

Message from the author:

I can still remember that day, the first time I ever rode my bike on a ramp. We had just finished building the 5' half pipe in my backyard. I was going to be the first person to drop-in. I got my bike to the top of the ramp and got ready to roll-in, but when I got to the edge I stopped. Over and over I stopped there on the edge. I knew what to do, I just couldn't find the courage to follow through. Eventually I did drop-in, although it was scary I knew I had discovered something that would be a big part of my life for along time. Today, some five years later, as I am performing at shows I think back to that day when dropping-in was a major accomplishment, but now it's just the prelude to a 360*, or No-footer, or something. A relationship with Christ is a lot like dropping-in, it's scary at first, but as time goes on it becomes part of your life and opens doors to bigger things.

We here at Chaos on Wheels Ministries believe that the most important decision you will ever make is to begin a relationship with Christ and to grow in that relationship. Christ is the difference between success or failure, joy and peace or turmoil. If you take as little as 10 minutes each day to learn about God and His will for your life, you will find a power that can help you through rough times, and help you make those tough decisions we all face daily. This book is designed to help you get a start in your walk with Christ. Work on one lesson each day and apply it to your life, and God will make a difference in your life.

In Christ,

Jeremiah Anderson

"Growing in Christ"

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Lesson #1

"The Lukewarm Christian"

"So because you are Luke warm, neither hot nor cold-I am about to spit you out of my mouth."

Revelation 3:16

Sadly, these words of Christ have been directed at many Christians, including myself. In Revelation 3:20 we read more of Christ's words, *"Here I am I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me."* Long ago I heard Christ knocking and I opened the door, but I never sat down to eat with Him. He was in my life, but I wasn't allowing the relationship to grow. I thought I had it all under control, as Christ states in *Revelation 3:17*, *"You say, 'I am rich, I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing'. But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked."*

Satan had blinded me to the fact that I was a baby Christian and that I wasn't growing. Luckily God opened my eyes with the words of Christ in Revelation 3. I soon realized that I had been sitting dormant in my Christian life and that Satan was slowly taking over. I had broken the Greatest Commandment, *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind."* *Matthew 22:37*

As Christians we have heard Christ knocking and we have let him in, but if we are to experience the full benefits of Christianity, we must commit to developing our relationship with Christ. We need to sit down and eat with Christ. When you sit down to eat with someone you usually converse and get to know each other. As Christians we need to find out about God and his will for our lives, as well as tell him about our joys and concerns. Don't be lukewarm and risk getting spit out of Christ's mouth. Explore your relationship with Christ; the more you learn, the more exciting it gets.

"To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I over came and sat down with my Father on his Throne." Revelation 3:21

Check out these verses:

Revelation 3:15-22

Matthew 22:37

Matthew 12:50

Lesson #2

"Prayer"

Commitment, that's what it takes to succeed at anything. If you don't make time for a project it will fall by the wayside. Each of us put aside time to eat, sleep, work, etc. How many of you set aside time to develop your relationship with Christ? As a Christian you need to spend time talking to God and allowing God to speak to you. If we don't communicate with God, our relationship will never grow, and in time will fall by the wayside. God makes it simple for us to communicate with him through prayer and the Bible. Today we will look at prayer.

Prayer is our telephone to God so to speak. At anytime of the day you are able to come before God in prayer and share with him your joys, concerns, and repentance. This privilege should not be taken lightly. You can talk to your creator anytime about anything, think about that. The next few lessons will deal with how to address God in a pleasing and respectful way. But first let's look at why we should pray.

As we read God's word, we find many places where we are commanded to pray; (*Luke 22:41, Ephesians 6:18, I Thessalonians 5:17, I Peter 4:7, and Jude 1:20*). So we are commanded to pray, that should be reason enough. In *Mark 1:35, Matthew 14:23, Luke 11:1 and Matthew 26:36* we read of how Christ would take time out of his day to go off alone and pray. Jesus, Son of God, believed it was important to set aside time to talk to God. How much more do YOU need to do the same? As Christians, we are to strive to be like Christ. He saw the importance of time with God, so should you.

We all have frustrations, temptations and problems, as well as times of rejoice and praise. Through prayer we can bring all of that before God and ask for the help we all need to get through life. Through Prayer we acknowledge that we do need God's power, provision and forgiveness to make - up for our shortcomings.

Spend 5 - 10 minutes each day with God. He will reward you for it.

Check out these verses:

Matthew 14:23

Matthew 26:36

Mark 1:35

Luke 22:41

Luke 11:1

Ephesians 6:18

I Thessalonians 5:17

I Peter 4:7

Lesson #3

"P is for Praising"

Speaking to God is not only an amazing privilege, but also an essential part of your Christian growth. We must learn to pray in a way pleasing to God. The next four lessons will focus on helping you achieve that goal. We can use each letter of the word PRAY to represent an important part of prayer. Today we will look at "P" for Praising.

Far too often we use prayer as a way to get what we want, and we forget to praise God for all he does for us. The fact is that God is our creator and He is worthy of our praises. When we come to God in prayer we must start by recognizing Him for the all powerful, all knowing, all loving, Creator of the Universe.

"Sing to the Lord, all the earth; proclaim His salvation day after day. Declare His glory among all peoples. For great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; He is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the nations are idols, but the Lord made the heavens. Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and joy in His dwelling place." I Chronicles 16:23-27. This little piece of scripture is a perfect example of how to praise God in a way pleasing to the creator of all things.

Praising isn't just about recognizing God for His greatness, but also thanking Him for all He does for us each day. Everyday God provides and protects us, but we often forget to give Him the thanks He deserves. It is important that during your praises you thank God for specific things He has done in your life. His blessings come as specifics so thank Him specifically; it will amaze you how much God actually does for you.

God will always provide and protect you. Can you say you always praise and thank Him? Take time to praise God and thank Him for all He is and does. By beginning your prayers with praise you are reminded of who you are talking to and at the same time gives you the opportunity to show your gratitude to God for all He does and is.

