

The 10 Pillars of Jesus' Love

Jason Rob rt

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to my friend, Zac Marshall.
You have been a wonderful example of Jesus' love to me.

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And support throughout this entire project.

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CHAPTER ONE

The GOOD News!

You are not reading this book by accident.

The pages you are now holding contain the power to change your life forever! And that's not because of my wisdom or knowledge; it's because the words you are reading are based on the truth revealed by Jesus Christ as recorded in the Bible.

Jesus said, "For God so loved the world [that means he loves you and he loves me], that he gave his only Son [to be crucified for your sins], that whoever believes in him should not perish [or go to hell] but have eternal life... And this is eternal life, that they know [have a relationship with] you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent" (John 3:16, 17:3).

That is the good news – the free offer of eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ! And eternal life is simply having a RELATIONSHIP with God and Jesus Christ based on LOVE. It starts in this life and goes on to eternity in heaven.

Would you like to have eternal life?

How would you answer that question (yes or no)?

If your answer is yes, please pray the following prayer out loud and from your heart as an expression of your faith:

“Heavenly Father, I believe Jesus Christ died on the cross for my sins. I turn away from my sins. Thank you for forgiving me. As of today, I commit to follow Christ. Please give me eternal life and the gift of the Holy Spirit. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

If you just prayed that prayer and meant it, I rejoice with you. You have now been given eternal life and the Holy Spirit.

I now invite you to enjoy the rest of this book to help you grow in your new relationship with God and his Son, Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER TWO

The Need to be Baptized in Water

In 2005, when I was on a missionary trip to Israel, I had a desire to be baptized in the Jordan River. I had not yet been baptized in water since I rededicated my life to the Lord Jesus in the year 2000.

I remember it like it was yesterday.

I planned on being baptized on Saturday, so on Friday I rented a bicycle. I planned to ride it from my hostel some seven miles away to the Yardenit (Jordan River) Baptismal Site on Saturday. That is exactly what I did.

The day was somewhat hot, but I was on a mission to get to the baptismal site, and I ignored the heat. I planned on being baptized by a famous evangelist who was there leading a tour that day. So I rode my bike to the site and sat upon the stone steps awaiting the arrival of the evangelist.

However, when his team arrived, they informed me that he would be unable to baptize me because of all of the other people on the tour who were in need.

I clearly remember the man in charge stretching out his hand toward the many tourists in gowns waiting to be baptized and saying, "I'm sorry, this day is for them."

Seeing that there was nothing I could do to convince this man, I decided to sit on the highest step and pray the Lord would change his mind. I didn't know what else to do! I remember thinking, "I've come all the way to Israel from California and this evangelist won't even baptize me. God, please change his mind!"

Just as I was praying that prayer, I felt as though my head was drawn to the left by the hand of God. Suddenly, I saw an unknown Messianic Jewish man up the river baptizing some elderly women. When at first I saw him, I knew that he was supposed to baptize me that day.

It was as though the light of Jesus Christ was shining upon that Jewish man as I approached him up the river.

He was speaking Hebrew when I got to him and I timidly asked, “Would you baptize me?” Smiling, he changed his language to English, and answered, “Sure, brother, I’d love to baptize you!”

So he placed one hand in front of me in the water and one hand behind me and said in a loud voice, “In the name of Yeshua (Jesus in Hebrew), I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit.” Then he plunged me into the water.

I distinctly remember looking up as the water closed around my body and over my head. Then, as he pulled me up from the water, I felt the power of God descend upon me. I knew God had just blessed me.

I was thrilled! It was the experience of a lifetime, and I will never forget it.

Who Should be Baptized in Water?

Jesus Christ’s last words to the Apostles were: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19).

Thus, all disciples/believers in Jesus Christ are to be baptized (immersed) in water in the name of Jesus Christ (or, equivalently, the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit).

Definition of Baptism

Baptism is being immersed (having your entire body dipped) in water in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Why Should You be Baptized in Water?

There are many reasons you should be baptized in water. However, I believe the biggest reason is simply to obey Jesus.

There is always a blessing that follows simple obedience to Jesus Christ. He said, “If you know these things [in this case, that you should be baptized], blessed are you if you do them” (John 13:17). Do you want to be blessed by God? Then follow Jesus’ commandment to be baptized in water!

Another reason for being baptized in water is more practical: when you are baptized, you symbolically enter into his death, burial, and resurrection. You do this in the presence of other believers, often at the church you have chosen to attend, and it serves as a meaningful declaration to them that you are serious about your faith. Thus, it may also provide a gateway into deeper fellowship with your local church and with God.

Additionally, if you invite your friends and family to your baptism, it is a way of telling them that you are making a break with the world and its ways and are choosing instead to follow Jesus Christ. Your baptism will be a powerful and moving witness to all those who attend.

The main point is this: if you are a follower of Jesus Christ, he commands you to be baptized in water in his name. If you do this, you will be blessed. To not do so would be an act of disobedience.

Note to Those Considering Baptism

To those of you who were baptized as babies or before you were serious about your walk with Jesus Christ, I encourage you to be baptized again. I say this for three reasons: 1) because Christ commands baptism *after* a person is saved, 2) it will be a memorable declaration both to you and to your local church of your break with the world and your decision to follow Jesus Christ, and 3) it will be a powerful witness to all of your non-Christian friends about what Christ has done for you.

Where to Get Baptized

“And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some...” (Hebrews 10:24-25).

My best advice to you if you want to be baptized in water is to *start attending a local, Bible-believing Christian church*. There you can ask the pastor or one of the elders to baptize you. I’m sure that they will be more than happy to do so.

However, if there has been another meaningful Christian in your life that you would prefer to baptize you, it’s okay. Just remember you still need to become part of a local church.

Final Questions

1. Who should get baptized in water?
2. Why should you get baptized in water?
3. Where should you get baptized in water?

CHAPTER THREE

Pillar #1: Repentance

When I was young and in high school, I became very popular because of my work with math. My mathematical puzzle book, *The Lab Puzzle Book*, was distributed to over 700 public high schools in California. Articles about me appeared in *People Magazine*, *The L.A. Times*, and many other publications and I was honored by the California State Legislature. Then I was accepted into my dream college, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Later that year, I was voted as one of the “Top Five” Freshmen in my class. I was on top of the world and living my dream.

It seemed like everywhere I walked turned to gold! My pride grew so high that I used to make it a point to tell every new person I met about my accomplishments within the first five minutes of meeting them.

Pride, lust, and greed became my brothers. And I greatly enjoyed their brotherhood.

Then one day while in my girlfriend’s dorm room, I saw angels, three of them. They were just standing there. Two of them picked up a huge bowl containing some spiritual substance that they poured on me. I couldn’t believe what I was seeing! I thought I was *out of my mind* and I tried to dismiss it.

However, the substance they poured on me quickly began to affect me. It caused me to lose all enjoyment of sin, particularly pride, lust, and greed. I started to feel emptier inside than I had ever felt in my life, because I no longer delighted in sin. What had once given me a sense of purpose, meaning, and fulfillment no longer satisfied me. Even though I had achieved my dreams of acquiring fame, a girlfriend, going to a prestigious university, and having money, I felt empty inside; and the more I embraced them, the emptier I felt. I felt like a bottomless pit sucking in the world and sin to fill myself up,

but all the time feeling emptier than ever before.

Since neither my girlfriend, nor alcohol, nor money, nor fame could satisfy me anymore, I was confused and perplexed. “What is wrong with me?” I asked myself... “I have everything the world can offer and I feel worse than I’ve ever felt in my life!”

Eventually I broke up with my girlfriend, finished out the school year, and returned to my home in California for the summer holiday. That summer I decided to seek the answer to the question that was haunting me: “What in the world is the purpose of life?”

A lot happened that summer, but it suffices to say that God sent Christians, Christians, and more Christians into my life. I began to realize they had the answer to my burning question. I could not figure out what made them so happy, or what made me feel so loved when I was around them; but I knew it was something significant.

Later that summer on a road trip with my Dad to San Francisco, angels showed up again. This time it was to pull my head in the direction of a Bible which my Dad always kept between the two front seats of the van. Time and time again, I would pull my head back in response, and say to myself, “No! I’m not reading the Bible!” But the angels just kept pulling my head toward the Bible until I could stand it no longer. Finally, I picked up the Bible and flipped it open at random to Matthew 5 (which just so happens to be the most famous sermon of all time – Jesus Christ’s Sermon on the Mount).

I read it and came upon the verse, “Do not give dogs what is sacred; neither cast your pearls to pigs. For if you do, they will trample them under their feet and then turn and tear you to pieces.” I thought, “Jesus understands exactly what I am going through! I have given myself away to the world. Now everything I had that was sacred is torn up and the pearls of my heart are trampled underfoot.” Then the Holy Spirit testified to my heart, “This is the wisest man who ever lived... he is truly the Son of God!” With that, I rededicated my life to Christ. No evangelizing, no altar call, no sinner’s prayer, just

simple faith in Jesus Christ by the grace of God. The day was August 9, 2000.

Immediately, I became convicted of my sins, especially of pride, lust, and greed, so I confessed them to God. I can't tell you that God immediately took away all my sinful desires; what I can say, is that I entered a gradual process of turning away from sin. There isn't a week that goes by that I don't recall the person I used to be, ask God to turn my heart away from those sins, and develop Jesus' heart of humility, purity, and generosity.

I have discovered that repentance isn't just a one-time thing. It's a lifetime process that not only gets rid of my old baggage but as an added blessing, fills me up with more and more of God's grace and joy. I still can't believe this great deal – I get to trade my garbage for God's glory! That's the heart of what repentance is to me – garbage for glory.

I entered the process of repentance some 19 years ago when I rededicated my life to Jesus. Today, I still repent of my sins – those of my heart, soul, mind, and actions. I used to think the word *repent* was negative, but today I look at it with a positive understanding. Through repentance, God gives me the power to change for my good.

I may not be rich or famous today, but I have something, or rather Someone, far greater. Repentance is the way to empty myself of temptations to sin from Satan, the flesh, and the world; and to fill myself with God through the Holy Spirit. Even if heaven wasn't in my future, which it is, there couldn't be anything better than the blessing I receive from God when I truly repent.

I thank God for his grace. I also thank God for the knowledge that if I am faithful to repent, God is always faithful to forgive, cleanse, and fill me with the Spirit of his one and only begotten Son. God promises us in the Bible, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9), and "By this we know that we abide

in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit” (1 John 4:13).

What was John the Baptist and Jesus Christ’s first Message?

“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand [within your reach]” (Matthew 3:2).

You may have heard that you need to confess your sins to God whenever you give in to temptation. This is true, but repentance is much more than just confessing your sins to God.

Definition of Repentance

Repentance is changing your mind from the world’s ways to God’s Word, and making an earnest decision to forsake all known sin and walk in righteousness.

Repentance means to change your thoughts for God in such a way, that your actions eventually come into harmony with your changed mind. Repentance is admitting that you’re wrong and making an effort to change, until you have changed for good and for God.

Now that we’ve laid out a working definition of repentance and its difference from confession, you may be wondering how it looks in real life. In other words, you might be asking, “How can I effectively repent?”

I’d like to give you 10 examples of how to repent of the most basic sins toward the righteousness of God. As imperfect as my efforts often are, I have lived and continue to live by each of these examples:

The 10 Major Examples of Repentance

1. Instead of hiding your guilt: repent.
2. Instead of hating God: worship him.
3. Instead of worrying about life: pray about it.
4. Instead of doubting: learn God's Word through discipleship.
5. Instead of being fearful and isolating yourself: embrace fellowship.
6. Instead of being angry and bearing a grudge: forgive the person who hurt you.
7. Instead of lusting: fast from your evil desires.
8. Instead of being greedy: give a portion of your resources to God, the church, and the needy.
9. Instead of being deceitful to other Christians: minister the truth in love to them.
10. Instead of envying unbelievers: share the good news about Jesus with them.

You may be saying now, "That's all fine and good. Now I know how to repent. But it's hard! What's in it for me?" That's an absolutely normal question to ask and God understands your heart in asking it! Therefore, he has made some exceedingly great promises in the Bible about how he will bless you if you repent. I have listed them below (each blessing corresponds to its numerical equal in the examples above):

The 10 Major Blessings of Repentance

1. Going *from guilt to repentance* brings mercy and heavenly rewards: "For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you [if you repent]" (Matthew 6:14) and "Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates" (Revelation 22:14).

2. Repentance *from hatred to worship* brings the glory and presence of God: “Worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness; tremble before him, all the earth!” (Psalm 96:9) and “You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore” (Psalms 16:11).
3. Repentance *from worry to prayer* will lead to prayers getting answered: “Whatever we ask we receive from him because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him” (1 John 3:21-22).
4. Repentance *from doubt to discipleship* will open the door to understanding God’s Word: “You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John 8:32).
5. Repentance *from fear to fellowship* will bring you Christian friends and cleanse you from sin: “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).
6. Repentance *from anger to forgiveness* will bring you forgiveness: “For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you” (Matthew 6:14).
7. Repentance *from lust to fasting* will bring you deliverance, healing, and protection: “Then shall your light break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up speedily; your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard” (Isaiah 58:8).
8. Repentance *from greed to giving* will bring you gifts: “Give and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap” (Luke 6:38).

9. Repentance *from deception to ministry* will bring eternal rewards: “Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done” (Revelation 22:12).
10. Repentance *from envy to evangelism* will bring joy to you and heaven: “...the joy of your salvation...” (Psalms 51:12) and “Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance” (Luke 15:7).

Final Questions

1. Before reading this chapter, what were your thoughts and feelings on the subject of repentance?
2. Now that you have read this chapter, what are your thoughts and feelings on the subject of repentance?
3. List three of the 10 major sins above you struggle with and the proper way of repenting of them as listed in the section above titled “The 10 Major Examples of Repentance.”

CHAPTER FOUR

Pillar #2: Worship

It was the greatest experience I have ever had with the person of Jesus Christ. I had been on a missionary trip to Ireland, England, Israel, and Finland for nearly four months. It was during the last few weeks of my journey, before returning to California, that I watched the movie *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. It is an incredible movie depicting the truth of the gospels through “Aslan” the lion.

After watching the movie, I was resting in a room at the house of my Finnish friends. I pondered all the ways that Aslan was like Jesus Christ – he was majestic, gracious, merciful, ferocious, mysterious, and royal. It was during this process that the Holy Spirit so manifested in the room that I began to cry.

