Whys' of your predicaments.

God is not obligated to give an intellectual defense for His divine actions, but if God does not tell you the 'Whys' of your human suffering, He will tell you the 'How's' - How to use difficult circumstances to advance your own spiritual life and to serve His own holy causes."

Questioning God can be an ally, not an enemy, of your Christian faith. Humans are not given the ability to solve the total mystery as to why God seems sometimes to be so slow in using His divine power to intervene in human problems, but asking honest questions of God is no sin!

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

The depressed soul that asks one's self-searching questions, which causes him to doubt his ability of holding onto his depression, is the soul that is clearing away the dismal clouds of sorrow to behold the sunshine of God's love. The depressed soul would

do well to ask one's self: "Why are you downcast, O My Soul?"

"Why so disturbed within me?" These questions, at this point in the plan for recovery, are not questions which seek to discover the possible causes of depression. These questions are questions that the honest seeker asks of one's self, in order to demonstrate to one's self, that there is too much positive in life to brood any longer on the negatives in life.

In other words, "Why, my soul, should you brood any longer on the hurts which people or circumstances have inflicted on you?"

Why continue to wallow in self-pity, wasting your energy in self-preoccupation, when you could instead be 'reaching out in love' to bring joy to others?

My soul, why should you continue to engage in morose reminiscing on the 'good old days of yesterday', when the God you serve is the God also of the present, of the future whose mercies are fresh every day and whose pre-

sent blessings can always match past blessings?

My soul, why do you bewail the pain which you feel because of the thorny bushes along life's way, when you know that the thorny way is the way to heaven's eternal happiness?

Thorns there may be on the road to heaven, but there are many snares and pitfalls on the road which leads to endless suffering in hell.

There may be a 'high cost' in serving Christ, but there is a much 'higher cost' in serving the Devil!

The way of the Cross may have its hurts and bruises, but the way of the world has its greater hurts which are only hints of infinite hurt in a godless eternity!

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"O Lord, with the Psalmist, David, I say: 'Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me?' – when I realize that God is good, that life is positive, that the suffering of the righteous is temporary, that the

punishment of the wicked is eternal, and that all things on earth work into a pattern for good to those who love the Lord?

Reflective questioning can lead me to reassurance and peace! Reflective questioning can show me the wisdom of casting my burdens of depression on the Lord, knowing that He cares for me. Thank you, O God, for your personalized love for me! Amen!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

Faith in God will restore hope to the despairing soul, put praise on the lips of the bitter wailer, and give relief to the anxiety-ridden soul.

Depression will give way to delight, sorrow will give way to joy, turmoil will give way to peace, and debilitating sickness will give way to rebounding health!

16.

"ARE THERE ANY ANSWERS FOR MY
FREQUENT FEELINGS OF
DEPRESSION?"

Objective thinking must replace mere subjective emotions. Pinpointing the causes of emotional depression is more than half the solution.

One must ask one's self: "Is my depression caused by unresolved guilt and unconfessed sins?" "Is my depression caused by false guilt, imposed upon me by my overly-sensitive conscience or overly strict parents or by satanic accusations?"

Is my depression caused by chemical imbalance in my physiological makeup, which could easily be treated medically? Or could it be caused by subconscious fears which I am unaware of or by conscious fears which I have been unwilling to face - fears like 'fear of failure' or 'fear of rejection' or 'fear of the unknown future' or 'fear of death'?

Is my depression caused by my sense of personal inadequacy, brought on because of my unrealistic perfectionist ideals of and personal achievements? Or is my depression caused by my jealous feelings towards a competitor whose accomplishments have overshadowed my accomplishments, resulting in my ego becoming deflated and my self-esteem being injured?

Is my depression caused by the attitudes which others have towards me, attitudes of judgmentalism or critical fault-findings?

Is my depression caused by a sudden change in my environment from one filled with exciting adventure to one filled with disappointments and failures? Or could it be caused by a major emotional let-down, following the completion of a major project in my life?

Or is my depression caused by the loss of loved ones, friends, as a result of sudden death, or as a result of my friend's unexpected moving?

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

After one has sought to pinpoint the source or cause of one's depression, one must not unduly focus on the cause, but one must begin to focus on the power and the greatness of God. What gets one's attention? Refocus on the power and the greatness of God. One must place his faith in God's power as the basis for solving one's problem which has caused one's depression.

The answer to depression is 'my Savior and my God'! A personal relationship with Christ, and faith in an all-knowing and in an all-powerful God is what enables one to deal effectively with his depressing problems.

God is the source of hope, and hope is what drives the depressed person to find answers for his debilitating problems. One who is overcome with despair is one who becomes more and more depressed, and such depression can lead eventually to suicide.

The despairing person must get his eyes off the hurtful circumstances around, and he must focus his attention on God. God is 'Savior' and thus, by nature, he is able to deliver a depressed person out of the 'slough of despondency'. He who is 'mighty to save' is He who is able to put joy in the heart and a song on the lips.

The troubling circumstances may seem hopeless in terms of change, but the depressed person who begins to look to the Lord will find that God can change the circumstances that gave birth to depression. But, if God does not choose to change the depressing circumstances, He is always ready to change the attitudes and moods of the depressed person, such that the onetime depressed person finds himself 'singing and praising God' in spite of depressing circumstances.

There is a song with these words: "Anyone can sing when the sun is shining bright, but it takes a song in the night". God is able to give a person a 'song in the night' of depressing

circumstances. If it is not because of circumstances changing, then it can be in spite of circumstances not changing, that the person of faith can begin to sing songs of joy rather than continue to groan away his life in depression!

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

I thank you that you are not a condemning God, but that you are a saving God. That You are 'touched with the feelings of our infirmities'! You know our 'human frame' (with all of our weaknesses, fragilities, hurts, bruises, propensities, and vulnerabilities).

You know all about our damaged emotions and our subconscious drives. You know all about the abusive relationships that we have experienced, resulting in certain fears, angers, and feelings of despair!

You know about the situations where evil persons have victimized us, circumstances in the past when we felt, as young persons, trapped and enslaved by controlling persons!