Check out these verses:

Jude 1:20

Psalms 106:1

Psalms 145

Psalms 100

Psalms 95:2

Psalms 93

I Chronicles 16:23-27

Lesson #4

"R is for Repentance"

In the last lesson we discussed the importance of praise in our prayer life. Today we will look at the letter 'R' which stands for repentance. As a Christian you will still sin, and therefore slow your growth in Christ. Unconfessed sin in your life will act as a wall between you and God. In order for you to come to God in prayer you must knock down that wall. Fortunately for us God is patient and forgiving. *I John 1:9* tells us, "*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins.*"

The first step to repentance is to find the areas of your life in which sin lies. Be honest with yourself, because God can see you inside and out. Once the sin has been identified you can bring it before God and claim the promise in *I John 1:9*. It is important to repent each individual sin, and once repented you can work on moving away from that sin. The final step of repentance is to make an effort to resist the temptation of going back to that sin. Once forgiven we must move in a way to turn away from sin.

Take some time right now to think about your life. Do you have any sin in your life that needs to be confessed? If so deal with it right now. The longer that sin stays hidden away, the longer it has to grow into a wall between you and God. Hiding your sins and not dealing with them will eventually separate you from God, and your Christian life will shrivel away. Take time NOW to identify and deal with those areas of sin in your life. Leaving your communication with God blocked by sin is a dangerous decision. Unhindered communication with God is essential if you are to grow as a Christian.

Check out these verses:

I John 1:9

Romans 3:23

Psalms 103:3

Romans 6:23

Psalms 86:5

Lesson #5

"A is for Asking"

We have considered the importance of praise and repentance in our prayer lives. Today we are going to look at the third part of prayer, asking. Unfortunately most people think of this as the only reason to pray. You shouldn't ask God for anything unless you first praise Him for who He is and what He does. And how can you go to God with requests when you allow sin to remain in your life? You can't, you must restore communication through repentance before asking God for anything.

"You do not have because you do not ask God. When you do ask, you do not receive because you ask with the wrong motives, that you might spend what you get on your pleasures." James 4:23. When coming to God with a request you must be sure of your motives. As a child of God you should not make requests out of selfishness, but rather to provide your needs and satisfy God's will and purpose for your life. *Philippians 4:19* states *"my God will meet all your needs according to His riches in glory."* God promises to supply our needs, but far too often we go to God with selfish wants.

In my own life I've asked for many things I thought were needs, but God would say "No." Later down the road I would find out what I was asking for wasn't within God's will for my life. He usually had something better in mind. As Christians we are to give ourselves entirely to God, that includes our desires. God has a plan for your life; he knows all and sees all past, present, and future. Considering that I think he knows what's best for us, more so than we do. God will answer your requests with either a No, Wait, or Yes depending on what fits into his will for our lives. I have found that when he answers, it is best to go along with it, because by fighting it you will run into more problems than you could imagine. God can see problems before they arise and that's what He tries to protect us from.

Another aspect of asking, is asking on behalf of others. In *Philippians 1:3 - 4* and *Romans 1:9 - 10*, Paul sets an example for us to pray for others in need. As Christians we need to support our brothers and sisters in Christ through prayer.

If Jesus is Lord of your life, your requests will be in accordance to God's will in your life. Pray according to His will and not your own desires.

Check out these verses:

Philippians 1:3 - 4

Romans 1:9 - 10

Philippians 4:9

James 4:2 - 3

Psalms 28

Lesson #6

"Y is for Yielding"

Thus far we have looked at "P" for praising, "R" for repentance, and "A" for asking. Finally we are going to look at "Y" for yielding. Defined as "The giving up, the surrendering, the relinquishing control of oneself," yielding is a state of mind. You must be willing to allow God to take control of your life 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. I Thessalonians 5:17 tells us to pray continually. By yielding your thoughts, desires, and actions to God's will, you are able to stay in that prayer mentality always.

"Finally brothers whatever is true, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy, think about such things." Philipians 4:8. Yielding yourself to God involves replacing your natural thoughts with those that reflect what God would want you to think about. *"Therefore, I urge you brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing, to God - this is your spiritual act of worship." Romans 12:1*

Stop and think about all the things God has done for you today. How about in the last month? He has given us eternal life through the death of His only son, Jesus Christ. We owe it to ourselves and to God to offer our lives 100% to God. What area do you still have a hold on? We all have parts of our lives that we don't want to yield to God, but by keeping a hold you cheat yourself out of God's full blessing for you. Each time you pray you need to yield to God your entire being in order to remind you of your commitment to grow in Christ and allow God to use you for His will. Become more like Christ each day, available to God for whatever His call.

Check out these verses:

Philippians 4:8

Romans 12:1

I Thessalonians 5:17

Psalms 37

Psalms 119:1 - 16

Lesson #7

"Listening for God"

The past few lessons have been about how to speak to God through prayer. The privilege of being able to talk to God about anything at any time, really isn't important if we don't take time to listen to what God has to say to us.

Developing a relationship is a two way road. We need to share with God our praises and concerns, but we also need to take time to let him tell us about His will for our lives and how to deal with our concerns. *Psalm 46:10 "Be still and know that I am God."* God will speak to you, but most likely it won't be a thundering voice but rather a subtle urging or a Bible verse that speaks to you.

John 1:1 states *"In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God."* If we want to hear what God has to say to us, we must get to know the Word, and through the Word we will know God. To hear what God has to say it is essential to not only set aside time to pray but also time to let God speak to you through his word. *"Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me."* *John 14:21*. If you are sincere in your love for Christ and you desire to grow as a Christian you will have a hunger for the word of God.