I looked up and standing on the couch right in front of me stood Jesus Christ in the Spirit. As I looked at him, I saw the red marks where the nails had pierced his hands and feet. He was clothed in a white robe, and I sensed his great gentleness and meekness filling the room. I exploded into tears. I could feel the love radiating from him.

I dropped to my knees and began to kiss his feet. My tears were abundant and fell upon the places the nails had pierced him. I wept like a baby for over an hour. All I wanted him to know at that moment was that I loved him and would do anything for him.

When I had no tears left to cry, and the comfort of the Holy Spirit came upon me, Jesus disappeared from the room. It was and still is my most intimate moment with Jesus Christ and the best expression of worship I was ever able to offer him. It was an experience I will remember until the day I die.

While we cannot gain such intimate experiences at will (such as this and others I've written about in this book), as we seek God and God alone, he may give us such moments of blessing and joy.

Reasons We Should Worship God

The Bible attributes many characteristics to God that only God can hold. The Bible says he is solitary, supreme, sovereign, unchangeable, holy, all-powerful, completely faithful, good, incapable of evil, patient, gracious, merciful, loving, and wrathful towards the devil and sin. His decrees are perfect; he declares the future with absolute precision; his knowledge is unsearchable; and he lovingly created you and everything else that exists.

Besides all of his wonderful and unique characteristics, he also loved us so much that he made an everlasting covenant available to us by grace, through sending his one and only Son to die for our sins (John 3:16), so that we might have an eternal relationship with him through the Holy Spirit (John 17:3). He is the very source and supply of our life.

God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is the only one who is truly worthy of our worship!

How the Bible Talks about Worship

The Bible uses a variety of Hebrew and Greek words for our single English word *worship*. In Hebrew, these words mean: to bow down, to work for or serve, to be in the presence of, and to show reverence or respect. In Greek, these words mean: to bow down, revere, adore, be religiously devout, honor, praise, serve, minister, and to show reverence to whom reverence is due.

Obviously, the meanings of these Hebrew and Greek words show us one thing – worship is both singing songs to God at church and much, much more. In his book, *Desiring God*, author John Piper says, “God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in

him.” What he is saying is that God is worshiped best when we do it out of our enjoyment of him. And this holds true in whatever you do in life, whether at a church service or not.

There was a time when the only place man was supposed to worship God was in the temple in Jerusalem. However, Jesus Christ brought us into a new covenant and made worship available to all Christians, wherever they are. In the discussion between Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well, we read:

“The woman said to him, ‘Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth’” (John 4:19-24).

What Jesus was saying is that we worship God whenever we live life passionately and fully devoted to him. We can do this by following the words of our Lord Jesus Christ: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind” (Matthew 22:37). Here Jesus was saying that anything you choose to do to glorify God with all of your being and with a pure heart is true worship.

The Apostle John said, “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome” (1 John 5:3). When we worship God by loving him with all of our beings we must do so in keeping with his moral law, or commandments. This shouldn’t prove to be an impossible task because God is gracious and very patient with us all.

At the end of his earthly life, Jesus Christ taught his disciples an extended definition of true worship. He said, “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:12-13).

Most of us are not actually called to die for our faith in Jesus Christ. However, we are all called to live by the principle expressed by the Lord Jesus – sometimes to choose to suffer on his behalf.

The Apostle Paul spelled out such love for God this way:

“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship” (Romans 12:1).

What he was saying is that sometimes worshiping God will involve making costly choices on his behalf. When you are called to do this, God will restore your soul afterward by giving you his abundant mercy.

Although worshiping God may be difficult at times, it doesn't always have to be. The Apostle Paul wrote, “So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31).

To conclude this section, I will say that worship is always loving God by keeping his commandments. Sometimes it will be enjoyable and other times it will be difficult. At all times it will give glory to God and bring meaning to your life.

Definition of Worship

Worship is simply glorifying God in whatever you do by keeping his commandments.

Practical Ways to Worship God

I feel this chapter would be incomplete without briefly offering you some practical ways you can worship God. I suggest the following:

1. Attend church and worship him there with song.
2. Give thanks to him every day.
3. Praise him in every circumstance.
4. Lovingly obey him to bring him glory and draw others into relationship with him through Jesus Christ.

Of course, my list is not complete. It is just a good place to start. Feel free to use your creativity to come up with other ways you can worship God!

Final Questions

1. What is worship?
2. Why is God worthy of your worship?
3. Write down one or two ways you will worship God in the next week.

CHAPTER FIVE

Pillar #3: Prayer

During a dry spell in my Christian life, I felt very disconnected from God. It seemed that I was doing all of the right things, but still not connecting with him in the way I wanted. So I asked God the same question that Jesus' disciples once asked him: "God, please teach me how to pray." To my surprise, God gave me the same answer that Jesus gave his disciples: "Pray the Lord's Prayer." But what was interesting is that the undertone of what he told me is that the Lord's Prayer isn't just meant to be memorized and recited to God; it is intended to be an outline of how to pray to God. With this insight, I began to pray like Jesus. As a result, I connect much better with God. I am very grateful for the Lord's wisdom of how to pray in the manner of Jesus. I sincerely hope this knowledge will also help you connect with God on a much deeper level!

Why Should We Pray

The Lord Jesus said in his Sermon on the Mount, "But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you" (Matthew 6:6).

There is always a reward when you pray. This is a spiritual law, according to the Lord Jesus Christ. The rewards are many; they may be spiritual, emotional, mental, physical, or financial. You will never know what your reward will be for sure when you pray. However, you can know that God will always reward you according to your greatest need and for your greatest good. "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28).

The reason that God is always able to give you the answers you need is because both Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit intercede for you when you pray:

“Consequently, he [Jesus Christ] is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them [us]” (Hebrews 7:25).

“Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words” (Romans 8:26).

Both Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit intercede to the Father for you when you pray. That is why you will always receive an answer to your prayers – because they always intercede for you according to the will of God the Father.

Often, your prayers will be answered in the way you want if you pray according to the perfect will of God. This type of prayer is called “praying in the Holy Spirit.” Other times your prayers will be answered in the way God wants, according to the way Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit intercede for you when you pray. This happens when you pray in the flesh.

This may be a bit confusing. However, what you can always be sure of is that the more you pray, the more Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit will intercede to God on your behalf through you. This is the reason Jesus said, “Ask, and it will be given to you” (Matthew 7:7).

The key to having prayers answered specifically is being obedient and pleasing God: “Whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him” (1 John 3:22).

The more you become like Jesus by keeping his commandments and doing the things that please him, the more your prayers will be answered specifically because the words of your prayers will be in alignment with the Father’s will. The more you become like Jesus, the more your prayers will be answered.

The more you pray, the more answers you will receive from your

heavenly Father in his perfect timing. So pray, pray, and pray some more!

One of the great things about prayer is that through it, we receive joy. Jesus said, “Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full” (John 16:24).

When you pray, God always works to give you the desires of your heart. Therefore, your joy will increase, and life will be given to you because “a desire fulfilled is a tree of life” (Proverbs 13:12). God knows the desires of your heart and gives them to you whenever you pray like Jesus. He works to bring you joy.

Definition of Prayer

Prayer is simply asking God for what you are in need of.

How We Should Pray

Prayer has always been one of the simplest ways of man connecting with God. Though most Christians pray daily, many do not often pray in the manner the Lord taught. This section you are now reading is meant to be an instructional guide for you and to give you a biblical framework for the type of prayer that most pleases God and is answered specifically.

Jesus Christ gave us The Lord’s Prayer in Matthew 6:9-13 so that we can always pray the *perfect* will of God. If we pray “in the manner” of the Lord, our prayers will be answered specifically. Jesus told his disciples,

“Pray then like this:

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come,
your will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.”

Let us now discuss what Jesus Christ meant when he said, “Pray then *like* this” (Matthew 6:9). The Lord’s Prayer is not supposed to be merely memorized and recited to God; it is meant to be used as a topical outline for *how* to pray to God. In this section, you will discover the heart of God through praying *like* our Lord.

Therefore, we will discuss the six major sections of The Lord’s Prayer, the Lord’s perfect prayer:

“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.”

When praying “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,” you will learn to address God and come to him with thanksgiving and praise. “Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise!” (Psalm 100:4). When you pray the Lord’s Prayer, you address God and then proclaim that his name is faultless through thanksgiving and praise for his many wonderful attributes.

“Your kingdom come.”

To effectively pray “Your kingdom come,” you need to know that God most desires to give his Holy Spirit and spiritual fruit when we pray.

“If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!” (Luke 11:13).

“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he

may give it to you” (John 15:16).

Prayer for the Holy Spirit and his spiritual fruit form the heart of praying for the kingdom because “the kingdom of God is in the midst of you [within you]” (Luke 17:21).

“Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”

When praying “Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven,” you should pray for God’s perspective on how he specifically made you to fulfill the unique purpose he gave you on earth. Ask him to help you discover your calling in your Christian life. Also, pray for the wisdom and strength to act upon and pursue your calling, whatever you believe it is.

“Give us this day our daily bread.”

“Daily bread” can be simply translated *today’s physical needs*. Therefore, when praying, “Give us this day our daily bread,” you should pray for whatever you mainly need at the moment to get through the day. Through this prayer and intercession, daily physical needs will be given to you and your loved ones.

“And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.”

In the fifth part of The Lord’s Prayer, you will learn how to forgive your brothers and sisters – to ask God for blessing, love, grace, mercy, and deliverance to be given to those who have sinned against you. Jesus said, “But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (Matthew 5:44) and “bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you” (Luke 6:28).

Because you have forgiven them, God wants you to come to him in repentance for your sins so that he can forgive you too. Jesus said, “For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you” (Matthew 6:14). During this time, you will both forgive and be forgiven.

“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”

Finally, as you pray, “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,” you will learn how to pray against the three most common forms of temptation in life: to abuse God’s purposes for sex, money, and power. “For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world” (1 John 2:16). At this point, God desires you to ask for deliverance in each area the devil is currently afflicting you.

As you practice praying in the manner of the Lord Jesus, you will experience more and more of God’s abundant presence, joy, and provision in your life. Praying the Lord’s Prayer will no longer be a dull, rote formality, but an intimate and fruitful encounter with your loving heavenly Father.

Now I would like you to practice praying in the manner of the Lord. If you are praying with another believer, simply take turns lifting your prayers up to God while praying through the major sections of the prayer.

You do not have to pray through all of these sections at once, just pray through whichever section(s) correspond to your greatest need at the moment. You can always come back to the other sections later.

To help you with this exercise, I have provided the following outline:

How to Pray like Jesus:

1. *Our Father Who Art In Heaven Hallowed Be Thy Name*
 - a. Give him thanks for all of the spiritual blessings in your life (“Thank you for the spiritual blessings of...”).
 - b. Praise God (“I praise you because...”).

2. *Thy Kingdom Come*

- a. Pray for the Holy Spirit (his glory, wisdom, understanding, counsel, power, knowledge, and reverence) to fill you.
- b. Pray for the Holy Spirit's fruit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control – to be produced in your life.
- c. Pray for more of the gifts of the Holy Spirit: holiness, righteousness, grace, faith, hope, and mercy.

3. *Thy Will Be Done On Earth As It Is In Heaven*

Ask him to reveal to you who he created you to be. Pray that he would reveal to you your purpose and calling here on earth. Finally, ask him for the wisdom and strength to act upon and pursue your calling.

4. *Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread*

- a. Pray that God is glorified in each thing that you are going to do today (be specific).
- b. Pray to be used by God to minister to all of the people you are going to see today (be specific).
- c. Pray for provision of your health, your finances, and today's physical needs (be specific).

5. *Forgive Us Our Debts As We Forgive Our Debtors*

- a. Ask God to bring to mind people you need to forgive. Then forgive them out loud by: 1) blessing them, 2) saying that you love them, 3) praying for God's grace and mercy to fill them, and 4) asking God to deliver them from evil.
- b. Ask God to bring to mind the sins in your own life [10 core examples of sin are: 1) guilt, 2) hate, 3) worry, 4) doubt, 5) fear, 6) anger, 7) lust, 8) greed, 9) deception, and 10) envy]. Then ask God to forgive you of those sins.

6. *Lead Us Not Into Temptation, But Deliver Us From The Evil One*
 - a. Ask God to reveal all the ways you are being tempted (specifically in the areas of sex, money, and power). Then ask God to lead you away from those specific temptations.
 - b. Ask God to reveal all the ways the devil is negatively affecting you. Then pray for deliverance in those areas of your life.

Final Questions

1. What was the biggest lesson you learned from this chapter?
2. What did you gain from praying through the above outline?
3. How will you make it a practice to pray like Jesus in the future?

CHAPTER SIX

Pillar #4: Discipleship

Discipleship is one of my favorite pillars of Jesus' love. Perhaps it is because I am a bit academic, but I think the main reason is that I just love to grow.

I grew up in a Christian family and on my third birthday, my dad led me to the Lord. I still remember it. It is one of my first memories. Dad told me about Jesus dying for my sins on the cross and then I prayed with him to accept Jesus as my Lord and Savior. As I was doing that, I had my first vision of angels. They were descending within the Holy Spirit and coming to me to let me know that God is real and that he loves me.

I attended church for the next 15 years. I never read the Bible on my own, but I always believed in God.

It wasn't until I fell away from the Lord during my freshman year at college and came back to him the following summer (as I already wrote to you about in the chapter on repentance) that I began to have a fuller relationship with Jesus Christ. It wasn't long after renewing my relationship with God through Jesus at the age of 19 that I began to read the Bible. For some reason, I was always drawn to the book of Ecclesiastes in the Old Testament. There was something about the wisdom of Israel's King Solomon that appealed to me. But I never actually read the New Testament.

After college, I experienced some health problems that caused me to get serious about my faith. I went to a local church, and as my young adult pastor, Jon, once preached, he said: "I want you all to read through the entire Bible in six months. To do that, you will need to read eight chapters a day."

That's how my love for discipleship began – by reading through the Bible for my first time. I began to experience God more and learn

so much about him. Then Pastor Jon said, “It is my advice to you that you don’t even read any Christian books until you’ve read the Bible, cover to cover.” When he said this, I felt that the God of Wisdom was speaking directly to me through him. So I was determined to read the Bible before I read any Christian books.