You know our physical weaknesses that easily lead to feelings of darkness and depression! O dear Jesus, more than anyone else, you understand!

Jesus, help me to better understand the nature and cause of my depression. You can directly touch me with Your healing power! Just now, I lift my heart to You, and praise You for loving me unconditionally - regardless of how I feel! Thank You! Amen!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

Wise is the depressed person who positively exercises his will to put his hurtful feelings behind him long enough to investigate possible sources of his depression.

It is almost impossible to solve problems without understanding the nature of the problems.

Clear thinking regarding possible causes of depression helps to solve the problem of depression!

17.

"SHOULD I NOT EXPECT FINANCIAL PROSPERITY IF I AM A SINCERE CHRISTIAN?"

Have you ever felt like you took two steps forward and three steps backward? Or the harder you tried to live a godly life the more adversities and reverses you seem to experience?

Have you ever felt a spirit of covetousness come over you when you observed the wicked in their prosperity, in contrast to your hardships, obstacles, and financial troubles?

Have you ever wondered why God allows the wicked man to enjoy pleasures, power, position, and prestige, while God, at the same time, allows the righteous man to suffer hardships of all kinds – financial losses, physical infirmities, heartbreaking sorrows or spiritual depressions?

Have you ever thought that health and wealth automatically belonged to you by virtue of your spiritual position

in God's family, and that when you were not enjoying prosperity God must be failing to keep His promises? Have you ever been tempted to demand an explanation of why some, who are not as righteous as you are, seem to get ahead?

If you believe that material prosperity is a sure sign of God's blessings, then you will be very confused, maybe even bitter as you observe the wicked prospering while you are not prospering!

Envy is the result of one person, in this case a believer, making an unfavorable comparison with another, in this case with a prosperous wicked man. Envy saps one of spiritual energy, and envy can even cause a believer to lose his spiritual stability.

So it was in the case of the psalmist in Psalms 73. "But as for me, my feet had almost slipped; I had nearly lost my foothold. For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked." (Psalms 73:2, 3)

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

To envy others is to take one's eyes off of God and to focus them on others, and to do this is to court disaster. It is when Christians begin to accept material prosperity as the gauge of success and happiness that they begin to make hurtful comparisons which lead to either pride, despair, or bitterness.

Using such a false measurement for success, such an out-of-focus Christian can arrogantly 'pat himself on the back' if his comparison with others, financially and materially, is favorable.

If his comparison with others leaves him on the 'short end of things', then he can feel himself a failure, resulting in feelings of either dismal despair or bitter envy. Why? Because the standard for success is wrong, the outcome of comparison will always be wrong. Thus, the stability of the believer always will be threatened by such comparisons.

If one believes that material prosperity, physical health, or leisure from life's common burdens are God's rewards for personal and moral integrity, what happens to the believer whose life becomes a burden, with life's cares such as financial loss or physical disability? One is tempted foolishly to despair and to blame God for not rewarding him for his holy lifestyle! Are those who are pure in heart and honest in conduct, guaranteed material prosperity and physical health? The Bible says 'NO'!

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"O Gracious Lord, you have promised your children that you will supply all their needs, according to your riches in glory, through Christ Jesus.

As your follower, deliver me from the 'love of money, which is the root of all evil!' Help me to be satisfied and contented if my necessities are met - food, shelter, and clothing. Save me from the damaging sin of envy by looking at the good things which oth-

ers have, and wanting to possess those very things!

According to your commandments, Exodus 20, envy violates my trust in my God, and it violates my love relationship with others and it takes my sole focus off adoration, worship of my loving, and providing God!

It deteriorates all vital relationships. Let me rejoice with those believers, and even non-believers, whom you allow to prosper greatly (nice homes, modern cars, enjoyable cruises, large churches, advanced educations, high profile, well-paying jobs, charming personalities which attract many friends, and etc.).

When others advance materially and otherwise, keep me grateful for what you have given me, and never, never let me be 'green with envy'! Rather, increasingly enable me to enjoy my true 'wealth' in life – a growing relationship with my Lord!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

If a Christian believes that health and wealth are the inevitable results of living a holy and pure life, then the saint will fall into a state of depression and despair if financial reverses and ill health come to them. Envyng those who prosper brings despair to those who do not prosper. Trust in Christ alone is the true source of your 'health' and 'wealth'! Do not despise earth's legitimate treasures, but 'set your heart on things above, not on things of this passing world!'

18.

"AMIDST MY VARIED TROUBLES IS THERE ANY RELIEF FOR MY SOUL?"

Not only is Jesus, our Great High Priest, in the Heavenly Temple interceding for us, but it is also stated in scripture that the precious Holy Spirit is also interceding for us.

"And in the same way—by our faith—the Holy Spirit helps us with our daily problems and in our praying. For we don't even know what we should pray for nor how to pray as we should, but the Holy Spirit prays for us with such feeling that it cannot be expressed in words. And the Father who knows all hearts knows, of course, what the Spirit is saying as he pleads for us in harmony with God's own will." (*Portion from Romans 8*)

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

Is there ever a burden that He does not bear, or a sorrow that He does not share? "The Lord is in His Temple" - i.e., the Lord is actively interceding to the Heavenly Father in your behalf.

Commit your troubles, sorrows, and complexities to Christ. Allow Jesus to carry these troubles to the Heavenly Father.

If your troubles are the result of the unjust action of others, or the result of unexplained and perplexing circumstances of life, then commit the bitterness of your heart and the doubts of your mind to the Lord. The Lord can heal and the Lord can help!

What if the cause of your problem should be personal sin in your life? Is this a problem too big for God to deal with? Never! For the Lord is still "In His Temple", even when you fail morally!

Remember, even when your trouble is the result of your own commission of sin, there is One who still cares for you! Repent deeply of your sin, confess your sins to God, and plead the blood of Jesus as a cleansing from all your sins.

Remember the counsel of John. "My little children, I am telling you this so that you will stay away from sin. But

if you sin, there is someone to plead for you before the Father. His name is Jesus Christ, the one who is all that is good and who pleases God completely. He is the one who took God's wrath against our sins upon himself and brought us into fellowship with God; and he is the forgiveness for our sins, and not only ours but all the world's." (1 John 2:1-2)

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"O Lord, is there any solace for the burdens and hurts of my life? So many of my problems come to me, unexpected, bringing shock to my heart and confusion to my mind – a result of simply living in a 'fallen world'.