So often we have excuses why we can't take time to read the Bible. I know, I've used many of them. We complain about not having time or not understanding, or the word doesn't apply to my life. No excuse will hold up to God's judgement. In order to develop a relationship you must talk to God and allow him to speak to you. God is there for you 24 hours a day. He doesn't make up excuses for why he can't hear our prayers, why do we make excuses why we can't listen to our Lord?

If you truly love the Lord you will take time to listen for God to speak to you. He has a will for your life and He wants to share it with you. Be still and let Him.

Check out these verses;

John 1:1

John 14:21

Psalm 46:10

Hebrews 4:12

Joshua 1:8

Psalm 119:17 - 32

Lesson #8

"Breakfast of Champions"

When on the road doing my bike stunt shows, sometimes I have to skip a meal or two through out the day. When that happens I ride poorly and usually end up getting injured. Without nourishment, my body isn't able to react the way it should because of lost strength and slowed response. The same is true for our souls. They need the nourishment of God's Word daily. *Jeremiah 15:16 "Your words are what sustain my, they are food to my hungry soul."* Being a Christian is in no way an easy task. Just as with riding a ramp, in your Christian life you need to be strong and able to react quickly. God's word gives you the strength to resist temptations and guides you as to what God's will is for your life.

I Peter 2:2 "Like newborn babies, crave spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation." As a new or baby Christian, we have to be "fed" God's word just as a baby is fed. But babies grow and soon are able to feed themselves, so you must grow also. You must learn how to study and understand God's word and get the most out of it. With out it your Christian life will not grow, but rather begin to starve and shrivel away. Your soul will become vulnerable to the attacks of Satan. God's word is food for you soul. The next few lessons will give you some help in learning how to feed yourself.

As Christians we are in a race (*I Corinthians 9:24*) and just as Wheaties is the "Breakfast of earthly Champions", God's word is the "Breakfast of the Spiritual Champion". Don't allow your soul to starve, feed it a healthy helping of God's word daily.

Check out these verses:

I Peter 2:2

Jeremiah 15:16

I Corinthians 9:24 - 27

Psalms 119:33 - 48

Lesson #9

"Preparing for the Meal"

Reading the word of God is a lot like sitting down with God for dinner. There are 3 stages to a meal with someone as important as God. Today we will look at stage #1, "The Preparation".

Just for fun, let's say the President called you up and asked you to dine with him at the White House. Would you go without any preparation or would you take sometime to get cleaned up, find some nice clothes, and present yourself as well as possible? I hope you would try to make a good impression. The same is true about our dinner with God; we must present ourselves humbly before God. The difference is rather than physical preparation for God, we must prepare our minds.

The first step is to purify your mind and soul. We know that unconfessed sins act as a barrier between you and God (*Isaiah 59:1 - 2*). So in order to dine with God you must knock down that wall by repenting you sins.

Secondly, we must open our minds to the Holy Spirit. *"But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you everything I have said."* *John 14:26*. This is a promise from Jesus that the Holy Spirit will be here to help us in our Bible study and growth. Make your mind receptive to what God is going to teach you, and believe that the Holy Spirit will help you understand and remember it.

Finally praise God for what he is about to teach you. Let God know you expect to learn something each time you read His Word. God will use the Spirit to teach you, it's a promise from God. As long as you want to learn and have purified and opened your mind, God will be sure to teach you. Once prepared it is time to dine with God.

Check out these verses:

John 14:26

Isaiah 59:1 - 2

I John 1:9

Psalms 46:10

Psalms 119:49 - 64

Lesson #10

"The Meal"

Okay, so you have prepared yourself for this meal with God. Now it's time to eat. I know your parents taught you not to play with your food. But when it's spiritual food it's okay, trust me.

The "eating" of the word requires you to pick it apart and figure out exactly what's in it. If the Bible was food I would have no problem devouring it, but it's not. The Word is made up of sentences and key nouns and verbs. Let me tell you a little secret, English has never been one of my strong points. I've never been real big on grammar, punctuation, spelling and all that stuff. Fortunately God has given us the Holy Spirit to help in picking apart the scripture and understanding what it has to say.

How do you begin to read the Bible and understand it? Well, most passages contain either a promise or command or both, so begin by looking for that. Let's look at *Psalm 23:1 - 3* "*The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake*". What is the promise or command? And how does it relate to your life? Well, there is a promise that God will watch over us and provide for our needs both physical and spiritual.

The passage refers to a Shepherd, pastures and quiet waters. These things may not apply to your life, but the key to understanding scripture is to reword the passage in away that it will relate to you. Allow the Holy Spirit to show you what God is trying to tell you. In this particular passage, David is writing about how God cares for each of us as a Shepherd cares for his sheep. We could reword this verse to say "The Lord is my provider, I shall not want. He gives me food, clothing, and shelter and keeps me out of danger. He comforts me and shows me His will for my life." Or something like that.

Remember, God has given us the Holy Spirit to help us understand the word. It is important to allow the Holy Spirit to show you what God wants you to learn form the word. Don't be intimidated by the word, but rather read it and believe God will teach you something each time you open the Bible and study it.

Check out these verses:

Psalm 23

John 14:26

Proverbs 3:5 - 6

Psalm 119:65 - 80

Lesson #11

"Digesting of the Meal"

Have you ever thought about how amazing our bodies are? We are able to put food in our mouths, chew it up, swallow it, and then turn it into energy and flesh. The food we eat really wouldn't do us any good if our bodies didn't use it. The same goes for the spiritual food you "eat." When you read the word, you feed your soul, but it doesn't benefit you until you use it.

Today we are going to look at digesting the word through application to your life. *"Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it" Luke 11:28.* Once the Holy Spirit has shown you the promise or command God is trying to communicate to you, use it in your life. Figure out the area of your life that God is saying needs growth. Maybe it's a specific sin or temptation, or maybe a fear or concern you have. What ever it is, take what you learned in the word and apply it to that area of your life.