Once I had followed his advice, I finally began to read other Christian books. Since I knew the Bible pretty well by that time, I could tell which of the things the authors were writing about were true and edifying and which were speculative and potentially destructive. I thank God for Jon’s wisdom at the beginning of my discipleship with the Lord and the benefits it has afforded me while being a follower of Jesus Christ.

I believe that reading the Bible is the foundation of all discipleship. However, I also now greatly benefit from reading other Christian books, listening to messages at church, receiving God’s grace and mercy for the brokenness of my past through godly counselors, and embracing the guidance for my future through mature mentors. All of these paths are discipleship to the core because they find their roots in the Word of God. They are merely applied to my spiritual, emotional, and mental life as best fits the occasion.

Discipleship has had and continues to have a profound impact on my life. Whether you are a new believer or a seasoned saint, discipleship will add a grace to your life that you won’t be willing to trade for anything. I assure you that if you embrace this pillar of Jesus’ love, you will never look back!

Definition of Discipleship

Discipleship is simply learning from Jesus Christ through others.

I am going to break the remainder of this chapter into four sections: 1) Reading the Bible, 2) Learning from Christian Leaders, 3) Being Counseled to Undo the Brokenness of Your Past, and 4) Being Mentored to Ensure the Blessedness of Your Future. I believe that

these form the heart of discipleship.

Reading the Bible

“So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, ‘If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free’” (John 8:31-32).

The Lord Jesus Christ said that we need to learn and live by his Word (the Bible). In this way, we will be his disciples. And through learning and living out his Word, we will come to know the truth which will set us free from all barriers between us and God’s love.

The Apostle Paul wrote, “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (1 Timothy 3:16-17). Therefore, we must embrace God’s written Word to become mature.

Just as my pastor counseled me, I counsel you to study the Bible early in your relationship with Jesus Christ. Versing yourself early in the Bible is similar to the way bank tellers are trained how to distinguish between real bills and counterfeits. In their training, they are shown only what real money looks and feels like. They become so acquainted with the real thing during their training that they are then able to distinguish between real bills and counterfeits much more easily. I suggest you apply this wisdom as you study the Bible and then other Christian resources.

Nothing will fill you with the truth as much as reading the Bible, especially the New Testament (Matthew through Revelation). As a rule of thumb, I recommend that you read the New Testament three times before you move on to the Old Testament. Then read the entire Old Testament. While other Christian books are good and profitable to read, my advice is that you focus mainly on the Bible at the beginning of your faith walk. If you do this, you will save yourself the heartaches and headaches that arise from learning from less-

than-true teaching and having to unlearn it in the future.

Therefore, as the Apostle Paul wrote Timothy, I also write to you: “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15).

The written, inspired Word of God is the foundation of all moral and revelatory truth, holding in it the riches of all wisdom, knowledge, and prophecy. I pray that you enjoy reading it, thinking about it, and living it. In this way Christ Jesus will set you free, free indeed.

Learning from Christian Leaders (i.e. Sermons, Books, CDs, etc.)

“And he [Jesus] gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes” (Ephesians 4:11-14).

Jesus Christ gave us leaders within the body of Christ to fully explain the Word of God to us. In fact, the above verses say that they are his gift to us! Their teachings and instructions equip us for ministry, enable us to grow to maturity, and help us to distinguish between truth and error.

If you are a Christian, I strongly urge you to attend a Bible-believing church where you can learn and grow. The Bible says, “And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near” (Hebrews 10:24-25).

At church, you will begin to be able to learn from your pastors and teachers through their sermons. There you will also find other believers who will help you grow in the grace and truth of God's Word.

As I have written above, when you feel you know the Bible well enough, I strongly suggest you seek out Christian books, CDs, and other resources based on the Bible created by pastors and teachers you trust. These will help you grow spiritually.

When selecting books, CDs, and other discipleship resources, I suggest you begin by asking your spiritual father or spiritual mother to point you in the right direction. Make clear what you want to learn about and follow his or her advice.

Books have been my favorite source of discipleship. If you do not yet have a spiritual father or mother, or if you just want to know my own reading suggestions, *I have listed My Top 9 Book Picks in the Appendix to this book on page 115.*

Being Counseled to Undo the Brokenness of Your Past

I have written the following four italicized statements to help you identify a true counselor and know how to respond to them. They may not follow these principles perfectly, but they will do a good job most of the time. And God will use them to help undo the brokenness of your past. Remember, it is God counseling you through them and restoring you to himself.

A counselor will believe in your potential to improve, listen to you when you're vulnerable, understand your thoughts and feelings, and love you in spite of your problems.

A Counselor Believes in Your Potential

“As it is written, ‘I have made you the father of many nations’—in

the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist” (Romans 4:17).

A good counselor is like God, calling into existence the things that do not exist, through their faith in you. They inherently see what you can be, not what you are. They choose to draw out of you what is best, Christ in you the hope of glory.

Each of us has limitless untapped potential, and it often takes a skilled counselor to draw it out of us.

A Counselor Listens to You When You're Vulnerable

“Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear [listen]” (James 1:19).

Counselors make us feel at ease because they listen to us when we make ourselves vulnerable. Many times in life, we do not need advice, merely a listening ear.

As a good listener, a counselor asks questions to draw out our thoughts and feelings. They are not focused on what they are going to say next, but rather in figuring out what we think, feel, and are going through. The best way to do that is to simply listen and ask questions.

A Counselor Understands Your Thoughts and Feelings

“But if anyone loves God, he is known by God” (1 Corinthians 8:3).

A good counselor is like God in the above verse; they know and understand you.

After we have become vulnerable enough to admit our mental and emotional struggles to a counselor, one of the greatest gifts we can receive from them is that of being understood. A counselor may not have lived through what you are going through, but they have made

every effort to listen and ask questions to understand from your perspective. It is a wonderful feeling to be understood by someone when you become honest in the midst of your own mental and emotional baggage.

Counselors often say things like, “I can see why you think that,” or, “I would feel the same way too, if what happened to you happened to me.” They step into your life when you feel isolated and alone and let you know they are right there beside you and understand what you are going through.

A Counselor Loves You in Spite of Your Problems

“In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4:10).

The greatest of all gifts a counselor can give is that of unconditional love. Often this comes in the form of a compliment, a prayer, or a hug. A wise counselor will ask what kind of love you need to be restored, and then give it to you appropriately.

This kind of unconditional love comes right from the heart of God. In fact, it was for this very reason that he sent his Son to die for our sins. He was saying to us, “In spite of your sins, I am willing to do anything to restore you to myself, even die for you.” Counselors function as the ambassadors of God’s love, restoring our hearts to the heart of Jesus.

Being Mentored to Ensure the Blessedness of Your Future

Mentors will add great value to your life. A mentor is someone you go to for answers about your direction and formation as a Christian. They will be able to connect with you like a friend, help you solve your problems, believe in you when you don’t believe in yourself, and encourage you to find and act out your unique ministry. Mentors, like everyone else, are not perfect, but they will help you

find the way. Remember, Jesus Christ is the real mentor, spiritually working through the body of Christ to lead you to freedom, fullness of life, and godliness.

A Mentor is a Friend

“No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you” (John 15:15).

The main thing a mentor will do is connect with you. They will be somebody who has gone down the path ahead of you and now works to help you along the way. Because they are acquainted with your journey, they will share your joy and connect with you in ways other people cannot. At heart, a mentor is a trusted friend.

A Mentor Displays Wisdom in Answering Your Difficult Questions

“And all who heard him [Jesus] were amazed at his understanding and his answers” (Luke 2:47).

When Jesus spoke, either publicly or privately, people were always astounded by his understanding and answers. He was a problem-solver through-and-through, and many people sought him out for advice.

A mentor helps you chart the course of your life. They provide direction for hiking the next mountain or traversing the next valley of your faith walk. They have been there before you and have the wisdom you need to make it successfully through life’s obstacle course.

When you go to your mentor, be sure to be prepared with good questions to ask them. I often prepare my mind for my meetings with mentors beforehand by writing down questions to which I really need answers. This takes work, but it is well worth the investment. Remember, you will get out of a mentoring relationship what you

put into it – a major key to this is being prepared with questions each time you take your mentor’s time.

Through this process, your mentor will train you to think at a higher level. The thing you are looking for in a mentor is wisdom based upon the Word of God.

A Mentor Affirms Your Belief in Yourself and God

“I can do all things through him [Christ] who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:13).

Paul was a mentor to many of the Church’s first leaders, and he affirmed that God had put the power within them to accomplish exactly what he had purposed them to do.

Often, we don’t think we can make it to our destination, either because we lack faith in ourselves or in God. Mentors speak faith into our lives. They believe in us when we don’t believe in ourselves. And they encourage us to perform daring feats for God. Paul wrote, “And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:6). This is the heart and mind of a mentor: that with God, you hold the power to perform every one of his purposes.

A Mentor Encourages You to Take Action in Ministry

“As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry” (2 Timothy 4:5).

Because they know you well, a mentor is well positioned to help you find your ministry and mission. As they advise you and affirm your beliefs, they also release you to perform them. They help you find your purpose and act upon it.

It has been said that our talents are God’s gift to us, but what we do with them is our gift to God. I agree with this statement.

God has given you many gifts through the Holy Spirit. He has given you experiences to learn from no one has ever had before. He has created you in a way no one has ever been created before. And he has put desires within you that are completely unique. Those are God's gifts to you. Acting upon these gifts is your gift to God.

You will do things for God no one has ever done before. A mentor will help you to see your potential and then call you to act upon it. By the grace of God, your mentor will help you to build up the body of Christ and save the lost in ways you are called to.

Final Questions

1. Are you reading the Bible on a regular basis?
2. Have you moved on to other Christian resources to help you grow? What kinds of resources do you most need?
3. If you already have a counselor and/or mentor, what have you learned from them? If you don't currently have a counselor and/or mentor, how do you think it might benefit you to find them?

CHAPTER SEVEN

Pillar #5: Fellowship

In my opinion, fellowship is the most rewarding of all the pillars of Jesus' love. The key to fellowship is the connection. I love connecting with God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. In fact, the connection and fellowship I have with them is what Jesus called eternal life: "And this is eternal life, that they know [have fellowship with] you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent" (John 17:3). Eternal life is the promise of God through Jesus Christ and the most rewarding experience we can ever have on earth or in heaven. It is the most rewarding part of my life and I hope it is for you too.

Our fellowship with God alone is very important. However, God also wants to have fellowship with us through other members of the body of Christ. I have greatly enjoyed the fellowship I get when I commune with the body of Christ when I'm living in the light, when I'm suffering, when I'm ministering, and when I'm evangelizing. All of these activities are meant to be done in the context of community, and God wants to fellowship with you as you fellowship with his church in these ways. The love and connection I feel with God has often been as strong as ever when I live righteously, suffer, minister, and evangelize together with the body of Christ. During such times, God dispenses his life through the body as I fellowship with them. And during these times my fellowship is really with God himself.

Definition of Fellowship

Fellowship is sharing with God and other believers about your relationship with Jesus Christ through authentic, personal relationships with them.

There are seven dimensions of fellowship we are going to talk about in this chapter: 1) fellowship with the Father, 2) fellowship with the Son, 3) fellowship with the Holy Spirit, 4) fellowship in the light, 5)

fellowship in suffering, 6) fellowship in ministry, and 7) fellowship in evangelism.

Fellowship with the Father

“That which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ” (1 John 1:3).

To illustrate my relationship with the Father, I will tell you a story of a day he revealed himself to me.

During a long fast I was doing in the Mojave Desert during the summer of 2005, I was on a walk in the sun on a day when the temperature reached heights of over 105 degrees. I got lost that day and cried out to God to help me find my camp where the water was.

As I walked longer and longer, my mouth became dry and my saliva became like cotton. I remember thinking that there was a chance I could die.

I put the walking stick I was using over my neck, and I rested my arms on it because they were becoming too heavy for me to hold up. After I had walked a great distance, I began to think that I was coming to my end. I was extremely discouraged and exhausted. Suddenly, I saw a vision of the Father’s voice coming down from heaven in power and glory. In it, he proclaimed to me, “I the LORD search the heart; I test the mind, and I will give every man according to his ways and according to the things he has done.” I started to weep. I had thought he had forgotten me, but in fact, he was testing me because he loved me and wanted to reward me.

To make a long story short, God eventually helped me find my camp and water again. I had been out in the sun for four hours. When I was ready to pass out and surrender to death, he revealed himself so powerfully that I will never forget it.

God the Father is holy and does what pleases him. You will come to understand that as he reveals himself to you during fellowship. Let us worship him in the beauty of his holiness.

We have access to the Father through the death and resurrection of his Son, Jesus Christ, by means of grace and faith in him. When God the Father chooses to make himself known to you, you will come to know him as a father, provider, savior, judge, rewarder, and grace and mercy giver, among other things.

Fellowship with the Son

“God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Corinthians 1:9).

To illustrate my relationship with Christ, I will tell you a story:

During a difficult emotional time of my life in the year 2006, I chose to do an Esther fast (no food or water) for a breakthrough with God. I remember waiting for a long time during extensive prayer for him to make himself known, but he remained distant.

Then, one morning at about 3 A.M., I woke up suddenly. I knew at that time that God was ready to perform the breakthrough for which I was so longing. I got a vision of Huntington Beach, California, and knew that it was there he wanted to fellowship with me. So I left my home in Garden Grove and drove about seven miles to Huntington Beach.

After I had parked my car, I began to walk along the beach. It was then that I had a vision of taking the stick I had in my hand and drawing a large hand in the sand. I remembered from John 10:28 that Jesus had said of his sheep, “I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.”

I just knew in my state of emotional vulnerability that Jesus wanted me to draw his hand in the sand and then symbolically place myself

in it. So I took the stick and drew a 10-foot long hand in the sand and I laid down in it. It was there that the Spirit of Jesus descended on me and I began to weep. I knew at that instant that I was safe in his loving hand.

While lying on the beach in the hand of Jesus, he said to me, “You are my friend.” And I wept more.

Jesus is so loving, caring, and compassionate. And he desires above all things for us to keep his commandments and thus be his friends. When relating with the Lord Jesus Christ, we will come to know him as our Shepherd, master, friend, and brother, among other things. He desires our security as his sheep (John 10:27), our obedience as his disciples (John 15:8), our communion as his friends (John 15:14), and our relationship as his brethren (John 20:17). He is the Prince of Peace and the Mighty God!