Other problems I face are the result of the wrong moral decisions which people around me have made, and these problems are difficult to bear (such as rejection, abuse, and deceitfulness by family members. Admittedly, some of my problems are the result of my having to reap the negative consequences of my own unwise and sometimes immoral decisions!

So I understand that my problems, which bring suffering to me, are caused by several factors – life's happenings like physical disease in a 'fallen world'; hurts that other people cause me, because I have a 'social network'; suffering caused by my own foolish, or immoral decisions. And, doubtless, another source of suffering is the Evil One who likes to inflict trouble upon God's righteous ones, as in the case of ancient Job.

But Lord, I know that you are merciful to forgive all wrongs, you are mighty to deliver from all evil, you are compassionate to heal all hurts, and you are a 'present help in all times of trouble'! I commit my many troubles to you, just now, and I trust you to either 'take away' my troubles, or take me through my troubles, and to use my troubles to further perfect my character! Amen!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

Remember, there is no trouble too great, but what God's power is greater yet. As Jesus stilled the troubled

water on the sea, He is still able to say to your troubles - 'Peace be still'.

Give God your disturbed emotions and your anxious mind, and even if the outward circumstances do not immediately change, God will give you Peace!

19.

"WITH LIFE'S MULTIPLE PROBLEMS, CAN I BE CONFIDENT OF GOD'S PRESENCE?"

"I am still confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord." (Psalms 11:13)

He who maintains a vital relationship with the living God is he who boldly faces the future, for he knows that, regardless of the challenges and the crisis of life, the future is always bright because of the promises of God. The God of the past, whose mercies have never failed, is the God of the future whose goodness will continue to rescue the godly. The goodness of God is un failing and His mercies are manifest from age to age. What He has done for us in the past, He will continue to do for us in the future. God is the same yesterday, today, and forever! Our God is not an arbitrary, a fickle, or an unpredictable God! Confidence in God because of

His past works of love in delivering the righteous from their enemies will not be shattered in the future. The God who reigned in ages past is the same God whose sovereignty will continue to be manifested in the present and in the distant future. There is no 'shadow of turning' with God, no turning His back on the faithful.

The believer's confidence in God's continuing goodness is a confidence that is founded on the integrity of God's character. God has never failed to exercise His saving power and He will always in the future continue to exercise His power. Exclaimed David, "I am expecting the Lord to rescue me again, so that once again I will see his goodness to me here in the land of the living." (Psalms 27:13; Living Bible)

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

What is the secret to overcoming fear? How can one maintain his confidence in the Lord? How can one be assured that his hopes for continuing deliverance from the Lord will not be disappointed? "Wait for the Lord; be

strong and take heart and wait for the Lord." (*Psalms 11:14*)

'Waiting' for the Lord is important, for God has His own timing. Man tends to take things into his own hands, rushing ahead in an attempt to change his own environment and to force his own will on his personal relationships. God alone can change people and can control circumstances, and God has His own time schedule and His own ways of working in the affairs of men and of nations. Believers are promised deliverance from their outward oppressors and from their inward fears, but God's methods of rescue may be different from what we expected.

The faithful are urged to remain strong and to keep encouraged and not to succumb to despair or to discouragement. 'The best is yet to be', 'the future is bright with the promises of God', and 'God is still on His throne'.

"Don't be impatient. Wait for the Lord, and He will come and save you! Be brave, stouthearted and coura-

geous. Yes, wait and He will help you." (*Psalms 27:14*)

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

*"Lord, you will quiet my fears, and You will bring deliverance to me from my enemies. The faithful often are delivered from physical harm, but if the faithful face death because of their commitment to God, their deliverance is the greatest of all! The deliverance through physical death is even greater than the deliverance from physical death. Paul said, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." (*Philippians 1:21*) Amen!"*

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

*Wrote John Bunyan, "Let dissolution (physical death) come when it will, it can do the Christian no harm, for it be but a passage out of a prison unto a palace." "Expect the Lord to rescue you again and again, and anticipate seeing the continuing goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." (*Psalms 27:13*) But always remember that if God chooses not to rescue you bodily, He will always rescue you spiritually.*

*Whether from death or through death,
God is always the great Deliverer.
"Those who wait for the Lord will al-
ways see the goodness of the Lord in
the land of the living." (Psalms 27:13-
14)*

20.

"HOW SHOULD I DEAL WITH MY
TERRIBLE FEAR OF FAILURE?"

Failure is almost certain to come to all persons in one form or another, but, depending upon how we react, failure can be a means of exercising faith or of becoming more fearful. Many there have been who, after experiencing failure, were simply spurred on to increased effort which led eventually to a greater success than what they would have had if they never had experienced defeat.

I recall one friend's attempts to have his writings published with so many failures that he had made a scrap-book of 'reject slips' from publishing companies. He persisted, year after year, and finally was successful in having nearly ten of his books published! It is said that 'Babe Ruth' struck out more times than he hit home runs!

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

How should we react to our fears of failure? Work and keep working, in spite of the fear of failure.

Consistent involvement will not only reduce the fear of failure, but such involvement will bring the possibilities of success closer to reality!

Failure and success must not be the main consideration in confronting a task, but rather faithfulness in carrying out God's commands. There have been great missionaries who have labored for many years with very little apparent or visible success.

"Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain." (*1 Corinthians 15:58, NIV*)

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"Father, deliver me from the fear of failure. When my terrestrial look is dark and forbidding, let me be assured that your celestial look is always bright and inviting. Your causes

cannot fail, so when my cause is identified with your cause, I too cannot fail!" Amen!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

You must remember that the 'mind of the world' did not think that Jesus was 'successful' at the time of His death on a criminal's cross, dying alone with most of His former followers fleeing in fear. But the masses of the world now know that Jesus is the most successful person in history! WHY? Because His faithfulness to God's purpose, which was most costly, resulted in a plan that is able to save the entire human race from eternal death! Faithfulness is Success!