Make a plan as to what area of your life God is speaking to and how you will use what you learned to change that area. As Christians our goal should be to take what we learn from God and change our lives until we are like Christ. That may seem like a tall order but God will help you. *"I can do everything through Him who gives me strength" Philippians 4:13.*

When God commands you to change an area of your life it is to your benefit to listen and act. *Luke 6:46 - 49* is an illustration, told by Jesus, of how important it is to do what our Lord asks. If you want your spiritual life to grow you must apply what you learn, otherwise your soul will starve just as your body would if you didn't digest your food.

Check out these verses:

Luke 11:28

Luke 6:46 - 49

James 1:22 - 25

Philippians 4:13

Psalms 119:81 - 96

Lesson #12

"Excuses"

"Why do you call me Lord, Lord and do not do what I say?" Luke 6:46. Those words of Jesus are far to often directed at each of us. We have been looking at the importance of prayer and Bible study if you are to grow as a Christian and know God's will for your life. Yet many of you will find yourselves struggling to make a commitment of time to God, each day. Rather than making time for our Christian growth, we find it easier to make excuses. Let's look at some typical excuses.

"I'm already so busy." This is common one, but the real issue isn't how busy you are, but rather your priorities. You can find time to watch TV or talk to friends, but you can't find time for you Lord and Savior? Make time and God will bless you!

"I don't know how." Hopefully the past lesson's have solved that. If not, consult a pastor, Sunday School teacher, or youth group for more help. Remember God has sent the Holy Spirit to teach you; claim that promise. (*John 14:26*)

"The Bible doesn't apply to my life." At first you may have a hard time understanding the Word. But anyone who has opened his or her heart to the Holy Spirit's guidance has the best teacher available. God provided the Holy Spirit to reveal His truths to you. Remember look for the promise or command, and for the key words. The Holy Spirit WILL relate it to your life!

"I can't fit it into my schedule." A quiet time isn't convenient, but it is essential to your growth as a Christian. If you truly want to grow as a Christian you'll make time, if you don't care you'll make excuses. May the Lord grant you the discipline and desire to spend time in prayer and Bible study each day.

Check out these verses;

II Peter 3:18

Luke 6:46

Psalm 34

Lesson #13

"The Fruit of the Spirit"

"No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit.... The good man brings good things out of the goodness stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil out of the evil stored up in his heart." Luke 6:43-45

It's a pretty basic concept, one we see every day. What you think and believe dictates how you behave. As Christians we have the old sinful nature that we are trying to destroy, and the new creature, created through Christ, that we are trying to be. The problem is that these "personalities" are in constant conflict with each other, *"For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want."* Galatians 5:17

In verse 16 of Galatians 5 we read *"Live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature."* So, how do we live by the Spirit? Well, if we read further in Galatians 5 we read about the things not to do. But living in the Spirit is more than a list of "Don'ts", it's about replacing the desires of the sinful nature with things that glorify God. As a growing Christian you are to produce "fruit". Jesus says *"I am the vine, you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit."* John 15:5

What is this fruit? *Galatians 5:22-23* tells us, *"But the Fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control."* As a growing Christian you need to cultivate these qualities of character. As a Christian you have the Spirit within you, and therefore the fruit. All you need to do now is water the seeds and allow them to grow. You cultivate the seeds by praying and studying God's Word, and then applying it to your life. Being a Christian is about doing, you must apply what God shows you in His Word.

God created us, Jesus died for us, and the Holy Spirit was sent to help us understand and apply all that God has in store for us. The fruit of the Spirit is the result of allowing the Holy Spirit to abide in your life and help you on your way down the path of growth as a Christian.

Check out these verses:

Luke 6:43- 45

Galatians 5:16- 26

John 15:5

Hebrews 9:14

Lesson #14

"Love"

The first part of the Fruit of the Spirit is love. What many people know as love, really isn't love at all, but rather some physically pleasing substitute. Once Christ was asked what the greatest commandment was and he replied, "*Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself.*" *Matthew 22:37- 39*

So when Jesus says to love, what does He mean? In *I Corinthians 13:4- 8* we find God's definition of love. "*Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil, but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.*" If we look at God's definition of love, and considering the two greatest commandments, we as Christians have some pretty high standards to live up to. Love will never be easy, but if you are going to live in the Spirit it is the foundation for the fruit you are to bear. Without love every aspect of Christian life is impossible and meaningless.

How do you cultivate love in your life? The first step is to obey the Greatest Commandment, to love God with all your heart, soul, and mind. Make God the center-point of your entire life, put nothing before Him and you will have obeyed the Greatest Commandment.

The second Greatest Commandment I find harder than the first. It's easy to love God. He has given me so much and is always there when I need Him. But to love every person I meet is something I struggle with. Face it we all have our enemies, those people that for whatever reason we don't want to have anything to do with. Guess what God wants us to love even our enemies. Look at *Matthew 5:44*, and *Luke 6:27,35*.

As humans it is almost impossible to love everyone, but as Christians we are more than just human, because we have God to help us in all we do. (*Philippians 4:13*) Here is my challenge to you. Find that one person you really can't stand to be around, and ask God to love that person through you, be sincere about it. Then go and spend some time with that person, allow God to work in you and help you love your enemies. Soon your enemies will disappear and as you look around you will find yourself surrounded by new friends. God loved you despite your sin, now give God a chance to love others the same way through you.

Once you have allowed love to grow in your life, you are ready to work on other parts of the Fruit of the Spirit. Remember to love God more than anything, and to love others like yourself are the two greatest commandments. If you live by those everything else will fall into place. Read through *I Corinthians 13:4 - 8* again and see if you are loving God and others with God's kind of love. If you're not begin working on that today.

Check out these verses:

I Corinthians 13:4 -8

Matthew 5:44

Matthew 22: 37- 39

Luke 6:27 and 35

Lesson #15

"Joy"

Joy, is the second part of the fruit we are to be bearing. Joy is much like love in that as humans it is impossible to love everyone or to be joyous on all occasions, but as Christians we have the power of God through the Holy Spirit to help us.