I pray you will have great fellowship with the Son, Jesus Christ, as you grow in your relationship with him.

Fellowship with the Spirit

“So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any fellowship in the Spirit...” (Phil. 2:1).

There have been many, many times in my life that I have had fellowship with the Holy Spirit. It is he who has been given to me as the seal of my eternal inheritance.

Every day, I worship God through music, and I can feel the real and glory-filled presence of the Holy Spirit making himself known to me.

I also greatly enjoy fellowshiping with the Holy Spirit through prayer. This is called “praying in the Holy Spirit.”

I distinctly remember one time I laid down on my couch in the

middle of the day and just started praying. Little did I know that it would turn out to be an experience of a lifetime.

As I lay there praying, the comfort and peace of the Holy Spirit came upon me. I sensed that he was filling the whole room and making himself available for an intimate time of fellowship. So I just began to tell him that I love him, asked him questions, and prayed for my friends and family.

That day the Holy Spirit responded to me with love, answers filled with wisdom and knowledge, and comfort for my anxieties. It was a blissful experience I will never forget. And when I finally looked at the clock in the room, I realized that over two hours had passed as I was fellowshiping with him.

As you fellowship with the Holy Spirit, you will find that he will relate to you as a direct connection between you and the Father and the Son and as your teacher and comforter.

I pray that you learn to greatly enjoy fellowshiping with the third Person of the Godhead – the Holy Spirit.

Fellowship in the Light

“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).

After I had returned home to California from college, a Christian brother came along my side named Zac Marshall. We had known each other since we were nine, when we were both in the same Sunday school class.

At that time Zac was the son of my senior pastor and we were both growing up in the same church. I had observed him live a life of integrity and purity all of his life. He was not perfect, but he was a perfect example to me of a godly man at the time of my life when

God was beginning to reveal his light to me.

Zac and I became housemates and fellowshiped with one another each day. Zac would tell me about the Christian books he was reading and share stories with me of when he was persecuted for preaching the gospel during his college years. He was, and still is, a great role model in my life.

I distinctly remember how Zac's love for God rubbed off on me. He would often sing Christian songs to himself and tell "holy jokes" which made us both laugh. He also counseled me through some dark and confusing times.

It wasn't the quantity of the fellowship that mattered most to me during this season of my life; it was the *quality* of the fellowship that mattered most. Zac modeled the light of Jesus Christ in righteousness. In all the time I've known him, I can't remember a single time he ever talked negatively about another person, complained about life, or engaged in unwholesome speech. I don't want to idolize him, but he represents Jesus Christ better than anyone else I know of my age.

I believe the light that is in Zac has rubbed off on me and made me a better man. I thank God for gracing my life with a true friend and mentor like him. I pray that you too may participate in the fellowship of the light as I have and enjoy its wonderful life changing effects.

The fellowship of the light is based on purity and sanctification in the truth of who God is. We have fellowship in the light with other believers who also love the light. In the light, we learn to hate that which is of the world: "For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world" (1 John 2:16).

We have fellowship in the light when we illuminate Christ to one another. The light also exposes darkness so that we can be saved from it and its defilements. There is great unity in the light; it is a blessed fellowship I pray you all will experience to the fullest.

Fellowship in Suffering

“...that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming like him in his death...” (Phil. 3:10).

I remember a time when both my friend Graham and I were each going through intense suffering as Christians. Graham was separated from his son, and I was going through intense feelings of loneliness.

I was so painfully cleansed from sin by God during this time that I felt like the least of all of God’s creatures. To this day, we still remember a day standing on a lifeguard tower in Newport Beach, when I said to Graham, “I feel like an animal!” Then I quoted King Solomon, “I said in my heart with regard to the children of man that God is testing them that they may see that they themselves are but beasts [animals]” (Ecclesiastes 3:18).

Graham knew the painful process of sanctification I was talking about and we both experienced fellowship at that moment, knowing that what we were individually walking through we were walking through together.

A couple of months later, Graham and I were back at the same beach sharing our sufferings with one another again. However, by this time we had begun to rejoice in our sufferings as Christians because we could see how God had used them to transform us for our good:

“More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us” (Romans 5:3-5).

Graham and I made a pact that day that we would try not to despise

our suffering, but rather embrace it. We summarized our pact in this phrase: “To the death and to the cross!” It meant that whatever pain and suffering we had to go through to get closer to Jesus, we would go through, even to death. And whatever cross we had to be crucified upon to get to Jesus, we would endure. In fact, we would even try to find joy in dying to self and being crucified for Christ, the highest form of love we can show him.

The pact I made with Graham that day was a defining moment in my Christian life. Through our fellowship in suffering, Graham and I each committed to God in a profound way. No longer would we complain about our sufferings, but we would make every effort to rejoice in them and embrace them.

Because we need each other’s help, suffering gives us a reason to come together as brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus. As his body, we are the face, hands, arms, feet, and mouth of the Lord Jesus Christ to one another. And as we love one another, God loves us. This is fellowship to the fullest.

I pray that as you go through suffering as a Christian, you are able to share it with other sufferers and experience the life-changing fellowship that is available to us even during the darkest of our hours.

Fellowship in Ministry

“Yes, I ask you also, true companion, help these women, who have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life” (Col. 4:3).

About a year ago, I began pastoring a high school and college group at my church in Laguna Niguel together with my friend Angel and his wife, Melinda.

As we have worked together to reach out to the youth and prepare

messages for them, we have experienced incredible fellowship. Because we have a common purpose of ministering to the youth, our interests are aligned, and we do whatever we can to grow closer to one another and to our students.

Through this time of ministry, Angel, Melinda, and I have grown closer and closer together. We have eaten together, prayed together, and laughed together. Many times, they have invited me over to their home for dinner, and we have discussed life and ministry.

As we minister to the students, I feel a joint participation in ideas and love for the students. This is only possible because of our connection and co-participation in the ministry. And Angel and Melinda have become trusted friends and confidants in my life.

Fellowship in ministry gives us a common bond, a common purpose to fulfill on behalf of others in the body of Christ, alignment with one another, and brings us toward authentic friendship in the Lord Jesus Christ.

I pray that as you minister in teams of Christians, you will experience all the blessings of the fellowship of ministry with one another. Jesus Christ is always with you. And together, you will have reason to fellowship with him and with one another in the love of God.

Fellowship in Evangelism

“After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go....[After they had gone out] The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, ‘Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!’” (Luke 10:1, 17).

The work of the gospel in evangelism has been part of my life for nearly two decades. I have shared the good news with people in Israel, Kenya, England, Ireland, China, and now at my home base in

California.

I have had the pleasure of working with many other evangelists during my time in the gospel, so it is hard to choose which story to share with you. So I have decided to share with you the story of the fellowship I had with the first man I trained to share the gospel, Brett.

After I met Brett and discovered we were both Christians with a desire to see the lost saved, we began to share the gospel at Seal Beach, California.

At that time we were using my “God Loves You” cards as a tool for evangelism. For over a year, especially during the summer months, we would walk the beach, hand out cards, share the gospel, and see the amazing hand of God move people to decisions for Jesus Christ.

Through this time, Brett and I became great friends. I was teaching him to lead others to Jesus and he was learning more and more each week. I still remember the joy on Brett’s face when he began to lead people to the Lord with me. And I rejoiced with him with joy inexpressible and full of glory!

After each day of evangelism, we would go out to eat at our favorite restaurant and fellowship by discussing our day at the beach. Brett and I always rejoiced together by discussing the joy of salvation that we had seen on the faces of the precious people who had given their hearts to Jesus Christ for all eternity. We felt a special bond knowing that we were working on the same team as ambassadors of Christ for the sake of seeking and saving the lost.

The deep, unforgettable fellowship we experienced was the same fellowship in the gospel that the seventy-two disciples experienced when Jesus Christ sent them out two by two to evangelize and preach the good news. I can imagine their joy at seeing the work of God as they labored together for the same purpose of spreading the good news of Jesus Christ and eternal life.

There was a time I used to share the gospel alone, but now after experiencing the incredible rewards of fellowship with other brothers and sisters in the gospel, I choose to evangelize with a friend whenever I can.

Fellowship in the gospel gives you more strength to witness, more joy in witnessing, more power in witnessing, a co-participation in the Holy Spirit, and a reason to rejoice together.

I pray that you will experience the tremendous blessings of the fellowship of the gospel as you choose to step out and share your faith with the lost. There is no experience like it!

How to Experience the Seven Forms of Fellowship

You may be asking yourself, “This is all fine and well for you, Jason, but how do I experience the kinds of fellowship you have written about here?” That’s a great question!

Here is my advice:

If it is God the Father, God the Son, or God the Holy Spirit you want to have fellowship with, I suggest five things.

1. Get alone with God.
2. Worship him.
3. Pray to him.
4. Study his word.
5. And if the above four things are not working, I suggest repenting of your sins or even fasting to remove whatever spiritual barriers that are hindering you. You just have to do whatever it takes.

If it is the fellowship of Light you desire, I suggest you find someone who shines with the light of Jesus who you want to become like and pursue having a relationship with them. Maybe invite them to lunch.

Many of my best experiences fellowshiping in the light were over a good meal.

If you are experiencing suffering, I suggest finding someone who is or has gone through a similar form of suffering to what you are going through. Then try to become friends with them and experience the fellowship of suffering. Finally, set up a time to get together and share what you are going through in a safe place.

Lastly, if it is fellowship in ministry or evangelism you want, simply find someone who has the same interest as you, preferably someone who is already your good friend, and then go and minister or evangelize with them.

You may find other ways to enter into fellowship, but the advice I have offered above is what has worked best for me. I pray it gives you a good point of reference.

Final Questions

1. What can you do to experience fellowship with the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit?
2. What can you do to experience the fellowship of the light?
3. What can you do to experience the fellowship of suffering?
4. What can you do to experience the fellowship in the ministry and evangelism?

CHAPTER EIGHT

Pillar #6: Forgiveness

Relationships are messy!

One thing you can always be sure of – if you want to get close to someone else – the relationship is going to require forgiveness on both sides all along the way.

As I started off early in life, I did not know about the tremendous power of forgiveness to restore my relationships and to heal my brokenness. As it was, I usually hid from people who hurt me, and drew close to people who were kind to me.

Let me tell you two short stories of how I have been healed and restored since I became a Christian, by forgiving others and being forgiven by them through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Story of Kyle

When I was in fourth grade, there was another kid in my elementary school named Kyle. He was from a wealthy family and was very popular, athletic, and funny. I thought he was amazing and wanted to be just like him.

One day after school, I was in the forest behind my elementary school playing with some of my friends and Kyle showed up. We were all taking turns jumping off a small cliff onto the sand below, as a dare. Kyle recognized the opportunity to show off and walked up to the highest point on the cliff and declared he was going to make the jump. Then he turned to my three friends and said, “Rick, if I die, you get my basketball court. Tom, if I die, you get my go-cart. Steve, if I die, you get my Nintendo set.” Then he turned to me and said, “Jason, if I die, you get SH*T!”

Nearly 30 years later, I can still remember those stinging words

spoken early in my life. For a long time, I just buried them in my soul, thinking they would go away, but they never did. It wasn't until I found the healing power of Jesus Christ through forgiveness, that my heart began to soften and be renewed.

Once I started to forgive him, I could feel my sense of self-worth coming back. Because of God's emotional healing through my forgiveness of Kyle, I feel more valuable and secure than ever before.

The Story of My Family

In the year 2004, my family had what we call to this day, "The Perfect Storm." Everyone seemed to be suffering from something, and negative emotions were flying everywhere.

In order to defend myself and work on my own healing, I felt like I had to put up a wall between my parents and myself and move out.

I held a grudge against them and didn't talk with them for roughly two years, except by letter. Then one day, my gracious sister, Sherrie, told me, "Jason, Dad and Mom are much better, and they really want to see you." I felt touched by the Spirit of God through her words and eventually agreed to meet with my parents.

We met at an old family restaurant nearby my childhood home. What I saw that day I will never forget. As I walked up to them at the booth in the restaurant, it was like the light and love of God was shining out of them. It turns out that God had been working on them just as much as he'd been working on me those two years. There were no tears that day, only joy at being together once again. There was total forgiveness, acceptance, and restoration between us. And to this day, over a decade later, my Dad and Mom have never brought up the fact that I had left them for two years.

This was the most powerful moment of forgiveness in my life. Looking back on it now, I realize God had been working in all of us for the purpose of reconciling and restoring us to one another. He

desires unity and love among us even more than we do! Today, I thank God for my godly father and mother. And I thank him for the forgiveness we've both been able to receive and give together as a family. The love we are experiencing for one another today is a testimony to the truth that God's love and power are displayed when we forgive one another and move toward reconciliation.

What is Forgiveness?

“And one of them, a lawyer, asked him [Jesus] a question to test him. ‘Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?’ And he said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets’” (Matthew 22:35-39).

The second commandment of loving others comes from the Old Testament book of Leviticus. Let me quote the whole verse for you here: “You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD” (Leviticus 19:18).

Often, when quoting a verse, Jews during Jesus' time only quoted part of the verse they were referring to. They did this for brevity and simplicity because the Jews had all studied the Law of Moses (the first five books of the Bible) so much they knew the whole verse the person was talking about by heart.

That's what Jesus was doing when he said, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” He was saying, “You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.”

With that in mind, you should see from the above verse that what Jesus was really saying was that we need to forgive people (not seek vengeance or bear grudges) in order to love them. That's the second

commandment.

In this broken and sinful world, forgiveness is what makes love possible. In order to love and be loved by others, we need to be forgiving and receiving forgiveness regularly.

I have found when there is no forgiveness in a relationship, there is no love either, because most relationships will simply break apart without forgiveness. You could say forgiveness is the glue that holds relationships together and makes love possible.

Definition of Forgiveness

Forgiveness is simply releasing the person who sinned against you, instead of bearing a grudge or seeking revenge against them.

What is the Consequence of Choosing Not to Forgive?

“For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (Matthew 6:14-15).

God is very serious about forgiveness. In fact, he has made the forgiveness you need to restore your relationship with him when you sin, depend upon if you forgive others when they sin against you.

The basic thing to remember is to obey God and always forgive others when they sin against you. If you do that, God will always be quick to forgive you when you need it.