21.

"HOW CAN I COPE WITH MY HURTFUL
FEELINGS OF INFERIORITY?"

Face inferiorities for what they are - enemies! Inferiority feelings are enemies that hinder in creativity.

We are made by God to be creative, and anything that hinders in that creative process is an enemy. Some foolishly mistake inferiority with humility. A grave mistake, for inferiority is an enemy of creativity while humility is the source of creativity.

What is humility? Humility is a sane estimate of yourself in the light of God and in the light of other people. Looking at self in the light of God should lead to neither boasting or to despair, but instead to gratitude. "Your dignity arises solely from your relationship to God. How can the child of a King feel inferior? How can a blood-bought sinner be proud?" (The Secret of Radiant Life; Sangster; pg. 80)

Looking at yourself in the light of others should lead neither to inferiority

nor to boasting, but to humble cooperation. The humble person has a sane estimate of himself and a sane estimate of others. He never considers himself worthless, and seldom considers others as geniuses. Rather, he sincerely appreciates others for their person and for their abilities, and truly accepts himself as having real worth. He knows that his abilities and the abilities of others are all God-given. There is no room either for boasting or for despair, but only for joyous cooperation with God and with others, as he works together cooperatively to carry out God's purposes.

Never admit, even to yourself, that you are inferior. For one to say that he is inferior is to tell a lie! God taught Peter—and He would teach us today—to call no man common or unclean. (Acts 10)

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

By idolizing others of greater ability, some people are not only experiencing regular rounds of defeat and failure, but are also failing to reach their

own potential.

God has made each of us differently and to do different work for Him. Have you yet learned to accept your own personal uniqueness? Your personal individuality is to be seen for its true purpose - to complement the whole work of God.

Comparing yourself with others can lead to one of these reactions - feelings of inferiority, feelings of superiority, feelings of jealousy. Seeing yourself properly in light of God and of others results in humility before God and in appreciation for others. Remember, even before you were born, God set you apart for a special purpose!

"Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee, and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee; I have appointed thee a prophet unto the nations." (*Jeremiah 1:5*)

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"Father, help me to see that to call myself inferior is not merely a weakness that causes great damage to myself, but that it is a sin against my

Creator. To devalue myself is to devalue the highest product of your creation and the purchase of Christ's redemption. Help me to accept and to love myself. Deliver me from my tendency to compare myself with others, which inevitably causes competitive feelings of strife. Help me to compare myself with myself and with your divinely revealed potential for me! Then I shall have the joy of becoming Christ-like in my upward striving, rather than the grief of becoming carnal in my outward striving. In Jesus' name. Amen!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

You are of infinite worth to God. God does not love you 'for something', but for yourself alone! Because you are the product of a unique creation, you can accept your personal uniqueness without either inferiority or superiority.

22.

"CAN I FACE AN UNKNOWN FUTURE
WITHOUT TERRORIZING FEAR?"

The unknown creates fears in many, and yet the fact of not knowing the future can add zest and anticipation to life. Who would want to know every detail of the future? It is an act of God's mercy to veil the future. If we knew the details of the future, we might become both complacent regarding effort and terrified regarding problems.

When Jesus said, "Take no thought for tomorrow", He did not forbid legitimate planning for the future. What He did forbid was hurtful worry in regards to the morrow.

What should be the relationship between the present and the future? First, the Christian must exercise faith in a God who is all-wise (He knows what is best), all loving (He wants to give what is best), and all-powerful (He is able to give what is best).

Secondly, the Christian must claim the promise that Paul gave to young timorous Timothy: "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." (II Timothy 1:7)

God gives the Christian power to cope with any circumstance of life. God gives the Christian love—love that is centered on others and love that is centered on God. The more than that one becomes preoccupied with others, the less one becomes preoccupied with self. The less one becomes preoccupied with self, the less one is fearful of the future. God also gives the Christian wisdom in dealing with circumstances that will arise—be those circumstances favorable or unfavorable. God will open your mouth and put the words in your mouth to meet the challenging situations of life.

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

Thirdly, act with confidence, living life to the fullest today, planning reasonably for tomorrow but not worrying about tomorrow. The God who took

care of you in the past is the same God who is able to take care of you in the future.

Take one day at a time. Don't borrow trouble from tomorrow. Divide and conquer. "Don't worry at all then about tomorrow. Tomorrow can take care of itself! One day's trouble is enough for one day." "So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own." (Matthew 6:34)

Fourth, close each day thanking God for the day and open each new day with a prayer for guidance. "In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God." Let that be your motto for life. Praise and confidence drives away fears.

Fifth, remember that love casts out all fear. "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love". (1 John 4:18)

"Love delivers from self-attention, gives you other-attention; and therefore love, not faith, is the method of

getting rid of fear. For love produces faith as a by-product of that love. You are not afraid of people you love." (Christian Maturity; E.S. Jones, pg. 230)

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"Father, help me to live one day at a time, reflecting on the past to learn and planning for the future to prosper, but never becoming guilt-ridden because of the past or terror-stricken because of the future. Let me feel your comforting hand on my shoulder and see your guiding finger charting my future course in life. Calm my fears and help me to rest secure in your love."

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

He who holds the unknown future in His mighty hands is He who holds my hand today!

23.

"WHAT PRACTICAL STEPS CAN I
TAKE TO OVERCOME MY VARIOUS
FEARS?"

It is easy to take counsel of one's fears, and hard at times to take the road of faith. Practically speaking, how can we use faith to cancel out our fears.

FIRST, face fear and determine to overcome it.

Joshua was doubtless afraid when the leadership over the Israelites was placed in his hands, following Moses' death, but God spoke to Joshua and alleviated his fears: "Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." (Joshua 1:19, NIV)

SECONDLY, after facing fears, we must find out why we have these fears.

This involves serious, objective thinking. Use the reasoning quality of the

mind to attack the illusive emotion of fear. If necessary, list the fears individually and pray about each one individually. In seeking to understand the cause of certain fears, it may be necessary to seek the counsel of a wise friend or minister. Self-knowledge can lead to a cure. Try to identify those fears. For instance, fears which originate in your early childhood, fears that have long been suppressed in the subconscious mind.