Joy and happiness are often confused. Although joy brings us happiness, happiness is fleeting, but joy is everlasting. How do we find true joy? In *John 15:9- 11* Jesus tells His disciples how to experience joy. *"As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Fathers commands and remain in His love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete."* If we want our joy to be complete we must remain in God's love by obeying what He commands us to do. There's that love again, God's love for us provides us with reason to be joyful.

Don't confuse joy with happiness, being joyful doesn't mean you will always be happy. Joy means that you never have to feel overwhelmed by sadness or worry. *II Corinthians 6:10* tells us that through the power of God we can be *"Sorrowful, yet always rejoicing."* We are told a number of times to be joyful in all things, even when faced with trials or persecution (*James 1:2, I Thessalonians 1:6*). In *II Corinthians 7:4* Paul writes *"In all our troubles my joy knows no bounds."* And in *Philippians 4:4* Paul writes *"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!"*

So, what is so great that it causes us to be so joyful? *Acts 14:17* tells us, *"He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their season, He provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy."* Look around at all God does for us each day, it's amazing! *"Though you have not seen Him, you love Him; and even though you do not see Him now, you believe in Him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls."* *I Peter 1:8* Not only do we have all of God's creation and provision to give us reason to be joyful, but we also have a great reward to look forward to, Eternal Life. *"Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in Heaven," Matthew 5:12.* No matter how bad things get as a child of God you always have eternal life to look forward to.

Christians can be joyful in all things, because we have a God who cares for us, and who has given us eternal life.

Check out these verses:

Matthew 5:12

John 15:9- 11

I Peter 1:8

Acts 14:17

Philippians 4:4

II Corinthians 7:4

II Corinthians 6:10

James 1:2

I Thessalonians 1:6

Lesson #16

"Peace"

If you have mastered the growth of love and joy in your life, the third part of the fruit will just naturally develop. There are actually two aspects of peace. There is peace with others, and peace within yourself. If you have begun to love others as yourself then establishing peace with them will be a logical step. In *Matthew 5:9*, Jesus tells us "*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.*" We are also told to "*Be at peace with each other,*" *Mark 9:50* and in *I Corinthians 7:15*. Paul writes "*God has called us to live in Peace.*"

We as Christians are to live at peace with other human beings. So if we are loving others as ourselves, and loving our enemies, living in peace should be easy. *Proverbs 12:20* tells us "*There is deceit in the hearts of those who plot evil, but joy for those who promote peace.*" See how those fruits cultivate each other. By promoting peace we find joy, and by having joy we can be at peace about any trials in our lives. In *Micah 5:5* we read "*He will be their peace.*" God will be our peace. In *John 16:33*, Jesus tells us "*I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart I have overcome the world.*" He also tells us "*Peace I leave with you my peace I give you. I do not give as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not be afraid,*" *John 14:27*. Christ has promised us peace. He tells us to be at peace and not to be afraid because , he has already beaten this world for us.

To find peace among men we must love one another with God's love. By being a peacemaker you will find joy, and with true joy you will find the peace that Christ has promised us despite our troubles. "*Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present you requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus,*" *Philippians 4:6-7*. "*Now may the Lord of Peace himself, give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you,*" *II Thessalonians 3:16*.

Check out these verses:

II Thessalonians 3:16

Philippians 4:6-7

John 14:27

John 16:33

I Corinthians 7:15

Proverbs 12:20

Mark 9:50

Matthew 5:9

Lesson #17

"Patience"

"The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance," II Peter 3:9

This verse displays both aspects of patience. First of all patience in waiting for God's timing, and secondly in dealing with others as God deals with us.

Let's look at patience with others first. Stop and think how you deal with people that irritate you. Do you love them unconditionally? Love is patient (*I Corinthians 13:14*), or do you lose your cool and treat them in a way unbecoming to a believer? I know quite often I'm not as patient with others as I should be. Think about what life would be like if God treated us with the same patience we have for fellow man. Fortunately God is patient with us, and for that we should be thankful. We are commanded many times to be patient with others. (*Proverbs 14:29, 15:18, 16:32, James 1:19 - 20*) *Proverbs 19:11* tells us "A man's wisdom gives him patience, it is to his glory to overlook an offense." This verse is so true, if we were to take a second and look at a situation before we blow - up. Often we would realize how trivial it really is and save ourselves the stress of taking it any further. Be patient with others, it is God's will to love one another and love is patient.

The second aspect of patience has to do with waiting for God's timing. *II Peter 3:9* says, "The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness." I think the key phrase here is "as some understand slowness". We are living in a fast paced society. We can cook food in a matter of seconds, we can travel around the world in a matter of hours, everything happens so fast. Patience is a lost virtue in our society, we all want things now and don't want to wait for tomorrow. But God doesn't work that way. He does things on His own time, and rightly so He created time anyway. Right?

In *Romans 8:22-27* we read how we must wait patiently for our adoption into the Kingdom of God, but that it is our reward to come at the time God sees fit. So we must wait and hope for what we don't yet have. We also read in these verses how the Holy Spirit will help us see God's will as well as help us ask for help. God has a plan for your life. He is all knowing and all powerful, so He knows what is best for you and when, all you have to do is be willing to follow His will and be patient as He reveals His plan according to His timing not ours.

Waiting for God is something I've struggled with many times over the past few years. Many times I thought that God was taking too long so I would rush into decisions. But I soon found out that by rushing God I was just creating more problems for myself. You can't make a plan for your life and run with it and expect God to keep up. Let God show you the paths you must take and go along at His pace. Be patient as a Christian you have all eternity to live, don't rush God.

Here are a few things to think about-

-Do you treat others with the same patience that God has shown you?

-God created time so let Him set the pace of your life He knows better than any of us.

-God knows everything including the future, so doesn't it make sense to follow His will rather than your own blind desires?

"Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for Him. Do not fret when men succeed in their ways.....Refrain from anger and turn from wrath, do not fret it only leads to evil. For evil men will be cut off but those who hope in the Lord will inherit the earth." Psalm 37:7-9

Check out these verses:

II Peter 3:9
I Corinthians 13:4
Proverbs 14:29, 15:18, 16:32, 19:11
Romans 8:22-27
Psalm 37:1-9

Lesson #18

"Kindness"

"Consider the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in His kindness." Romans 11:22

Today we will look at kindness. As we read in *Romans 11:22*, we are to remain in God's kindness. How do we accomplish that? Well, the Word is full of references to kindness, such as:

-*"An anxious heart wears a man down, but a kind word cheers him up." Proverbs 12:25*

-*"He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God." Proverbs 14:31*

-*"He who is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and He will reward him for what he has done." Proverbs 19:17*

-*"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other just as in Christ God forgave you." Ephesians 4:32*

-*"Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else." I Thessalonians 5:15*

Kindness could also be called generosity. To be kind is to be willing to give without expecting something in return. In *Luke 6:35* Jesus tells us *"Love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the most High, because He is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked."* Kindness is giving a smile, a kind word, some spare change, or even forgiveness, without expecting anything in return. Are you kind to those you meet each day?

A few acts of kindness to try-

-Reach out to that person that nobody really likes.

-Volunteer some time to a local charity or church group that helps the needy.

-Thank someone who helps you daily, but is usually unappreciated.

Ex. a teacher, pastor, police officer, etc.

-Spend time helping an enemy and expect nothing in return.

Kindness is putting your love to the test, try it. *"A kind man benefits himself, a cruel man brings trouble on himself." Proverbs 11:17*

Check out these verses:

Romans 11:22

Proverbs 12:25, 14:31, 19:17, 11:17

I Thessalonians 5:15

Luke 6:35

Lesson #19

"Goodness"

Goodness is love in action. If you are going to allow goodness to grow in your life you must take all the characteristics of love and put them to work in your life. Just as an apple tree can grow from one little seed, love can grow from love if it is put to action.

In Colossians 3:14 we are told, "Over all these things put on love, which binds them all together in unity." We are to "put on" love, in other words surround ourselves in love. By doing that you display all of what love is according to *I Corinthians 13:4-8*. Love is the foundation of the Christian life, but it is useless until it is put into action through goodness.

Goodness is doing good works in order to show love to those around us. But be careful, sometimes we get so caught up in doing good that we forget the reason for our actions. Good works without God are nothing. Take the word GOOD, now remove the G-O-D. What's left? A big zero right? Get the point? Good works need to be done to glorify God, not to make you look good to others.

True goodness is impossible with out the Holy Spirit working in your life. What we are studying is the Fruit of the Spirit, in other words characteristics the Spirit will cultivate in your life, if you allow it. Anybody can be good, but to truly show goodness you must portray all aspects of God's love to those around you. This is impossible for man alone, but with the Spirit in your life your works will be done to glorify God and your good works will never add up to a zero.

Check out these verses:

Colossians 3:14

Ephesians 5:9

I Corinthians 13:4-8

Lesson #20

"Faithfulness"

As a Christian you have begun a relationship with Christ, and as with any relationship it is important to remain committed to what you started. Faith is the foundation of your salvation, you heard the message of salvation and you believed that Christ shed His blood and died on the cross to cleanse you of sin, and then rose again in order to be a living savior for all mankind. In *Hebrews 11:1* we read, *"Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see."* Without seeing any physical proof you believed God's word and therefore demonstrated faith. *"For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did, but the message they heard was of no value to them, because they did not combine it with faith."* Faith is the key to your salvation, as well as the key to your spiritual growth.

You must continue to allow your faith in God to grow. Faithfulness means to be full of faith, faith in what God can do, faith in God's commands, and faith in the fact that there is a reward waiting for all who are faithful in their relationship with Christ. *"We do not want to become lazy, but to imitate those, who through faith and patience, inherit what has been promised."* *Hebrews 6:12.*

Being faithful is to believe in God with all your heart, but it also means to remain committed to what you started that day you decided to become a Christian. It is so important to allow your faith to grow and to also remain committed in your Christian growth. On that day that we finally meet our heavenly father I pray that He will greet each one of you with the words, *"Well done, good and faithful servant.....come and share your master's happiness."* *Matthew 25:21* Are you still faithful to God? That is a question I hope you are able to answer with a confident and enthusiastic YES!

Check out these verses:

Matthew 25:21

Hebrews 11:1, 4:2

Revelation 13:10

Psalms 101:3

Deuteronomy 6:5

I Thessalonians 2:13

Lesson #21

"Gentleness"

When I'm out on the road doing my bicycle stunt shows I meet many people. I try to share my faith with them both through the show and when we talk after. Unfortunately at times I've turned people off to God's word, because I didn't use gentleness. As Christians we know the truths of the Word, and sometimes when sharing them we become somewhat proud; kind of an "I'm better than you" thing. In I Peter we are warned of this, *"But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give a reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect."*

When dealing with other Christians or non-believers we need to be careful how we handle the situation. *"Whoever claims to live in Christ must walk as Jesus did."* I John 2:6 So how did Jesus act? In His own words, *"I am gentle and humble in heart."* Matthew 11:29 Gentleness is an alteration to your attitude, in *Philippians 2:5-11* we find the kind of attitude to develop. *"Your attitude should be the same as that of Jesus Christ. Who being in very nature, God, didn't consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man He humbled Himself and became obedient to death even death on the cross! Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord to the Glory of God the Father."* Christ was the Son of God, yet He came to earth, took on human form, and then as a servant died for each of us. In return God gave Him the name that every creature knows to be Lord. As Christians we who are only human must take on the humble servant attitude that Christ, the Son of God, displayed here on earth. An attitude of a humble servant is the key to sharing God's word without turning people off. We are told to *"let your gentleness be evident to all, the Lord is near."* *Philippians 4:5* By dealing with people gently, rather than pushing them around you will show the world what Christ was really like as He walked on this earth. Meekness doesn't mean weakness. Don't back down from your convictions, just share them in a way that is respectful and won't turn others off to the Word.