How to Forgive Someone

Our gracious and wise Savior, Jesus Christ, said you can do five things to forgive someone who sins against you. You can: 1) love them, 2) do good to them, 3) bless them, 4) pray for them, and 5)

reconcile with them, if possible.

Love Them

“But I [Jesus] say to you who hear, love your enemies...” (Luke 6:27).

Anyone who sins against you makes himself an enemy.

The idea of loving your enemies holds true for loving those who: sin against you who are not Christian, who are Christian, who are family, and those who are not family.

Often the people who are the most difficult to love are those closest to us. To emphasize this truth, Jesus said:

“Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a person's enemies will be those of his own household” (Matthew 10:34-36).

It is when those closest to us, who make themselves our enemies by their transgressions against us, that we really have to work hard to love them.

I often do two things when someone I know offends me. First, I go into my room and say out loud from the depths of my heart, “So-and-so, I love you.” Then I treat them in real life with that same love I just pronounced over them. If you do this as well, you will be able to completely forgive your enemies through God’s transforming love.

Do Good to Them

“But I [Jesus] say to you who hear...do good to those who hate you” (Luke 6:27).

When people “hate” you, they usually act in ways that are destructive toward you. Anticipating this, Jesus said, “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:10). When we practice acting righteously towards others, and they are convicted of sin because of it, they often respond by acting hatefully towards us.

In order to forgive such people, Jesus taught us to practice the golden rule with them: “So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets” (Matthew 7:12).

The best way to respond to a hateful person is by actively doing good to them. In this way, the apostle Paul wrote, “[You will not] be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (Romans 12:21).

Bless Them

“But I [Jesus] say to you who hear...bless those who curse you” (Luke 6:27-28).

When people curse us with their words, often our first reaction is to put up a verbal fight. King Solomon said this reaction is not wise. He wrote, “Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest you be like him yourself...[and] he be wise in his own eyes” (Proverbs 26:4-5).

Not only should we not curse others with our words by returning folly for folly, but instead we should bless them. Whenever we respond to a person who speaks evil to us, to our face or even behind our back, we should take the high road and build them up with our words. This is what Jesus was speaking about when he said to bless those who curse us.

In the past, when people have gossiped about me or slandered me, and I had the courage to respond by building them up behind their backs, it has always resulted in forgiveness, protection, and love being poured out into my heart.

Whenever I find that someone is cursing me with their words, I try to respond by blessing them both publicly and privately. I do this by speaking well of them in public and also by going into my room and saying out loud and from my heart, “So-and-so, I bless you.” In this way, I keep my heart right by forgiving them. You can do this too, whenever you find someone cursing you.

Pray for Them

“But I [Jesus] say to you...pray for those who persecute you...[and] who abuse you” (Matthew 5:44, Luke 6:28).

I often find some people will persecute and abuse me through their influence. When this happens, I turn to prayer. I do this by praying a simple prayer for them like this, “Dear God, I pray that you give grace, mercy, and deliverance to so-and-so. In Jesus’ name, amen.”

When we pray for our persecutors and abusers we deliver them into the hands of God. I have found that when I do this, God often works in their lives to convict them of sin and lead them to repentance. It also gives me a loving and forgiving heart toward them, as I pray for their good.

Reconcile with Them If Possible

“If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother” (Matthew 18:15).

“So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift” (Matthew 5:23-24).

When a brother in Christ sins against you, you should go to them and gently make them aware of their fault. Often this will lead to repentance and quickly restore the relationship.

Additionally, if you remember the story I told you about how my family was restored and reconciled through forgiveness after a two year separation, God wants us to be reconciled. This is what the Apostle Paul meant when he wrote, “If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all” (Romans 12:18).

Both parties in a broken relationship are often waiting for the other side to make the first move. God is with us and desires forgiveness always and reconciliation, if possible. So if you have a broken relationship in your life, I urge you to make the first move toward reconciliation with that person. Forgiveness has the power to restore a family, marriage, or friendship that has been broken for years, and turn it into a source of joy for the rest of your life.

There are, however, some situations where reconciliation is simply not possible, or at least not possible at the time. In situations where someone has died or abandoned you and refuses to return, reconciliation is not within your power. It is neither logical nor emotionally healthy to hold on to relationships in cases like these. I know because I’ve tried! Instead, you should just choose to forgive them before God and then make the decision to move on with your life. When I need to do this, I go into my room and repeat the truth to myself in this way, “It is not possible to reconcile with so-and-so [at this time]. I forgive them and release them. I now choose to move on with my life.” I feel a great degree of freedom after I speak the truth over myself like this in these situations. You will too!

Final Questions

1. What did you think and feel about forgiveness before reading this chapter?
2. Is there anyone in your life you need to forgive?
3. What is your plan to forgive them?

CHAPTER NINE

Pillar #7: Fasting

I have done many fasts during my life. However, the most memorable was definitely the time I fasted for 40 days in the Mojave Desert.

It was the summer of 2005, and I had been going through a tough time with spiritual warfare. I had tried everything I knew to get free from it. Then one day I had the thought, “Jesus fasted for 40 days in the desert... I bet if I did that God would answer my prayers for deliverance from the enemy!” That was the seed I believe God planted in my mind to get me into fasting.

When I finally decided to do it, I got serious. I read everything I could on the subject and how to do a long fast in a healthy way. Then I made a plan to go to a desert where I could be alone with God. Living in California, I chose the Mojave Desert. It was within driving distance of where I lived and remote enough that I could be completely alone with him.

Then I filled my car up with some sunblock, a sleeping bag, a pillow, a snake bite kit, and some 200 gallons of water in 5-gallon drums. It was quite comical to look at my car as I drove out to the desert; the rear was nearly dragging on the pavement due to the weight of all the water.

Once I reached the desert and set up camp, I decided to go on three prayer walks a day. As I would walk through the desert, I would call out to God for healing and deliverance, and he often made himself known to me.

I don't know if you've ever heard somebody say that after three days of fasting, you lose your appetite. This is not true! I distinctly remember having crazy dreams about food and I was always hungry. Once I even dreamed of a pizza tree. It was an average looking tree,

but instead of fruit, it grew slices of pizza. I climbed the tree and ate a piece. Then I suddenly woke up. I was about 20 days into my fast and for a minute I thought I would have to start all over again. So much for the hunger going away after three days!

Suffice to say, the fast was very long and took everything out of me that I had to give. Then on the 40th night something remarkable happened. All of a sudden, a massive wave of power fell upon me and I went to the ground. It felt like a river of living water mixed with God's power rushing through my body, cleansing me of evil and freeing me from all that had been attacking me.

God powerfully broke the hold of the enemy upon my life at that time, and he forever changed the way I think about the power of prayer with fasting. When it is led by the Holy Spirit, it can provide a way to change your life and leave you forever grateful to God for his incredible presence and awesome power.

Different Types of Fasts

My concern in offering you my testimony above is that you may think that to move God's heart in a big way through fasting, you will have to be as extreme as I once was. That is not true. In fact, the way God talks about fasting in the Bible is often just the way we do normal Christianity. You will see that there are three basic types of fasts taught in the Bible. One is "the fast chosen by God," or the lifestyle fast; and the other two are fasting from food and fasting from both food and drink.

The Fast Chosen By God

"Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?" (Isaiah 58:6-7).

The lifestyle fast, or “the fast chosen by God,” has nothing to do with denying yourself food or drink. Instead, it has everything to do with denying yourself of your own selfish desires as you choose instead to minister to others.

It is the fast we should be doing at all times. We must deny our sinful nature that tempts us to serve ourselves and instead choose to serve others. It is the type of fast talked about here:

“Then Jesus told his disciples, ‘If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it’” (Matthew 16:24-25).

Jesus was talking about “the fast chosen by God” – that of denying yourself, picking up your cross and serving others just as Jesus did. It is the fast that all Christians are called to at all times.

The Food Fast

“Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry” (Matthew 4:1-2).

Please don’t think when reading this verse that if you want to do a food fast, you must do one for 40 days. Fasting from food is a way to draw near to God for a specific purpose over a time, lasting at *most* 40 days. The only thing required of you to do during such a fast is simply not to eat.

The Food and Drink Fast

“Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my young women will also fast as you do. Then I will go to the king, though it is against the law, and if I perish, I perish” (Esther 4:16).

In doing a food and drink fast, Queen Esther and all the Jews of Susa

moved God's heart and she was able to appeal to the king on behalf of her people successfully.

The food and drink fast just requires you to deny yourself these things for at *most* three days. It is a very powerful way to fast when your needs are more urgent and time sensitive than with a food fast.

Definition of Fasting

Fasting is simply choosing to deny yourself in order to draw near to God or others.

How to Fast

In his famous Sermon on the Mount, Jesus Christ said:

“And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you” (Matthew 6:16-18).

Above, Jesus was saying that when we do a food fast or a food and drink fast, we should do it as privately as possible. It is God who sees us during such fasts and it is he alone who rewards us. During such fasts we should draw near to God prayerfully.

Rewards of Fasting

“Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not

to hide yourself from your own flesh?

[1] Then shall your light break forth like the dawn, and [2] your healing shall spring up speedily; [3] your righteousness shall go before you; [4] the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard. [5] Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; you shall cry, and he will say, 'Here I am.' If you take away the yoke from your midst, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness, if you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday.

[6] And the LORD will guide you continually and satisfy your desire in scorched places and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail. [7] And your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to dwell in" (Isaiah 58:6-12).

Above we find seven possible rewards of fasting: 1) sanctification (becoming more like the Lord Jesus in holiness), 2) healing, 3) the Lord's power to succeed, 4) the Lord's presence to protect, 5) answered prayer, 6) provision, and 7) restoration (the steady return of any losses you have experienced). These are the seven chief rewards from fasting.

We can see from the rewards of fasting that there are seven corresponding reasons for fasting. You should fast 1) if you feel defiled, 2) if you need healing, 3) if you need the Lord's power for some purpose, 4) if you need the Lord's protection for some reason, 5) if your prayers are not being answered, 6) if you need provision, or 7) if you need restoration. If you have any of these needs you should consider choosing a lifestyle of fasting for a season.

Conclusion

Fasting is simply choosing to deny yourself in order to draw near to God or others for a specific purpose. There are three main types of fasts written about in the Bible: “the fast chosen by God,” or the lifestyle fast, the food fast, and the food and drink fast. You should choose a suitable type of fast if you are in need of sanctification, healing, the Lord’s power to succeed, the Lord’s presence to protect, answered prayer, provision, or restoration. Always remember that when you fast you should do so as privately as possible. If you do this, the Lord promises to reward you – it’s a spiritual law.

Final Questions

1. What is the definition of fasting?
2. What are the different types of fasts?
3. What are the possible rewards of fasting?

CHAPTER TEN

Pillar #8: Giving

Back in 2005 after I first became a missionary, I received a call from a friend that I met in college. His name was Sam and he lived in London, England.

I can still remember how the phone conversation started. He said, “Jason! It is so great to hear your voice! I know you’re a missionary now. If you fly out to England to minister, I’ll fly you anywhere else you’d like and I’ll pay for the whole trip!”

I was in shock. I’d never received such a generous offer from anyone before. As it turns out, my missionary trip to England and beyond lasted four months. And Sam paid for everything, including trips to Israel, Finland, Ireland, and Switzerland. The gospel advanced and God blessed many lives, including mine.

To this day, I still can’t believe that Sam gave me such a blessing. When I arrived in England to see him he greeted me and joyfully and generously paid for all of my food, lodging, expenses, and other missionary trips. He asked for absolutely nothing in return. It was like receiving a gift from Jesus Christ himself. It was a blessing I would never forget.

What God Has Given to Us

“God so loved the world that he gave...” (John 3:16).

God set a perfect example for us as a giver. In fact, the moment we receive salvation, we receive from him six gifts: his Son, the forgiveness of our sins, eternal life, a new family, his Word, and an eternal inheritance.

He Gave Us His Son

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son...” (John 3:16).

It is a hard thing to understand if you are not a parent – the gift of an only son. Still, that’s exactly what God did when he sent Jesus Christ into the world. He gave to us the person he loved most, his only Son.

God knew what he was doing when he gave us Jesus Christ. He knew that Jesus was going to have to live a life of unprecedented suffering and persecution, ultimately to pay the price for our sins through his sacrificial death on the cross.

God gave us what was most precious to him – Jesus – and he did it because he loves us.

Now we can enjoy the blessings of God’s gift by having Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. And our relationship with Jesus Christ is not limited to life on earth; it will go on for eternity in heaven.

He Gave Us Forgiveness

“Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you” (Ephesians 4:32).

When we repent and accept Jesus Christ as our Savior, we are forgiven. Period!

There is no way to estimate the price of the gift of forgiveness. The way it was attained was by Jesus Christ suffering and dying for us on the cross with the same suffering that we justly should have experienced in hell.

It seems incredible, but that’s exactly what God gave us: forgiveness of all of our sins. It is not a gift we can ever pay back. But it is a gift that we can rejoice that we have received, offering to God acceptable thanksgiving and praise.

He Gave Us Eternal Life

“And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son” (1 John 5:11).

“And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent” (John 17:3).

God has given us eternal life, which is simply a relationship with him and Jesus Christ based on love, joy, peace, and the presence of the Holy Spirit. It starts in this life and goes on to eternity in heaven. God loved us so much that he wanted to have a personal relationship with every one of us, and that’s exactly what he accomplished by giving us eternal life.

You can’t give a person anything more than giving them yourself. This is what God gave us through eternal life; he gave us an eternal, loving relationship with himself.

He Gave Us a New Family

“Jesus answered, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit’” (John 3:5-6).

“But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brothers” (Matthew 23:8).

When you accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, you were born again into a new family. Now all Christians around the world are your brothers and sisters.

This spiritual family you are now part of includes all the saints who have gone before you, and all who will come after you; and we are going to spend eternity together, in love and communion with one another and with God.

He Gave Us His Word

“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Jesus said, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away” (Matthew 24:35).

God has given us his Word in the form of the Bible. This is a gift that not all people at all times enjoyed because it was not yet written and complete. However, today we have the whole counsel of God’s will revealed to us in the form of the Bible.

The gift of God’s Word has come at an enormous cost to God and his people. Many people have died proclaiming the Word of God and spreading it throughout the world.