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

THIRD, we must constantly affirm our faith in Jesus' power to overcome our fears. Relax, let go of your fears, and let God constantly fill you with His power and poise. God conquered all fears on the Cross and through the Resurrection, and He is able to impart the benefits of that victory to you. You must be relaxed and receptive.

FOURTH, practice faith every day in order to defeat you fears. Make faith affirmations during difficult circumstances, such as "I can do all things through Christ who stengtheneth me." (Philippians 4:13) Remember that He

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

Exercise yourself daily in faith meditations. One man who was haunted for a long time with fears and insecurities, read through the Bible underlining in red pencil every statement relative to courage and confidence.

Engage daily in faith prayers. Stretch your faith a little every day by asking God for a few things that seem impossible. Associate with people of faith. Involve yourself in faith actions and projects. This will enlarge your faith and drive away fears faster than almost anything else, for faith in action is God in action.

To See God Work Miracles Through Your Life, Will Make Your Faith Grow by Leaps and Bounds!

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"Kind and Loving Father, give me both knowledge of the source of my fears and determination to overcome my

fears. Help me to practice 'Faith Affirmations', 'Faith Meditations', 'Faith Prayers', 'Faith Associations', and 'Faith Projects'. Then I shall become a man of FAITH! Amen!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

Be sure today to listen to the calm voice of faith, not to the clamoring voice of fear! When fear comes knocking on your heart's door, just decide to send Jesus to the door! He is powerful to conquer your every fear! He said, "Fear not, I am with thee!" Take Him 'At His Word', and enjoy PEACE in place of FEAR!

24.

"HOW IS MY FAITH AN EFFECTIVE ANTIDOTE FOR MY VARIOUS FEARS?"

Faith releases, but fear ties up. Faith in God releases one, but terrifying fear of God ties one up. Faith in the character and nature of God releases one from despair and gives confidence that life is inherently good. He who believes that God is who the Bible says He is – a God of infinite love, wisdom, and power – is the person who sees Reality as ordained for good purposes and not for bad purposes. Thus, his whole outlook on life is positive and happy.

On the other hand, he who sees God as one to be avoided and feared is the one who has a most dismal and terrifying outlook on life. Luther was only released from his terrifying fear of God and the consequent terror of life that it produced, when he came to his experience of justification by faith. Faith in God liberated him from his false conception of God and of life in general.

Reverential fear is always appropriate when we approach God. Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. (Matthew 10:28): "If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth;" (1 Peter 1:17): "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding." (Proverbs 9:10). "But terrorizing fear of God only shows that our love for God is not yet perfected." (1 John 4:18)

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

Think of this principle as it relates to one's relationship with Nature. Faith in Nature releases one to new discoveries while terrifying fear of Nature limits one in his experiences of new discoveries. All of man's discoveries in nature have depended upon man's faith in the predictability and consistency of Nature's Laws. Even before the planet Uranus was actually

discovered its position in the sky was predicted based on man's faith in the Law of Gravitation. On the other hand, terrifying fear of nature kept man for centuries from discovering Nature's secrets and using them for his advantage.

This principle applies to one's relationship with other people. Faith in people releases one but fear of people ties one up. Fear of people causes suspicion, hate, betrayal, and war, but faith in people builds strong and enduring relationships. The foundation of peace is faith in people, while the foundation of war is suspicion and fear.

Faith in self-releases one's self, but fear of self-ties one up. The poised, positive, and contributive person is the person who has faith in himself. The insecure, inferior, defeated person is the person who has lost faith in himself and who has come to fear himself. Faith in one's self releases one to realize his fullest potential, but fear of self-thwarts one's abilities and stunts one's growth.

Many who have an inability to be alone, and yet are insecure among people, are plagued with fear - the fear of self. Such are often defeated in the face of problems because the center of their personality - 'Self' - is not intact. It was to such individuals that Christ so graciously ministered, inspiring confidence, and imparting self-respect.

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"Father, I am inwardly constructed to live by faith, not by fear. Fear paralyzes me, while faith relaxes me. I can breathe more deeply, see more clearly, and feel more intensely, when living by faith. Every nerve, tissue, and brain cell in me is made for faith, not for fear. Help me to walk by faith, not by fear. In Jesus' name."

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

Like a magnet, faith attracts people because faith in a man creates a winsome personality, while fear repels people because fear produces a with-

drawn and self-centered personality. Faith solidifies relationships and makes one other-centered. On the other hand, fear and suspicion of others destroys relationships and results in a self-centered life. The person who lives only for himself will have no one to applaud him but himself!

25.

"HOW SHOULD I DEAL WITH MY TERRIBLE FEELINGS OF INSECURITY"

How do you deal with those terrible feelings of insecurity and inferiority? Become convinced of God's unconditional personal love for you as an individual. Then surrender to God's love for you. No longer hold bitterness toward God! The root cause of insecurity is, as one man said, "rejection of self with an unconscious bitterness toward God for making me the way He did."

Begin, therefore, to look at yourself through God's point of view. No longer hold bitterness toward God for the 'frame' of your life which God gave to you. Instead, transfer your attention to the 'picture - your soul - which is eternal and redeemable. Your 'frame' includes your personal background, physical appearance, talents, job, money, nationality, parentage - all of which are subject to competition and comparison which can produce insecurity and inferiority feelings.

The 'picture' is the inner soul of man which is made for God's fellowship and which is redeemable. Centering on the external and perishable frame will only make you subject to competition and invites insecurity. Why build one's security on the basis of the 'frame' - the perishable qualities - which can be so easily compared with the 'frame' of another. This comparison of 'frame' leads to jealousy and ill feelings.

Get your focus on Christ and off of others! "If we are living now by the Holy Spirit's power, let us follow the Holy Spirit's leading in every part of our lives. Then we won't need to look for honors and popularity, which lead to jealousy and hard feelings." "Let us not become conceited, or provoke one another, or be jealous of one another." (Galatians 5:26-27)

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

He who accepts God's wisdom in producing a great variety of 'frames' will thank God for his personal limitations as well as his assets. He who accepts God's love, which seeks to be

personally applied to each person, learns to replace temporal values with eternal values, and competitiveness with compassion.