Jesus said, *"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth."* *Matthew 5:5*

Check out these verses:

Matthew 5:5

Psalm 37:11

John 13:15

Philippians 4:5, 2:5

I John 2:6

I Peter 3:15

Lesson #22

"Self Control"

When I was a young'n I remember learning about the Fruit of the Spirit in Sunday School. When we were learning about self control there was a picture of a kid kicking a door and hurting his foot. I'm not sure why I remember that, but it relates to this lesson so I thought I'd share it. Self control is the part of the fruit that deals with saying "No" when tempted to do something that doesn't reflect the results of a Spirit filled life.

"For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self controlled , up-right and godly lives in this present age." Titus 2:11-12 God's grace has given us forgiveness of sin and taught us to resist sin, but as humans we still struggle with the desires of the flesh. As Christians we are to turn from sin. *"Therefore prepare your minds for action, be self controlled, set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Christ Jesus is revealed. As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as He who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy." I Peter 1:13-16*

As God's children we must be obedient to him, which can be difficult when Satan goes poking his nose into your life. We are warned about the devil *in I Peter 5:8-9, "Be self controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith."* As humans we are easy targets for Satan. He waits for a time of weakness and then attacks. But in *II Timothy 4:17* we read that as Christians we have God's strength to help us. *"But the Lord stood at my side and gave my strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was delivered from the lions mouth."*

As Christians we are living, walking, talking Bibles for the world to see. Your actions show the world what a Christian is like. Unfortunately sometimes we all slip, and that's what the world notices. For some reason one mistake can destroy an entire life of righteousness, the negatives are always noticed before the positives. This is why it is so very important to allow the Spirit to help you with self control. Remember that when you are feeling weak the devil will try to attack, but there is help and strength available from God, all you have to do is ask for help and God will see that you are delivered from temptation. I'm a big fan of the Star Wars movies; in Empire Strikes Back, Yoda tells Luke, "Control, control, you must learn control!" This is also true in your Christian life you must learn to control your emotions and desires.

Words of wisdom from Proverbs, *"Like a city whose walls are broken down is a man who lacks self control." Proverbs 25:28* Without self control you will be vulnerable to all kinds of attacks.

Check out these verses:

Proverbs 25:28

II Timothy 4:17

I Peter 5:8-9, 1:13-16

Titus 2:11-12, 1:8

Lesson #23

"Just say Yes"

Everyday we are faced with decisions. We've been taught to say "No" to drugs and alcohol, to say "No" to violence and sex. Everywhere we turn there is something that we are not to be doing. But in the Word we find that it isn't so much what we don't do, but more what we do.

Anyone can be "good", but as Christians we need to do more. We need to cultivate The Fruit of the Spirit in our lives. By living in the Spirit we will become a light to the world as commanded in *Matthew 5:14-16*. *"You are the light of the world.....let your light shine before all men that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."*

Satan will tempt you to sin, in an attempt to dim your light so to speak, and when that happens you need to resist him. *"Submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you."* *James 4:7*. If you spend your time concentrating on the good things as *Philippians 4:8-9* tells us the devil won't be able to find openings for temptation. *"Finally brothers whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable, if anything is excellent or praiseworthy- think about such things..... put it into practice, and the God of peace will be with you."* Satan tempts us through our own thoughts and desires, so by concentrating on the good things we defeat him before he has a chance to tempt us. By cultivating the Fruit of the Spirit you leave no room for sin or evil desires in your life.

So often we are told we can't do this, or we can't do that. But rather than dwell on the negative, let's show the world that being a Christian isn't about a list of don'ts, but rather replacing sin with love, joy, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control. Through the Spirit we will be able to resist the attacks of Satan. If you resist him in Jesus' name he will run away from the power you have by being a dynamic, growing Christian.

Check out these verses:

Matthew 5:14-16

James 4:7

Philippians 4:8-9

Lesson #24

"Take a Stand"

Peer pressure- you hear about it everyday. It's a term used almost to often. As Christians peer pressure is very relevant to your walk down the narrow path. *"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life and only a few find it."* Matthew 7:13-14

You will be faced with distractions and temptations to get you on the "wide road". Clothes, entertainment, parties, etc.; these are all distractions Satan uses to pull you off the path of righteousness. As humans we naturally want to "fit-in" with those around us, that desire can create a problem. As Christians we are not to be like those around us. *"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is- His good, pleasing, and perfect will."* Romans 12:2.

The world's way is to put your own pride, desires, and gratification's first. They are seeking themselves. As a Christian you are to seek the kingdom of God first (*Matt 6:33*). Satan will use your peers to drag you down. We all have a fear of not belonging and Satan will use that to get you away from God's will. That's why it is so important to know God's word. The Bible can help you in your weak moments.

It is important to develop relationships with other Christians in order to fill that need of belonging.

Don't allow your peers to pressure you into following the broad road, it only leads to death. Take a stand, be strong in God and stay on the narrow path. It may be lonely, but it leads to life. *"Press on toward the goal to win the prize"* *Philippians 3:14*.

When times get tough, remember the promise of *Philippians 4:13*, *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."*

Check out these verses:

Philippians 3:1

Philippians 4:13

Romans 12:2

Matthew 6:33

Matthew 7:13 - 14

Lesson #25

"Skunks and Roses"

My Dad says, "You can't run with the skunks and come out smelling like a rose." That little saying holds a big truth. Like it or not, your friends or the people you associate with have a tremendous impact on your actions and thoughts. We all have a natural urge to be with other people. Which is important, but they must be people that won't cause you to compromise your beliefs or values just to fit in.