Now we may enjoy all the treasures of God’s wisdom and knowledge as revealed to us through the Scripture. It is an unprecedented gift that we should all be grateful for and enjoy through daily study.

He Gave Us an Eternal Inheritance

“...and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him” (Romans 8:17).

We are heirs of the kingdom of God together with our elder brother, Jesus Christ. That means that we will all have a home, place, and possession in heaven and the new earth after we die.

Our inheritance is going to be more incredible than any of us can possibly imagine. The Apostle Paul wrote, “But, as it is written, ‘...no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him’” (1 Corinthians 2:9).

Our inheritance will be incredible and will give us joy for all of eternity.

Definition of Giving

Giving is simply bestowing a portion of the goods you have upon God and others.

What to Give

Jesus said, “Give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap” (Luke 6:38).

God wants us to give to him and others. First and most importantly, he wants us to love him by giving him thanksgiving and praise. Then he wants us to love others by giving them a portion of our money and material blessings. What’s amazing is that whatever we give to God and others will be multiplied and given back to us by God.

Give God Thanksgiving and Praise

“Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!” (Psalm 100:4).

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above” (James 1:17).

Everything good and perfect thing we have is from the hand of God. There is nothing that we can give him that he hasn’t already given us. This is the main reason that God wants us to offer him the gifts of thanksgiving and praise.

There is always something in life to be thankful for, even during the worst of times. Giving God thanks for the good things in our lives during the difficult seasons helps us to remain positive, even joyful, in the midst of our circumstances. When we do this, we should often reflect on the verse in Romans 8:28 that says that God works all

things together for the good of those who love him and are called according to his purpose. Keeping our perspective during trying times is a huge key to keeping our peace during the storms of life.

And during the best of times, God wants us to remain humble and thankful, remembering that good times are a gift and not merely a result of our skill and hard work. When things are going well in life, offering thanksgiving to God will keep us away from the tendency to fall into pride and the trap of the devil.

After we have thanked God, he wants us to praise his name. Not merely are we to maintain an attitude of gratitude towards the Lord at all times, but we are also always to rejoice before him.

God doesn't want our circumstances to dictate our happiness. Instead, he wants our faith in his continual goodness towards us to dictate our happiness. God is good to us. He is always good to us. And for that we always have reason to rejoice, praising him for who he truly is.

Give Others Money and Material Blessings

“But if anyone has the world's goods [including money] and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?” (1 John 3:17).

There are times in each of our lives when we need others to give us money and material blessings. It starts during infancy with our parents or caregivers, may be necessary in the middle of our lives, and will be required if we reach an old age and can no longer provide for or care for ourselves.

When I was once attending a sermon given by Pastor Rick Warren, he said, “You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving.” I wholeheartedly agree with him. In order to love, we must give. And in order to be loved, we must receive the gifts of others.

Giving is one of the most basic expressions of God's love. The

Apostle John wrote, “Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth” (1 John 3:18). One of the things he was saying is that we may say we love each other, but do we love each other enough to put our money where our mouth is? I pray the answer is yes.

The most basic form of giving comes when we do so freely to someone in need of money or material blessings. There is reason for great joy in giving to others in this way. Not only do we experience joy when we give, but we also receive back more than we give in the form of what we need most. The apostle Paul said it this way,

“The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Corinthians 9:6-7).

So let us keep God’s Word by showing our love to one another by giving a portion of our money and material blessings to those who are in need of them, receiving in ourselves joy and an abundant harvest for our generosity.

To Whom Should We Give?

God wants you to wisely steward what you have been given.

We learn from studying his Word that we are first to give him thanksgiving and praise. Then we are to give money and material blessings to our families, those who minister to us, needy believers, and the lost. If we are obedient in giving to God and people in the way he prescribes in his Word, we will be good stewards of what God has freely given to us and enjoy his blessing.

Remember Jesus said, “If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches?” (Luke 16:11). God reserves his richest spiritual blessings for those of us

who faithfully use their money to benefit his Kingdom.

Give to God

“At that time Jesus declared, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children” (Matthew 11:25).

Jesus Christ often gave thanks and praised God, his Father. In a similar way, we are to offer to God thanksgiving and the praise due his name.

Give to Your Family

“But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever” (1 Timothy 5:8).

It is the truth, that if you are the head of a family, you are responsible for providing for them. Additionally, if any of your relatives are in need and you have the means, you should help them until they can get back on their feet. The Apostle Paul wrote this in such an absolute way, that it is clearly apparent that our first financial obligation is to the members of our family.

Give to Those Who Minister to You

“In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel” (1 Corinthians 9:14).

As a minister of the gospel for over a decade who formerly worked a secular job, I can tell you that my ministry to the body of Christ is just as difficult as the job I used to have as a financial analyst. I can write on behalf of myself and many of my friends who are also in the ministry, that we labor for others in the Lord *because we love them*. And we love it when they appreciate what we do and *show* it through financial giving to our ministries. We have to support

ourselves just like everyone else, and it is only through the love and generosity of others that what we do is even possible.

The Lord Jesus Christ commanded that we give to those who labor to provide us with spiritual food and drink. This should not be viewed as a burden to shrink from, but rather a privilege to be embraced.

Give to Needy Believers

“Now when it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, ‘This is a desolate place, and the day is now over; send the crowds away to go into the villages and buy food for themselves.’ But Jesus said, ‘They need not go away; you give them something to eat.’ They said to him, ‘We have only five loaves here and two fish.’ And he said, ‘Bring them here to me.’ Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass, and taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces left over. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children” (Matthew 14:15-21).

Above we read that Jesus Christ was moved to give food to his followers who were hungry. We look to him as the example of one who provided for the needy within the body of Christ. We should also do the same.

Give to the Lost

“And I [Jesus] tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous wealth, so that when it fails they may receive you into the eternal dwellings” (Luke 16:9).

The above saying is mysterious and may initially confuse you as it did me. One thing it means is that we should use some of our money to give to non-Christians who are in need, as an expression of God’s evangelistic love. If we are faithful to give in this way, many will be

drawn to the Lord because of the mercy shown them through our financial gifts.

I was formerly involved in a mission that provided food to the needy on a weekly basis in the name of Jesus Christ. Because the love of God was so expressed through this giving and because we also shared the good news with them, hundreds of people would come to know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior each year.

Though I have been called elsewhere at this time, I am still friends with many who are currently involved in that ministry. And I often hear stories of how God is using them to give to the lost and lead others to Jesus.

How to Give

Jesus Christ had a lot to say about money and its uses. And his Word says we should give joyfully, generously, freely, and privately. If we are faithful to give in these ways, others will be most benefitted, and God will be most glorified.

We Should Give Joyfully

“God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Corinthians 9:7).

Simply put, God loves and enjoys giving to us, and we should respond by joyfully giving to others.

We Should Give Generously

“Now when Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, a woman came up to him with an alabaster flask of very expensive ointment, and she poured it on his head as he reclined at table. And when the disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, ‘Why this waste? For this could have been sold for a large sum and given to the poor.’ But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, ‘Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a beautiful thing to me. For

you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me. In pouring this ointment on my body, she has done it to prepare me for burial. Truly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her” (Matthew 26:6-13).

This story reveals that Jesus loves extravagant and generous giving! In fact, because of this woman’s sincerity and generous gift to Jesus, we are still reading about her in the Bible some 2,000 years later. We should follow this woman’s example and give generously both to God and to others.

We Should Give Freely

“But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil” (Luke 6:35).

Have you ever heard it asked, “Are there strings attached?” That’s what people ask when they suspect that someone is giving to them with hidden motives. Nobody likes being given to through manipulation. That’s why Jesus Christ said that would be the wrong way to give.

Because God unconditionally loved us, he gave us eternal salvation freely, and by means of grace. We should follow his example as the perfect giver, by giving to others and expecting nothing in return.

We Should Give Privately

“But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing” (Matthew 6:3).

We should not do deeds of righteousness to be seen by other people. Such giving is an act of pride and is not blessed by God. Instead, if at all possible, we should try to give without making ourselves known. If you do this, God who sees in secret will reward you openly (Matthew 6:4).

Conclusion

God has given us his Son, forgiveness, eternal life, a new family, his Word, and a future eternal inheritance. Therefore, we should follow his example, by giving him thanksgiving and praise, and giving a portion of our money and material blessings to others. We should remember to give to God, our families, those who minister to us, needy believers, and the lost. Finally, we should give joyfully, generously, freely, and privately. God loves such giving, and you will be richly rewarded if you do it.

Final Questions

1. What gifts has God given you?
2. What gifts should you give to God and others?
3. Specifically, to whom and how should you give to others?

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Finding Your Motivational Spiritual Gift

In the following two chapters, the chapters on ministry and evangelism, you will need to know your motivational spiritual gift. That is why I have added this extra chapter to the book.

I used to spend hours trying to find what I was good at that would benefit others for God. I came up with lists of so many spiritual gifts, so many desires, and so many experiences but I could never seem to boil down what I was supposed to do for the body of Christ (ministry) and the lost (evangelism). Maybe you feel as lost as I did. However, there is good news! After I found that all of my ministry and evangelism should flow from my single motivational gift, what I should be doing became clear to me. Now I use my motivational gift to benefit both the body of Christ and the lost. I pray that through this study, you find your motivational gift and become passionate about using it to love the church for ministry, as well as the lost for evangelism.

You Have One Motivational Spiritual Gift

The Apostle Peter wrote, “As each has received a gift [your single motivational gift], use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace” (1 Peter 4:10). We each have one motivational spiritual gift. The Greek word for this gift in the verse above is “charisma.”

We have many *ministry roles* (Ephesians 4:11, 1 Corinthians 12:28) and may have many *manifestation gifts* (1 Corinthians 12:8-10), but we only have one *motivational spiritual gift*. Knowing your motivational spiritual gift will be key to discovering what you should be doing in the arenas of ministry and evangelism.

The Apostle Paul wrote:

“For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if [your gift is] **[1] prophecy**, in proportion to your faith; if [your gift is] **[2] service**, in your serving; the one who [has a gift who] **[3] teaches**, in his teaching; the one who [has a gift who] **[4] exhorts**, in his exhortation; the one who [has the gift who] **[5] gives**, in generosity; the one who [has a gift who] **[6] leads**, with zeal; the one who does acts [with the gift of] **[7] mercy**, with cheerfulness” (Romans 12:3-8).

Although there are seven possible gifts listed in the above passage, what Paul was saying when he wrote this is that each of us has only one motivational spiritual gift. This is the gift that motivates you and gives you the power you need to perform your unique ministerial and evangelistic callings as a Christian. It is the heart of what will drive you to perform your unique ministry and mission in life.

As you look at the above seven motivational gifts, you will see that the gifts are also roles that God wants us each to perform. Everyone is supposed to prophesy, serve, teach, exhort, give, lead, and show mercy. However, each and every Christian has been given a powerful, supernatural ability in *one* area. This is their motivational spiritual gift.

The thing about having a gift is that it is just that – a gift! You will act with your gift in a natural and powerful way. Other people will be able to look to you to discover how to perform their role in the area of your gifting. And you will be able to look at others in the area of their gifting to help you perform your role in that area of your Christian life. Together we will represent Jesus Christ to the world

through our gifts manifesting in love.

Jesus Christ was the only person to possess every single motivational spiritual gift in absolute fullness. Now we are a body, and as a whole, we have all seven motivational gifts. This is a reason we all need one another!

The Body of Christ and its Parts

The body of Christ has many parts. The Apostle Paul wrote that these parts correspond to areas of gifting:

“Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed...For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

For the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot should say, ‘Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,’ that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear should say, ‘Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,’ that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.

The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I have no need of you,’ nor again the head to the feet, ‘I have no need of you.’ On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unrepresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, which

our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it” (1 Corinthians 12:1, 12-27).

Each of the body parts has a unique function, or gift that none of the other parts has. I have written the following list of the parts of the body and their corresponding gifts. They were taken from the book *Discover Your God-Given Gifts* by Don and Katie Fortune. I believe they represent general wisdom rather than biblical truth. I hope that the list helps you to better understand the body of Christ and its motivational spiritual gifts:

- The eyes of the body – the gift of prophecy
- The hands of the body – the gift of service
- The mind of the body – the gift of teaching
- The mouth of the body – the gift of exhortation
- The arms of the body – the gift of giving
- The shoulders of the body – the gift of leadership
- The heart of the body – the gift of mercy

Additionally, a study of 1,000 people from more than 100 groups in various states, provinces, and countries was conducted over a period of 10 years using detailed response questionnaires. This study revealed the following approximate percentages of the body of Christ who have each motivational gift:

- The gift of prophecy – 12% of the body of Christ
- The gift of service – 17% of the body of Christ
- The gift of teaching – 6% of the body of Christ
- The gift of exhortation – 16% of the body of Christ
- The gift of giving – 6% of the body of Christ

- The gift of leadership – 13% of the body of Christ
- The gift of mercy – 30% of the body of Christ

Do not be deceived by the above percentages of the body of Christ having each motivational spiritual gift in terms of their importance. Each of us in the body of Christ has an extremely valuable gift, and though gifts are ministered differently, no gift is either more or less valuable than the others. All are invaluable and indispensable! For instance, the gift of mercy is usually used one on one. That is why more of the body of Christ must have this gift. The gift of teaching, on the other hand, is usually used to minister to multiple people at once. This is one reason the body of Christ does not need as many teachers as we need mercy-showers.

Trying to Understand Spiritual Gifts

The Apostle Paul wrote:

“Now there are varieties of gifts [motivational gifts], but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service [ministry gifts], but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities [manifestation gifts], but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone” (1 Corinthians 12:4-6).

Motivational Gifts (“charisma” in Greek) – you have one.

- Prophecy
- Service
- Teaching
- Exhortation
- Giving
- Leadership
- Mercy

Ministry Gifts (“diakonia” in Greek) – you function in one or more.

- Apostle

- Prophet
- Evangelist
- Pastor
- Teacher
- Works of Power
- Healings
- Helps
- Administrations
- Various Tongues

Manifestation Gifts (“energma” in Greek) – the Holy Spirit decides how many you have/display.