How do you maintain your love for God, in light of your persistent imperfections and limitations which you observe in the 'frame' with which He created you? Following our initial and total surrender of ourselves to the great and loving Designer, we must recognize that God intends to continue His plan to mature us, to cultivate godly traits into our lives until He chooses to take us to heaven (where we will probably continue to grow towards Christlikeness throughout eternity)!

Of course, God is interested in developing the kind of character within us, such that He will be able to shine forth His love through us, so that "others may see our good works and glorify the Father in Heaven". Maturing us for not only our own personal benefit, but in order that God will be honored, and in order that a clear witness will be given to a lost world!

We must, therefore, thank God for what He has done in our lives (i.e. how He has thus far developed our character), but also for what He will do in our lives in the future.

God can use the specific 'frame' of our life to 'perfect' the picture (character) of our life!

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"Father, deliver me from my tendency to compare myself with others, which often leads to feelings of bitterness and jealousy. Help me to accept myself good-humoredly, to love others sincerely, and to know that You, O God, will develop within me the traits of inner beauty which shall make me both winsome and attractive to others."

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

Because God's reputation is at stake in the 'final product', you can rest assured that God's dealings with you has highest priority to God!

26.

"CAN I BE DELIVERED FROM MY
DEBILITATING JEALOUSY?"

Jealousy destroys human relationships. Envy can spoil friendships and destroy old fellowships.

"Wrath is cruel, and anger is overwhelming; But who is able to stand before jealousy?" (Proverbs 27:4)

"For we also once were foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another." (Titus 3:3)

Envy breeds hatred, resentment. Jealousy robs one of his own just joys, because he is obsessed with the greater triumphs of others.

A little boy is overcome with joy when he receives his new bike for Christmas, but returns after riding it for one hour, all disgruntled. When his parents inquire where his joy has gone, he replies, "George has been given a bicycle too. It is a better one than

mine is. It has a three-speed gear."

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

Honestly face your personal need for deliverance. No physician can help a man who denies his disease and thus refuses treatment.

Re-channel your tendency away from comparison with others. To constantly compare yourself with others is to do yourself great harm. God accepts you just as you are, and therefore you don't need to build up your ego by comparing yourself with others in a less favorable condition than you, and you don't need to plunge yourself into despair or into jealousy by comparing yourself with others who appear to be in a much more favorable condition than you.

Unfortunately, competition and comparison is a common way of life in America. We compare mind with mind. We compare bank account with bank account. We compare beauty with beauty. We compare achievement with achievement. We pit wit against wit to outdo our fellows. We

try to prove that our city, our church, our doctrines, our political concepts, and our ball teams, etc., etc., are the best!

This tendency towards power, popularity, dominance, and leadership breeds envy, strife, and jealousy. The musical expresses this spirit of comparison and strife: 'Anything you can do; I can do better!' Competition and comparison breed jealousy!

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"O God, I confess that jealousy is a serious problem in my life. Help me to rest secure in your unconditional love for me, and to know that I do not have to 'prove' myself worthy of your acceptance through performances and achievements in a world of competitive striving. God, do not let me go through life begrudging others of their happiness and success, and at the same time losing my own joy and contentment. Deliver me from my mad pursuit for success and recognition, based on a competition with others. Help me to be neither the object nor the subject of jealousy, but to live at

*peace with all men. In Jesus' name
Amen!"*

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

*Outdoing one another in showing love
and in demonstrating generosity is
the only kind of competition that is
acceptable and worthy.*

27.

"WHY IS MY JUDGEMENT OF OTHERS
SO VERY HURTFUL?"

"Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus. Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus".

(Philippians 2:5)

Having the mind of Christ means that we will be free from the bondage of judgmentalism. To be free from the critical spirit, which seeks to judge our fellowmen, we must turn our eyes upon Jesus and look fully into his wonderful face.

"Thy life in my life, Lord, give Thou to me" - this must be the prayer of every sincere believer! The mind of Christ and the life of Christ are the mind and life of charity and acceptance.

Not harshness but sweetness of spirit. Not criticism but compassion. Not rejection but acceptance. Not judgmentalism but charitableness. Not condemnation but salvation. Not in-

tolerance but flexibility. Not dogmatism but openness. Not rigidness but adaptability.

The more of the mind of Christ that one experiences, the less of the spirit of criticism and judgmentalism will one possess. "Jesus, thou art all compassion. Pure unbounded love thou art." *The Master's face is not sour and critical, but it is sweet and radiant—radiant with love of the Father's heart!*

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

Matthew 7:1 says, "Judge not, that ye be not judged." *This can be interpreted as "Do not condemn or criticize others if you do not want to be criticized yourself by others." The person who criticizes others most is usually the person who receives most criticism and is liked the least. This statement has also been interpreted as "Do not judge others if you yourselves do not wish to be judged harshly by God at the final judgment of evaluation for believers."*

Jesus further says, "For with what

judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it will be measured to you again." (*Matthew 7:2*)

Jesus seems to be saying, "Judge not, for in not judging others, you do not set the standard for your own judgment." The standard that we apply in judging others will be applied in judgment of us! If we expect much of others, much will be expected of us. If we judge others harshly, we will be judged harshly. "The slave who knows his master's plan but does not get ready or act upon it will be severely punished, but the servant who did not know the plan, though he has done wrong, will be let off lightly." (Luke 12:47, 48a)

By the way we treat others in this life, we set the standard for our own judgment hereafter! We are not to condemn a person, but we are to judge the rightness or wrongness of his position, morally, and perhaps theologically.

We are commanded to "...contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints." (Jude 3) Jesus

said we are to be 'fruit inspectors': "By their fruits ye shall know them." (Matthew 7:16) We are to examine and evaluate and discriminate between truth and falsehood, but we are not to judge men!