Psalm 1:1 - 2 states "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers, but his delight is in the Law of the Lord and on his law he meditates day and night."

God has a definite plan for your life, and if you are to experience it fully you must not allow unbelievers to impact your thoughts or actions.

There was a time when I believed I was strong enough to avoid being affected negatively by the people around me, but guess what, I was wrong. No matter how strong you think you are, it is always easier for your friends to drag you down, then it is for you to bring them up. To avoid being brought down, *Psalm 1:1 - 2* tells us to avoid the advice of non-believers. This doesn't mean to be stuck-up and avoid them completely. Rather associate with them, but don't develop strong relationships. Jesus spent time with the evil of the land and was criticized for it, but as he said in *Matthew 9:12* "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but the sinners,"

We need to reach out to the sinners as Christ did, but be careful not to let them drag you down. Your friends should be of the same mind as you. *Proverbs 27:19* says "A mirror reflects a man's face, but what he is really like is shown by the kind of friends he chooses."

Think about your friends. Do they reflect the type of person God wants you to be?

Check out these verses

Proverbs 27:19

Psalms 1:1 - 2

I Corinthians 15:33

Matthew 9:12

Lesson #26

"Christian Friends"

As you go through life you will associate with non-believers, it is inevitable. That's important in order to spread God's word. But it is also important to develop friendships with others who are excited about living for Christ.

Proverbs 27:17 says "As iron sharpens iron. So one man sharpens another." We've discussed how your friends can effect you. With that in mind you can see how important it is to have friends to help you in your Christian growth.

"Two are better than one, because they have a good return on their work. If one falls down his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up!" Ecclesiastics 4:9 - 10.

You will run into rough times, in order to make it through you need other Christians to lean on. And at times you will need to be there for someone else to lean on. *"Carry each others burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ," Galatians 6:2.*

How do you find Christian friends? Well, start by praying. God wants you to develop relationships with other Christians. Pray that he will help you meet the right people. Pray that he will give you the courage to go out and look for other Christians. You have to look in the right places as well. You won't find fish in the clouds, or birds on the ocean bottom. If you are looking for Christian friends, look for them in places where God would have you be. If you find someone in a bar drinking, chances are they won't make a good Christian friend.

God has commanded us to develop relationships with Christians. So through prayer and a little effort on your part, God will bring the right people into you life. Believe God will do it and be sincere in your effort and you will make Christian friends.

"The one who calls you is faithful and will do it," I Thessalonians 5:24.

Check out these verses;

I Thessalonians 5:24

Galatians 6:2

Proverbs 27:17

Ecclesiastics 4:9 - 10

Lesson #27

"Persecution"

I'm 22 years old and still ride a little bike. I don't need to tell you that this fact has led to ridicule from all sorts of people. But you know, people can talk all they want, because I love riding my bike. Because I've stuck with it I can now use my bike to spread God's word. I've learned from experience that you will be better off if you accept the fact that some people will dislike you no matter what. Christ experienced all kinds of persecution, and as a Christian you can expect some too. *In John 15:19 - 21, Jesus tells us this, "If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. Remember the words I spoke to you: No servant is greater than his master! If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the one who sent me."* The world naturally hates Christ and Christians because it is controlled by Satan (Luke 4:5 - 6). So as Christians we can expect to be rejected by unbelievers. They don't know God or His Word, and ignorance always leads to hate.

Never fear though because Jesus is here. *"All men will hate you because of me. But not a hair on your head will perish. By standing firm you will gain life," Luke 21:17 - 19.* God will be by your side through all persecution, and by standing firm in your faith you will have eternal life.

Expect the world to hate you and expect God to love and protect you. In the end you will have eternal life. *In John 15:18, Jesus said "If the world hates you keep in mind it hated me first."*

Check out these verses:

John 15:18 - 21

Luke 21:17 - 19

Philippians 1:12 - 29

Psalm 23

Lesson #28

"The Reward"

Over the past few weeks you have learned what it takes to become a fruitful Christian and what to expect from the Word. It takes commitment to spend time growing. It requires going off on your own to be a little different from the world. It means persecution from all sides.

Some of you may be thinking "If I have to go through all that, forget it!" If you are thinking that, wait one second. You will have to endure some hardship, but Christ is always there to talk to. If you stick with it and follow God's will your reward will make it all worthwhile. *"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you, and falsely accuse you because of me. Rejoice and be glad because great is your reward in heaven."* Matthew 5:10-12. Jesus promises that despite our hardships we will have a great reward in heaven. I speak from experience when I say "having Christ in your life is more important than anything this old world can offer."

Without Christ there is no chance to succeed in life and without him you are destined for eternal death. Jesus lays it out in *Revelations 22:12 - 15* "Behold I am coming soon! My reward is with me and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last. The beginning and the end. Blessed are those who wash their robes that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood."

Christ is coming soon. You have a choice; endure some hardship here on earth and receive eternal life. Or take the easy road and experience eternal death.

It's up to you. As for me, I will follow Christ and look forward to His return. Striving toward the goal with prayer and Bible study.

Check out these verses:

Matthew 5:10 - 12

Revelations 22:12 - 21

Filename: Growth Book
Directory: D:\Chaos\Website 4_2005\newsletter files
Template: C:\Documents and Settings\Jeremiah\Application
Data\Microsoft\Templates\Normal.dot
Title: Introduction
Subject:
Author: Academic Computing
Keywords:
Comments:
Creation Date: 10/16/1998 9:55:00 AM
Change Number: 27
Last Saved On: 3/28/2007 3:08:00 PM
Last Saved By: Jeremiah Anderson
Total Editing Time: 497 Minutes
Last Printed On: 3/28/2007 3:26:00 PM
As of Last Complete Printing
Number of Pages: 31
Number of Words: 9,442 (approx.)
Number of Characters: 53,821 (approx.)