- Word of Wisdom
- Word of Knowledge
- Faith
- Healing
- Working of Miraculous Powers
- Prophecy
- Discerning of Spirits
- Tongues
- Interpretations

God has given us a lot of gifts! You may say, “This is confusing! What am I supposed to do with all of these gifts?” That is a great question. I propose the following bit of wisdom, paraphrased from Dr. Paul Cox’ book, *Spiritual Gifts*:

***We should focus on our motivational gift** as it allows us to use our ministry gifts as needs present themselves, and count on the Holy Spirit to display our manifestation gifts to benefit others.*

Focusing on your motivational gift will enable you to be a better lover of the body of Christ (ministry) and a better lover of the lost (evangelism). For maximum effectiveness, you should use your motivational gift both in your ministry and evangelism. For

instance, I use my teaching gift in my pastoral ministry to the church and to teach non-believers the gospel and encourage them to make a decision for Christ. You will find that you also will be the most powerful minister and evangelist if you are always working with your motivational gift.

God has made finding your ministerial and evangelistic callings easier! You just have to find your motivational gift and use it both as you minister and as you evangelize. Doing this will maximize your successfulness.

You may ask, “What are the benefits of using my motivational gift?” Great question! As it turns out, the word for a motivational gift in Greek is “charisma.” The root of this word, “charis,” means grace in Greek. Thus using your motivational gift will be a blessing both to you and to those who receive the benefits of you using your gift. Additionally, “chara” means joy in Greek. Thus, you will find great joy when using your motivational gift and others will be filled with joy through you as you use it.

The bottom line is to use your motivational gift both when you minister and evangelize. This will both bless your life and give you the most joy.

Discover your Motivational Gift

There are some definite practical things you can do to help you discover your motivational gift. I would suggest the following seven:

1. Read up on motivational gifts (like this chapter).
2. Experiment with different motivational gifts and observe the results.
3. Check which of the gifts gives you the most grace/“charis.”
4. Check which of the gifts gives you the most joy/“chara.”

5. Show your Christian family and friends a list of the seven motivational gifts and ask them which one most describes you.
6. Ask some people who have the manifestation gift of discernment to observe you in your work for God and identify your motivational gift.
7. Take a motivational gifts test.

To help you determine your motivational gift, I suggest you take the following two-part test. In this test, you are trying to identify which of the seven people you identify most with because each person is a perfect example of someone with a specific motivational spiritual gift.

Keep in mind when taking this test that the results will be more accurate the longer you have experienced the Christian life.

Motivational Gift Test, Part 1

In Part 1 of the motivational gifts test, simply circle the dot before each phrase if it perfectly describes you. After you are done circling the dots for Persons 1 through 7, add up the totals in the list below.

Person 1

- You like to tell people how you feel about certain subjects
- You can tell if people are honest
- You are able to tell if things are evil and hate them
- You use God's Word to back up what you say
- You want people to act the way they talk
- You speak directly, clearly, and strongly
- You are concerned with what people think God is like
- The sins people talk about are disappointing to you
- You don't mind having others point out sin in your life
- You tend to exaggerate the problem; it is black or white to you

Person 2

- You can easily remember what friends like and do not like
- You can tell when people are in need and you want to help them
- You enjoy working with your hands
- You want to do things that need to be done as soon as possible
- You keep working to finish projects even when you are tired
- You like to do more than is expected of you
- You are involved in a lot and often find it hard to say no
- You like to do projects by yourself more than with a group
- You are bothered when others cannot tell when things need to get done
- You are disappointed when others do not appreciate what you have done

Person 3

- You think it is important that people use words correctly
- You like to hear what the Bible says in the original language
- You like to test the knowledge of the people who teach you
- You enjoy looking up things to prove that they are true
- You compare new things to things you already know are true
- You tell people things in an organized way
- You sometimes like to use Bible stories to explain truth
- You are bothered when a person uses a Bible verse out of context
- You greatly enjoy researching the truth
- You look to the Bible to explain the occurrences in your life and others' lives

Person 4

- You think that going through hard times makes you a better person

- You like to see people reach their goals through going through the right steps
- You usually avoid information that does not have a practical use in life
- You like to see people accept you when you speak
- You find things the Bible is talking about happening in real life
- You are bothered when teachers do not tell you how to use what they are teaching
- You enjoy learning new ideas from others
- You are more concerned with what a person does than how he feels
- You get people excited about things even if those things may never happen
- You sometimes plan things for the future that you never do

Person 5

- You use your money wisely
- You like to give your money to worthy causes without others knowing about it
- You would try to give in such a way as to get others to give
- You see needs that other people overlook
- You like to meet needs without being asked to
- You are excited when your gift is an answer to another person's prayer
- You want what you give to be of the highest quality
- You want to feel part of the ministry you give to
- You tend to deal with a lot of money
- You usually save more than you spend

Person 6

- You can understand overall projects and see their goals
- You like to organize things you are responsible for
- You tend to lead if no one else will

- You like to finish tasks as soon as possible
- You know what resources you have to finish a project
- You can usually finish a job with whatever is available
- You usually know what types of jobs to give specific people
- You are usually able to pass parts of jobs on to others
- You are able to put up with difficult people in order to get the job done
- You are a big-picture person

Person 7

- You can tell if someone is sad or upset
- You feel close to and understand people who are upset
- You like to talk with people who feel bad and help them to feel better
- You care greatly about people's mental and emotional problems
- You try not to be firm unless you know it will help
- You are careful about words and actions that might hurt others
- You can tell when people really mean what they say and do
- You enjoy being with people who care a lot about others
- You tend to avoid people who do not care about others
- You are hard-pressed to make a decision when you think it might hurt someone

Now add up the number of dots you circled (out of 10 possible) for Persons 1 through 7 and write down your totals in the list below:

Person 1, total dots circled _____
 Person 2, total dots circled _____
 Person 3, total dots circled _____
 Person 4, total dots circled _____
 Person 5, total dots circled _____
 Person 6, total dots circled _____
 Person 7, total dots circled _____

Motivational Gift Test, Part 2

In Part 2 of the motivational gift test, I simply ask you to rate each of the statements below in terms of their truthfulness from your perspective. Rate each statement from 1 (not true at all) to 10 (completely true).

In filling out Part 2, please give only one person a perfect 10. Give everyone else a different, but appropriate numerical rating:

_____ **Person 1** – I feel blessed and joyful when convicting others by declaring God’s truth and calling for action.

_____ **Person 2** – I feel blessed and joyful when serving others and meeting their physical needs.

_____ **Person 3** – I feel blessed and joyful when researching and explaining the truth so that others can understand it and apply it.

_____ **Person 4** – I feel blessed and joyful when encouraging, strengthening, and inspiring others to be their best.

_____ **Person 5** – I feel blessed and joyful when generously sharing what God has blessed me with in terms of time, talent, energy, and resources.

_____ **Person 6** – I feel blessed and joyful when governing, overseeing, and directing others so that the group moves forward.

_____ **Person 7** – I feel blessed and joyful when empathizing with, cheering, and showing compassion to those who hurt.

Determining Your Final Score and Motivational Gift

Part 1 of the motivational gift test was out of 10 possible points, and Part 2 of the motivational gift test was out of 10 possible points. To determine your final score (out of 100) simply multiply your score from Part 1 by your score from Part 2 for each person as follows:

$$\text{Person X} = (\text{total from Part 1}) \times (\text{total from Part 2}) = \text{Final Total}$$

Your Final Totals

Person 1:	_____	×	_____	=	_____
Person 2:	_____	×	_____	=	_____
Person 3:	_____	×	_____	=	_____
Person 4:	_____	×	_____	=	_____
Person 5:	_____	×	_____	=	_____
Person 6:	_____	×	_____	=	_____
Person 7:	_____	×	_____	=	_____

Whoever in the list above who has the highest total out of 100 is the person you most identify with (you have their same motivational gift).

The motivational gifts corresponding to the seven people above are written below:

- Person 1** has the gift of **prophecy**
- Person 2** has the gift of **service**
- Person 3** has the gift of **teaching**
- Person 4** has the gift of **exhortation**
- Person 5** has the gift of **giving**
- Person 6** has the gift of **leadership**
- Person 7** has the gift of **mercy**

Definitions of Each Motivational Gift

Again, each Christian has one motivational gift which they should use both when they minister and evangelize. Each possible motivational gift is defined below:

The gift of prophecy functions to convict others by declaring God's truth and calling for action.

The gift of service functions to serve others and meet their physical needs.

The gift of teaching functions to research and explain truth so that others can understand it and apply it.

The gift of exhortation functions to encourage, strengthen, and inspire others to be their best.

The gift of giving functions to generously share what God has blessed them with in terms of time, talent, energy, and resources.

The gift of leadership functions to govern, oversee, and direct others so that the group moves forward.

The gift of mercy functions to empathize with, cheer, and show compassion to those who hurt.

Final Questions

1. What is your main motivational gift?
2. How does using your motivational gift impart blessing and joy to yourself and others?
3. Do you think that you can use your main motivational gift to minister and evangelize?

CHAPTER TWELVE

Pillar #9: Ministry

It wasn't long after I rededicated my life to the Lord Jesus Christ as an adult that I began evangelizing. For the longest time, I thought that my sole purpose on earth was to bring the love and life of Jesus Christ to the lost.

After many years living as an evangelist, I began to experience a dry spell in my spiritual life. The enjoyment I used to get from leading non-Christians to the Lord no longer satisfied me the way it once did. I was confused and asked myself, "Is evangelism the only reason I was put on this planet?"

One day while I was on a prayer walk to get alone with God, I began to feel a deep urge to minister to the church. I still remember praying, "God, if it is possible, I want to minister to your church. But I don't know what to do for them. Please help me!"

It wasn't long after praying this prayer that the Lord began to bring me young men to mentor and teach. As the years went on, I began to write books and lead study groups for Christians. Then one day the Lord spoke to my heart: "You have the motivational gift of teaching; use it to minister to my church." I was spellbound. I never knew that my ministry should flow out of my motivational gift! Until this point in time, I only thought my motivational gift was for evangelizing non-Christians, but I had not considered it could also be used for ministering to the church. So as time has continued, I have done everything possible to minister to Christ's body using my motivational gift.

Had I known what my motivational gift was much earlier, I may have been spared a lot of time trying to figure out in what way I was supposed to minister to the church. As I began to teach on motivational gifts, I began to see first-hand the power of knowing your motivational gift and using it, both as the heart of the way you do ministry, and evangelism.

My prayer for you is that now that you have discovered your motivational gift, you will be able to come up with some creative ways to use it for the building up of Jesus Christ's church here in this chapter.

Let's get started!

A Couple of Ministry Stories

Below I have written down just a couple of the many ministry stories I've had over the years. My hope is that you will be inspired by them and want to go out into the church and get your own ministry stories!

Mentoring Begins for a Young Man

A man named Dean had fallen away from the Lord years ago, and just needed to connect with a Christian who lived out their faith. I had been spending time with him each week for over a year, and sharing my Christian life with him. Finally, I asked him, "What is stopping you from devoting your whole life to the Lord once again?" He sat there for a minute thinking and then said, "Nothing!" At that moment, Dean returned to faith in Jesus Christ! Because we were already friends, Dean began to look to me for answers to his many questions. He asked me a lot about the Bible, prayer, worship, discipleship, ministry, evangelism, etc. Through our friendship, he became a very zealous Christian. We spent lots of time together. Dean grew so much and I was so proud of him. Eventually, I felt that there was nothing more I could teach him and encouraged him to get more involved with his local church, and to find another mentor. I still remember the day we thanked each other for the time we had together. He thanked me for leading him back to the Lord and teaching him so much, and I thanked him for being the best student I could have possibly imagined.

Pastoring a Home Church

After I had written another Christian book called, *Discover the Heart of God in His Purpose*, I reached out to the body of Christ, to people who wanted to study it together in a home church. To my surprise, a lot of zealous Christians responded! As the weeks went on, I was able to teach them everything from my book and start on some new topics as well. We all became better and better friends. I was able to use my teaching gift on a weekly basis to benefit them, and other people in the group were able to use their gifts, such as prophecy, service, teaching, exhortation, giving, leadership, and mercy, which benefitted me and others there. The Holy Spirit began to visit us on a weekly basis, and we began to grow closer to God. So many wonderful relationships have grown out of this home church. I praise the Lord Jesus for his work in everyone there and in me!

I hope you have enjoyed reading these two “ministry stories”. Now let’s ask ourselves a critical question and discover what the Bible has to say about spiritual gifts and ministry.

An Important Question

- Do you think you are called and qualified to minister to the church?

Definition of Ministry

Ministry is simply loving the Christians in your life in order to bring them closer to Jesus Christ.

Different Ways to Minister

My concern with offering you my “ministry stories,” is that you may end up thinking that in order to have a ministerial impact, you will need to minister in the same way I did. If this is the case for you, you couldn’t be further from the truth.

In fact, there are as many ways to minister as there are people in the body of Christ. However, I believe that each of these ways falls into one of seven distinct categories (spiritual gifts) all motivated by the love of God.

“For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if [your gift is] [1] **prophecy**, in proportion to our faith; if [your gift is] [2] **service**, in our serving; the one who [has a gift who] [3] **teaches**, in his teaching; the one who [has a gift who] [4] **exhorts**, in his exhortation; the one who [has the gift who] [5] **contributes**/[gives], in generosity; the one who [who has a gift who] [6] **leads**, with zeal; the one who does acts of [with the gift of] [7] **mercy**, with cheerfulness” (Romans 12:3-8).

We learned in the chapter on spiritual gifts that each person has received one motivational gift and is supposed to use it to minister to the church.

Now that you have discovered your motivational gift, it is important to discover what practical applications it can have to benefit the body of Christ.

It is impossible to list all of the possible activities you can participate in to use your gift. It is wiser for you to try to understand how your gift functions and to use your own creativity to come up with ways to benefit the church through your gift. This will help you apply your gift in the way that you most enjoy.

These are the definitions of the seven possible motivational gifts combined with examples from the New Testament and my own life:

The gift of prophecy functions to convict others by declaring God’s truth and calling for action.

- Verse: “Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them” (Ephesians 5:11).
- Example: My friend, Dave, convicts Christians of their compromised lives and calls them to live radically for Jesus Christ.

The gift of service functions to serve others and meet their physical needs.

- Verse: “The greatest among you shall be your servant” (Matthew 23:11).
- Example: My Mom used to set up coffee for my whole church each Sunday. Today, she continues to serve the body of Christ in various capacities.

The gift of teaching functions to research and explain truth so that others can understand it and apply it.