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"Father, let me never be eager to tell others their faults, for I myself am full of faults. The faults I most readily see in others are the same faults that are most glaring in me. Deliver me decisively from all faultfinding. Help me to focus on the fine, good things in others. Father, just as I desire to receive mercy, not justice, from your hand, so help me to extend mercy, not judgment, towards others. To extend forgiveness to others is to receive forgiveness from you. To withhold forgiveness from others is to forfeit my forgiveness from you. Help me to judge not that I be not judged! In Jesus' lovely name Amen!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

You must seek to treat others in the same way that you desire to be treated by God—kindly and uncritically!

*People grow through affirmation but
wither through criticism. By God's
grace, commit yourself to be an af-
firming person!*

28.

"WHY SHOULD I CONSIDER ENVY TO
BE SO HARMFUL TO ME?"

"For I envied the arrogant when I saw
the prosperity of the wicked."

(Psalms 73:3)

When you see a next-door neighbor – a neighbor who obviously is not a Christian – drive home one night in a brand new car, How Do You Feel?

When your fellow employee – a man who is notorious for his crude language and his godless actions – flaunts his new clothes before you and talks about his newly purchased 4000 square foot home, How Do You Feel?

When your non-Christian friend comes back from his two-week ocean cruise and is eager to show you his pictures of himself bathing in the sun on the beaches, How Do You Feel?

When your next door neighbor lady friend – an unbeliever – comes to your home for coffee in the mid-morning and talks to you about her happy fam-

ily and her loving husband, and you know that you – a believer – are presently having marital problems and disciplinary problems with your children. How Do You Feel?

If we are honest, most of us would have to admit that the seeming 'prosperity' of our unsaved friends, in contrast to our seeming 'failures', often causes envious feelings to rise to the surface of our heart.

One incentive in dealing with covetousness is to understand the serious consequences of covetousness.

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

Think in terms of what hurtful affects covetousness has in one's relationship with God, in one's relationship to others, and in one's relationship to himself. Covetousness grieves God because the covetous believer has turned his attention away from God and has placed his focus on others instead. Covetousness hurts others because the covetous believer sees others as opponents to overcome rather than as fellow brothers to serve. Covetousness harms oneself because

the covetous believer misses God's blessing for himself while he enviously desires the blessings which God is bestowing on others. Preoccupied with what others have, the covetous person fails to give proper attention to what he already has, to what he ought to be enjoying.

"When I thought how I might know this, it was too painful for me until I went into the sanctuary of God, and considered their latter end." "Yet it is so hard to explain it—this prosperity of those who hate the Lord. Then one day I went into God's sanctuary to meditate and thought about the future of these evil men". (*Psalms 73:16-17*)

Replacing one's own petty perspective with God's true perspective of reality is an indispensable step that one must take if he is to find victory over covetousness. Mental confusion and emotional depression are the results of trying to figure out the world of moral inconsistencies and spiritual mysteries. It is when the confused believer lays aside his independent mental queries and begins instead to

seek the mind of God within the sanctuary of God that he begins instead to find answers to his questions and cleansing from his disquieting envies.

The Bible says that we will be transformed by the renewing of our minds and not be fashioned according to this world "that ye may prove what is the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God." "Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but be a new and different person with a fresh newness in all you do and think. Then you will learn from your own experience how his ways will really satisfy you". (Romans 12:2, Living Bible)

To see the world from God's perspective is to see the world from a moral perspective - a world where the 'books will be balanced', where evil will be eventually punished and where righteousness will be ultimately rewarded. When the righteous affirm the goodness of God to His saints and, in addition, when the righteous understand the severity of God to His enemies, who would ever again want

to envy the wealth, the power, and the prestige of the wicked?

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"O how envy is hurtful to others, and hurtful to myself!" You commanded: 'You must not be envious of your neighbor's house, or want to sleep with his wife, or want to own his slaves, oxen, donkeys, or anything he has.' (Exodus 20:17) You, my dear Lord, are the source of all joy, happiness, contentment, satisfaction, fulfillment, enlightenment, inspiration, creativity, fellowship, energy, perseverance, wisdom, understanding, discernment, vitality, new life, inward purity and integrity, assurance of eternal life, strength in temptation, material blessings, loving relationships, and so much more! 'In thee I live and move and have my being'!

You are the source of all my life - physical, intellectual, social, spiritual life! You have given me 'all things richly to enjoy!' 'There are pleasures evermore in your presence!' You distribute all the spiritual gifts as You sovereignly choose, so why should I

covet someone else's gifts? You have made me to be special—to fulfill my small (but significant) mission in life! You, my Creator, do all things well, so why should I wish to be someone else? I love you, I love others, and I wholesomely love myself. Praise You, Jesus! I only 'COVET' Your Presence!" Amen!

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

Love God Supremely, Love others Sincerely, and love yourself Subordinately. God made you Special, So Wholesomely Love Yourself, and Envy No One!

"Lord my God, I want to live above the world's frays and fights that come because of the devilish sin of envy! You have commanded me not to envy anything—except more of the presence of God in my life! I must always envy more of your blessing in my life, as I walk humbly before my God. But, any other envy is wrong and hurtful—hurtful to You, O God."

29.

"HOW CAN I FIND DELIVERANCE
FROM MY DEBILITATING
COVETEOUSNESS?"

Personal repentance for holding bitter envy in one's heart is a vital step in finding victory in one's spiritual life.

Affirming God's goodness to one's self, regardless of how hard life at times seems to be, is the first step towards regaining one's spiritual equilibrium.

Reorienting one's thinking regarding the life of the wicked from that of coveting the prosperity of the wicked to that of recognizing the final destiny of the wicked, is the next step in achieving victory over covetousness.

Contemplating the seriousness of God's judgment on the unrepentant wicked is the next step towards recovery. This means trusting in God's sovereignty—i.e., believing that God has a reason for allowing the wicked to prosper materially and for allowing the righteous to experience hardships.

Earthly prosperity is the prelude to God's harsh judgment in eternity on unrepentant sinners, while earthly adversity is sometimes the instrument of God's discipline to better prepare humble saints for their ultimate rewards in heaven. Earthly prosperity cannot always be looked at as a sign of God's favor, and neither can adversity always be considered as a sign of God's judgment. The righteous often times do prosper physically and materially, but so do the wicked. It is understanding of the ultimate destiny of the righteous and of the wicked that enables the believer, who is caught in the web of covetousness, to find deliverance from that debilitating web.

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

Repentance means 'change of mind' from one of foolishly coveting earth's unsubstantial wealth to one of coveting the eternal wealth of heaven.

It was Paul who wrote, "Aspire to the realm above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God, and let your thoughts dwell on that higher realm,

not on this earthly life." Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. (*Colossians 3:2*) "You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me into glory." (*Psalms 73:24*)

It is as if the Psalmist is acknowledging the folly of his human wisdom and understanding, and recognizing that he needs the divine guidance and spiritual wisdom which God alone can provide. Rather than simplistically trying to figure out the inequities and the mysteries and the seeming injustices of life, the Psalmist realizes that he must rely on the sovereign God alone.

It is when a believer falls and fails that he is usually most humble and receptive to the counsel of God.

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"O Lord, you have clearly shown me that I must deeply repent for my coveting the things of this earth rather than coveting a 'closer walk' with you! Please forgive me and restore me to a warm relationship with You! I

now understand why repentance is so important! Repentance is recognizing the folly of coveting the wrong things—the wealth and the power and the position of the wicked. Setting one's affections on the things of time rather than on the things of eternity is what constitutes sinful coveting. Your Son exhorts me to covet the things God does, not the passing fantasies of this world. Thank You, God, for Your Love and Forgiveness! Amen!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

When the mind cannot understand the ways of God, the heart must trust the wisdom of God. God's ways are higher than our ways, as high as the heavens are above the earth. Therefore, trust the Lord, submit to His counsel, accept His disciplines, and anticipate His future glory when He shall ultimately reward His humble servants in Heaven!

30.

**"WHY AM I PLAGUED WITH FEELINGS
OF GUILT?"**

Perhaps your feelings of guilt are needless. Perhaps your guilty feelings are the result of your inner condemnatory voice of an overly sensitive conscience.

Sometimes this overly sensitive conscience is developed in your childhood. Children can develop notions and impressions that some things are wrong or evil, even though the things, which are producing guilt feelings, are not wrong at all.

You may have feelings of guilt, not because you have deliberately broken God's moral laws, but simply because you have failed to accept yourself as God has made you. Because you, for some reason, do not feel that you are a worthy human being that God has created.

You strongly feel you owe an apology to the 'human race'. Thus, you (un-justly) feel 'guilty'! You may feel

'guilty' because of your failure to live up to someone else's expectations, or because of your failure to live up to your own (perfectionist) expectations!

These 'false guilt's' (caused by one of the above mentioned factors, or other factors) must be committed to God in prayer, and they definitely need to be 'thrown into the moral wastebasket' - no longer to give you problems—no longer to cause you 'guilt feelings'!

If your guilty feelings are the result of your breaking of God's moral (objective) laws—The Ten Commandments—and violation of other Holy Laws, then it is important for you never to dismiss your feelings of guilt!

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

There are many people who know they are guilty of deliberate violation of God's standards of righteousness and moral purity. These people need the conviction of the Holy Spirit, to enable them to see the seriousness of their sinful lifestyle, and to 'drive' them to the loving arms of their redeeming Savior!

If you know you need personal rescue from your sins, and a whole new life through Jesus Christ, then (as hard as it may be for you) welcome the feelings of 'guilt' as a type of 'spiritual fever' that alerts you to your need to go quickly to the 'Great Physician' who is ready and able to heal you of your 'sin sickness'!

Physically-speaking, no one likes to experience the 'heat' of a high temperature, but you know that 'fever' (like 'conviction' in the spiritual realm) is a 'friend' - 'fever' (conviction) sends you to a place of healing!

Yes, 'guilty feelings', which reveal the conviction of sin in your life, is the first step in the journey to God and to the realization of personal salvation through Christ. God alone, as a gift from Jesus (because of what Jesus did on the cross), can save you, but God saves no one who does not respond to the offer of 'grace'.

Grace is 'God's unmerited favor', which He gives to anyone who takes the necessary steps to receive the

gift. (An inheritance to you is a 'gift', but you must take certain 'legal steps' to receive your inheritance). The gift of God is never given indiscriminately or unconditionally to any person (sinner).

Here are the steps (conditions):

- 1. Awakening - (conviction of sin) that brings a 'sense of guilt' which is uncomfortable to the guilty person.*
- 2. Repentance—godly sorrow and telling God you are sorry for your sins, a moral U-Turn.*
- 3. Confession—admitting in humility that you have been 'wrong', and God has been 'right' about all of life and the 'moral order'.*
- 4. Faith—trust, reliance in Christ's adequacy to save you.*
- 5. Surrender—turning over your will to Christ's will, and determination to follow Christ's plan for your entire life.*
- 6. Restitution—asking those whom you have 'wronged' to*

forgive you.

7. *Obedience—desire to please God for the rest of your life, and to be a learner (disciple) for time and eternity, and desiring the fullness of Holy Spirit.*

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"Father, restore unto me the joy of my salvation. You are the source of my joy, for you are the solution to the problem of my guilty feelings, which have stolen away my joy. You came to earth, not to condemn, but to save—to save me from the real guilt of my sins and from the false guilt's resulting from my inadequacies. Thank you for your total provision! Amen!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

If your guilty feelings are the result of deliberate sin in your life, you may quickly and decisively come to the 'Foot of the Cross', and repent, confess, believe, and surrender your life to the Savior. If it is 'false guilt's', then rid yourself of those, and throw

them into the 'moral wastebasket' now! Be free from all guilt, through your loving Savior. Pray the following prayer! "Jesus, thou art all compassion. Amidst my changing emotions, you remain steadfast and faithful to me. In my sadness, you are my companionship; in my depression, you are my hope; in my sinning, you are my forgiveness. Amidst the changes and chances of life, your resources are infinite to meet all my needs! I am profoundly thankful! He who is greater than my heart will stand guard over my heart, delivering me from all guilt—both real and false! Thank You!"

*Booklet Titles Of
"Effective Christian Living" Series.*

- | <i>No.</i> | <i>Titles</i> |
|------------|---|
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