- Verse: “What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (2 Timothy 2:2).
- Example: My friend, Samuel, reads the Bible and shares what he learns with all of his Christian friends.

The gift of exhortation functions to encourage, strengthen, and inspire others to be their best.

- Verse: “Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching” (2 Timothy 4:2).

- Example: My friend, Heather, inspires others by telling them the attributes of God she sees in them.

The gift of giving functions to generously share what God has blessed them with in terms of time, talent, energy, and resources.

- Verse: “Give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you” (Luke 6:38).
- Example: My friend, Sam, blesses the body of Christ by financially giving to his church, missionaries, and special projects.

The gift of leadership functions to govern, oversee, and direct others so that the group moves forward.

- Verse: “The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out” (John 10:3).
- Example: My friend, Zac, organizes groups of Christians into clubs, classes, and special teams.

The gift of mercy functions to empathize with, cheer, and show compassion to those who hurt.

- Verse: “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy” (Matthew 5:7).
- Example: My friend, Anni, listens to people who are hurting and stands by them during their hours of difficulty.

Final Questions

1. What do you believe your main motivational spiritual gift is?
2. Now that you have discovered your motivational gift, do you think that God wants you to use it to bring Jesus' love to the church?
3. Think about and write below one possible way you can use your motivational gift to love the church (minister) to bring them closer to Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Pillar #10: Evangelism

I dedicated my life to Christ again after my freshman year in college at M.I.T. After that, God plugged me into a Christian fellowship that met every week at Harvard University, only about three miles away from my school. While I was there, a blessed Harvard student named Richard started mentoring me through Campus Crusade for Christ. Our weekly meetings went really well for many weeks until he asked me the big question: “How about we go out, and you share your faith with just one person?”

I was petrified and said, “No way! I’m not ready to do that!” After that, week after week, Richard urged me to go out and evangelize, but I always said, “No.” So my senior year at M.I.T. finished and I still hadn’t shared my faith with anyone. My mentorship with Richard was also officially completed.

I know what it’s like to have a fear of sharing the gospel. It is a very scary feeling until you have grown accustomed to it.

The years went by and I finally read the book *More Than a Carpenter*, by Josh McDowell. After reading all the proof of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, I could not help but tell all of my old friends about it!

None of them came to the Lord. In fact, all of them left me as friends. I was heartbroken, but the love of Christ had consumed me by that point. I still miss some of those friends and pray for them that God would grant them the grace and faith to be saved.

So that was the start of my evangelistic career – utter failure. But, as I said before – the love of God was consuming me. As the prophet Jeremiah said, it was like fire in my bones, and I had to speak the good news of God’s great salvation.

Time went by, and I eventually moved to La Mirada, near Talbot

Theological Seminary. One of my roommates, Peter, also had an interest in sharing the gospel. So we went out at a local grocery store's parking lot to give away Bibles and share the gospel with anyone we met. We led about 15 people to Christ in a year. At the time, I didn't think street evangelists could ever have better results than that!

Then I got a job at a Christian School in Arcadia, California, as a teacher. The best part of my job was that it was a Chinese Christian school for wealthy students who had come over from China to go to an American high school in the hope of getting into a good American college, but none of them were Christian. They allowed me to teach a Bible class and develop the curriculum for it. Because none of these Chinese students were Christians, I thought it ridiculous to have them study the Bible first. So our class text was the evangelistic book, *More Than a Carpenter*, in hopes of leading some of them to Christ. Every day, their only homework assignment was to write a journal entry about what they had learned from God. Throughout the course of the year, well over half the class got saved and began crying out to Jesus. Then a mini-revival broke out through our class on campus and many students got saved. It was incredible!

I eventually had to leave my job for health reasons, and I moved back to Lake Forest, California. I kept sharing the gospel, and eventually I had to make the decision: was I going to become a statistician or an evangelist? I was torn by this decision. The job of a statistician offers far more money than that of an evangelist, and I love mathematics. But my heart was for evangelism.

So one night before going to sleep, I prayed, "Dear Jesus, I don't know what to do with my career. Please give me wisdom!"

That night I had a dream. In the dream, I was standing in the midst of the twelve Apostles in the Temple in Jerusalem, and Jesus was standing in the middle. He turned to me and said, "Follow your heart." I quickly woke up and knew what I had to do. My heart's desire was for evangelism, so I decided to become a full-time evangelist! I knew God would be with me!

So I founded a 501c3 Non-Profit Organization and named it Salvation United. During the first few months I led a few people to the Lord and felt great about it. But as time went by, God gave me the idea of sharing the gospel with high school students. That was when the number of decisions for Christ exploded. Every day, I would go to a high school campus while they were getting out of school and lead students to the Lord using my gospel tract, while standing on a public street where it is legal, because of our freedom of speech. The rest is history. I literally led thousands of souls to the Lord and had great joy in the Holy Spirit in my work! I couldn't believe that God gave me and allowed me to use the desire of my heart as a career path.

God is with you in evangelism and it is his glorious will to seek and save the lost!

A Few Salvation Stories

Below I have written down just a couple of the various salvation stories that I've had over my many years doing evangelism. My hope is that you will be inspired by them and want to go out into the world and get your own salvation stories!

Two Ex-Convicts Get Saved and Delivered In Huntington Beach

I was evangelizing with Robert, and I went straight to this fully tattooed man and his girlfriend. Their names are Victor and Alexis. It turns out that Victor had just been released from prison three weeks prior and Alexis had been in and out of jail since she was a teen. I began by giving them two "God Loves You" cards and reading them John 3:16-18. They both said it is very hard to have faith. Then I asked if I could simply pray for them. I prayed that God would unlock their hearts and tear down the walls that separate them from him. Alexis had once accepted Christ but had since got into drug addiction and turned her back on him. I said, "God wants you back!" She then started crying. So I asked them if they would both pray with me to accept Jesus Christ into their hearts, because he

wants to enter into their lives to take away their addiction, and give them joy, peace, and his presence in their lives. He wants a relationship with them. They said they would like to pray that prayer, so we prayed, and they accepted Jesus as their Lord, Savior, and Master! Then they told Robert and me that they were tormented by the “demons” of addiction, guilt, and shame. So we asked, and they agreed to let us cast demons out of their lives. We laid hands on them, and I said, “I command the demons of addiction, guilt, and shame to come out of you in Jesus name!” I could feel the demons leaving them. They then told us that they felt better. We counseled them and invited them to church. We finally left after an hour, with them hugging us and thanking us.

Former Muslim, Ali, Prays To Receive Christ

I got into a gospel conversation with a formerly Muslim man from Iran named Ali. We talked about Islam, and he said it was a religion of death. Then we spoke about how good Jesus was. But the man said, “If I go back to Iran then they will kill me for becoming a Christian.” So we talked more about the grace and goodness of Jesus. Then the man prayed with me to accept Jesus as his Savior: “Dear Jesus, I accept you as my Lord and Savior. Please forgive me of my sins. And please give me the Holy Spirit, amen.” After we prayed, my friend, Bob, gave me a Bible to give to Ali. Ali gladly accepted it and said he would read the entire gospel of John and pray on his bed tonight to Jesus Christ. Then he went next door and bought me a pizza from B.J.’s for lunch to show his appreciation.

I hope that you have enjoyed reading these two “salvation stories”. Now let’s ask ourselves a critical question and discover what the Bible has to say about spiritual gifts and evangelism.

An Important Question

- Do you think you are called and qualified to share the gospel with the lost?

Definition of Evangelism

Evangelism is simply loving the unbelievers around you and sharing the good news about salvation with them in order to bring them to Jesus Christ and eternal life.

Different Ways to Evangelize

I know from nearly two decades of experience working with evangelists that there are as many ways to share the gospel, as there are people in the body of Christ. However, I believe each of these ways falls into one of seven distinct categories (corresponding to each spiritual gift) all motivated by the love of God.

As we learned in Chapter Eleven, each person has received one motivational gift, and they should use it to evangelize to the lost.

Romans 12:3-8:

“For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if [your gift is] [1] **prophecy**, in proportion to our faith; if [your gift is] [2] **service**, in our serving; the one who [has a gift who] [3] **teaches**, in his teaching; the one who [has a gift who] [4] **exhorts**, in his exhortation; the one who [has the gift who] [5] **contributes**/[gives], in generosity; the one who [who has a gift who] [6] **leads**, with zeal; the one who does acts of [with the gift of] [7] **mercy**, with cheerfulness.”

Instead of providing you with lists of possible evangelistic activities to choose from, I believe that it is wisest to provide you with brief

descriptions of each of the seven motivational gifts. I will give you examples of how they were used by Christians in the Bible and in modern times, to share God's evangelistic love to guide you in your future evangelistic efforts.

You have read the previous chapter on spiritual gifts and should now know your motivational gift. I now offer the following definitions and examples in order to inspire you to be creative in coming up with ways to evangelize within your area of gifting, which will most powerfully influence the lost for the sake of the gospel.

These are the definitions of the seven possible motivational gifts combined with examples from the New Testament and my own life:

The gift of prophecy functions to convict others by declaring God's truth and calling for action.

- Verses: "In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand'" (Matthew 3:1-2).
- Example: My friend, Michael, preaches repentance for the forgiveness of sins to the lost in the name of Jesus Christ.

The gift of service functions to serve others and meet their physical needs.

- Verses: "Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, 'It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.' And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and

they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them. And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith” (Acts 6:1-7).

- Example: My friend, Theresa, serves at a local ministry by handing out food to the poor in Jesus’ name.

The gift of teaching functions to research and explain truth so that others can understand it and apply it.

- Verses: “After this Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. And he went to see them, and because he was of the same trade he stayed with them and worked, for they were tentmakers by trade. And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and tried to persuade Jews and Greeks. When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah” (Acts 18:1-4).
- Example: My friend, Anthony, shares the good news with the lost at a basketball court by teaching them about God’s love and eternal life.

The gift of exhortation functions to encourage, strengthen, and inspire others to be their best.

- Verses: “Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, ‘He told me all that I ever did.’ So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. And many

more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, ‘It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world’” (John 4:39-42).

- Example: My friend, Rebecca, encourages the lost to give their lives to Jesus and follow him.

The gift of giving functions to generously share what God has blessed them with in terms of time, talent, energy, and resources.

- Verses: “Now when Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, a woman came up to him with an alabaster flask of very expensive ointment, and she poured it on his head as he reclined at table. And when the disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, ‘Why this waste? For this could have been sold for a large sum and given to the poor.’ But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, ‘Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a beautiful thing to me. For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me. In pouring this ointment on my body, she has done it to prepare me for burial. Truly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her’” (Matthew 26:6-13).
- Example: My friend, Sam, gives money to evangelistic projects so that people come to know Jesus Christ as their Savior.

The gift of leadership functions to govern, oversee, and direct others so that the group moves forward.

- Verses: “Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the

Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:16-20).

- My friend, Joe, leads a house of mercy where they give out food and offer clothing at discounted prices to the poor in the name of Jesus Christ.

The gift of mercy functions to empathize with, cheer, and show compassion to those who hurt.

- Verse: “When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd” (Matthew 9:36).
- Example: My friends, Todd and Michelle, find homeless people and show them mercy by giving them new shoes and socks in the name of Jesus Christ.

God Has Commissioned You!

Jesus Christ’s final words to us are:

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:19-20).

You may not be called to the office of an evangelist. However, the Lord Jesus has commissioned all of us to “go” and be his *witnesses*. Together, we have the privilege of making known to the world God’s free offer of eternal life through Jesus Christ!

Example of How to Share the Gospel

As an evangelist, I am often asked to teach others how to evangelize. When I do, I give my students the short script starting on the next page and list of guidelines to follow. I offer it to you now to help you in your mission to evangelize. It is not the only way to evangelize, but it is the way I have found most helpful. I call it *The John 3:16 Evangelism Encounter*.

The John 3:16 Evangelism Encounter

Created by Jason Robért

FOLLOW EXACTLY:

[You, LOVINGLY]: “Hi, how’s it going?”

[Them]: “Good!”

[You, transitioning]: “Can I ask you an important question?”

[Them]: “Sure.”

[You, GENTLY]: “Do you have eternal life?”

[Them]: “I don’t know... What’s that?”

[You, BOLDLY]: “Well, it says in the Bible that God so loved the world that he gave his only Son that whoever believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. And eternal life is simply having a RELATIONSHIP with God and Jesus based on LOVE. Would you like that?”

[Them]: “Of course! Who wouldn’t?”

[You, DIRECTLY]: “Then pray this prayer with me! Repeat after me:”

[You and them]: “Dear God, I believe that Jesus died on the cross for my sins. I turn away from my sins. Thank you for forgiving me. Please give me eternal life and the gift of the Holy Spirit. In your name, amen!”

- If at any time the person you are sharing with begins to argue, disagree, debate, or persecute just tell them, “I RESPECT you! Have a great day!” and move on to the next person.

Final Questions

1. What do you believe your main motivational spiritual gift is? Do you think that God wants you to use it to bring the good news to the lost?
2. Think about and write below one possible way you can use your motivational gift with *The John 3:16 Evangelism Encounter* to love the lost (evangelize) and bring them into the kingdom of God.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Thank You!

I put a lot of work into preparing this little book for you. So thank you for taking the time and effort to read it!

I pray that *The 10 Pillars of Jesus' Love* has brought you close to God through Jesus Christ, built you up in your faith, and encouraged you to take the next steps in your Christian life.

May God richly bless you as you daily pursue a relationship with him, other believers, and the lost.

Sincerely,

Jason Robért

APPENDIX

My Top 9 Book Picks

I have broken down my top book picks into three categories: spiritual, relational, and intellectual. In this way you will be able to choose from my favorite books on the most fundamental areas of the Christian life – our relationship with God (spiritual), our relationship with other people (relational), and how to think like Christ (intellectual).

Spiritual Picks

1. *The Purpose Driven Life* by Rick Warren
2. *Experiencing God* by Blackaby and King
3. *My Utmost for His Highest* by Oswald Chambers

Relational Picks

4. *Safe People* by Cloud and Townsend
5. *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership* by John C. Maxwell
6. *Winning with People* by John C. Maxwell

Intellectual Picks

7. *Essential Truths of the Christian Faith* by R.C. Sproul
8. *Thinking for a Change* by John C. Maxwell
9. *Mind Your Faith* by David Horner

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