

2 • CHANGING “SELF” GOD’S WAY

- As a Believer in Jesus Christ, you will face constant temptations to be self-centered. Self-centeredness leads to *thoughts, words, and actions* that are devastating to your walk with the Lord. Because self-satisfying thoughts, words, and actions characterized your old life apart from Christ, these sins must be confessed and overcome if you are to mature as a child of God. As a “new creation” you have the indwelling Spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit, to enable you to understand the Word of God and His power to live God’s way.
- We hope this study will help you to understand God’s plan for your life. We pray you will no longer lean on your own understanding, but rather choose God’s way.

*Matthew 5:6 ~ Jesus said:
“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.”*

- We encourage you to “honestly examine yourself in the light of God’s Word” so that you will mature spiritually, and will gain the peace that surpasses understanding.

*Matthew 6:33 KJV ~ Jesus said:
“But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness;
and all these things shall be added unto you.”*

- Be filled with “His righteousness” and receive “the kingdom of God” in your present and *eternal* life!

*Proverbs 28:13
He who conceals his sins does not prosper,
but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.*



May God richly bless you as you seek to die to “self” and live for Him!

The Most Excellent Way ~ “Becoming GOD-Dependent”

I. GOD’S VIEW OF MAN’S WAY

- **Proverbs 11:2** ~ *When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom.*
- **Proverbs 14:12** ~ *There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.*
- **Proverbs 30:32** ~ *“If you have played the fool and exalted yourself, or if you have planned evil, clap your hand over your mouth!”*
- **Isaiah 5:20-21** ~ *Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter. Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight.*
- **Matthew 23:12** ~ *For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.*
- **Luke 9:24** ~ *For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for Me will save it.*
- **I Corinthians 1:20** ~ *Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?*
- **I Corinthians 1:25** ~ *For the foolishness of God is wiser than man’s wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man’s strength.*
- **I Corinthians 1:27** ~ *But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.*
- **I Corinthians 10:12** ~ *So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall!*
- **II Timothy 3:2, 6-7** ~ *People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, . . . They are the kind who worm their way into homes and gain control over weak-willed women, who are loaded down with sins and are swayed by all kinds of evil desires, always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth.*
- **James 4:6** ~ *But He gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”*
- **II Peter 2:1-3** ~ *But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves. Many will follow their shameful ways and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. In their greed these teachers will exploit you with stories they have made up. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping.*

II. GOD’S VIEW OF “SELF”

A. No one hates himself; rather, he loves, cherishes, and nourishes himself:

- *Matthew 22:39 ~ And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’*
- *Ephesians 5:29 ~ After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church—*

B. Man’s problem is that he pays too much attention to self, not too little:

- *Luke 9:24 ~ [Jesus said:] For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it.*
- *Philippians 2:19–21 ~ I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. I have no one else like him, who takes a genuine interest in your welfare. For everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ.*
- *II Timothy 3:1-5 ~ But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God—having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them.*

C. A proper view of self comes from an understanding of who you are in Christ:

- *Romans 8:14-17 ~ Because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by Him we cry, <“Abba,> Father.” The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in His sufferings in order that we may also share in His glory.*
- *Ephesians 1:3-14 ~ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.
⁴For He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight. In love ⁵He predestined us to be adopted as His sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with His pleasure and will—
⁶To the praise of His glorious grace, which He has freely given us in the One He loves.
⁷In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace
⁸That He lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding.
⁹And He made known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Christ,
¹⁰To be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment—to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.
¹¹In Him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of Him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of His will,
¹²In order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of His glory.
¹³And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in Him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit,
¹⁴Who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of His glory.*

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- *Colossians 2:9-12 ~ For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, And you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority. In Him you were also circumcised, in the **putting off of the sinful nature**, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, Having been buried with Him in baptism and raised with Him through your faith in the power of God, who raised Him from the dead.*
- *I Peter 2:9-10 ~ But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.*

D. As a child of God you have the assurance that your Heavenly Father, out of His grace and mercy, is actively involved in your life:

- *Philippians 1:6 ~ Being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.*
- *Philippians 2:13 ~ For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose.*
- *II Peter 1:3-4 ~ His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these He has given us His very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.*

E. You have His assurance in spite of your natural inadequacies:

- *Psalms 62:9 ~ Lowborn men are but a breath, the highborn are but a lie; if weighed on a balance, they are nothing; together they are only a breath.*
- *Isaiah 64:6 ~ All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.*
- *John 15:4 ~ Remain in Me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in Me.*
- *II Corinthians 3:5 ~ Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God.*

F. While you are totally inadequate to live God’s way in your own strength, God has chosen you to be a testimony of His power to the world:

- *I Corinthians 1:26-31 ~ Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, So that no one may boast before Him. It is because of Him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God--that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: “Let him who boasts boast in the Lord.”*

G. God gives you a purpose for living by conforming you into the image of Christ:

- *Matthew 5:16 ~ In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.*
- *Romans 8:28-29 ~ And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brothers.*
- *II Corinthians 5:17-20 ~ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: That God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And He has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.*
- *Ephesians 2:10 ~ For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

H. God's view concerning “self” emphasizes the need for change in accordance with His Word. Instead of a preoccupation with self in its varied forms, God's plan focuses on a denial of self in order to please Him and be a blessing to others:

- *Ecclesiastes 7:20 ~ There is not a righteous man on earth who does what is right and never sins.*
- *Luke 9:23-24 ~ Then He said to them all: “If anyone would come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it.”*
- *Romans 1:20-21 ~ For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—His eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. For although they knew God, they neither glorified Him as God nor gave thanks to Him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.*
- *Romans 3:9-18 ~ What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin.*
 - ¹⁰*As it is written: “There is no one righteous, not even one;*
 - ¹¹*There is no one who understands, no one who seeks God.*
 - ¹²*All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.*
 - ¹³*Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit.” “The poison of vipers is on their lips.*
 - ¹⁴*Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.*
 - ¹⁵*Their feet are swift to shed blood;*
 - ¹⁶*Ruin and misery mark their ways,*
 - ¹⁷*And the way of peace they do not know.*
 - ¹⁸*There is no fear of God before their eyes.”*
- *Romans 12:1-12 ~ 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.*

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²Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will.

³For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.

⁴Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function,

⁵So in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

⁶We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man’s gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith.

⁷If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach;

⁸If it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

⁹Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.

¹⁰Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.

¹¹Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.

¹²Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

- **I Corinthians 2:14** ~ The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.
- **I Corinthians 3:19** ~ For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight. As it is written: “He catches the wise in their craftiness”; . . .
- **I Corinthians 3:20** ~ And again, “The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile.”
- **II Corinthians 5:17** ~ **Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!**
- **Galatians 2:20** ~ I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.
- **Ephesians 5:8-10** ~ **For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord.**
- **Philippians 3:8-9** ~ What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.
- **Philippians 3:12-14** ~ Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.
- **Hebrews 13:20-21** ~ **May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing His will, and may He work in us what is pleasing to Him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.**

III. MAN’S PREOCCUPATION WITH “SELF”

- A. *Self-belittlement, self-exaltation, and self-pity* all indicate a preoccupation with self. Inordinate attention to self is the exact opposite of God’s commands to love Him and others.**
- B. A self-focus also prohibits the development of a Christ-like servant attitude in you. If you try to save your life by focusing on self, you will reap the consequence; instead of saving your life, you will lose it:**
- *Matthew 10:34-39 ~ [Jesus said:] “Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to turn ‘a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law—‘A man’s enemies will be the members of his own household.’ Anyone who loves his father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me; and anyone who does not take his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.”*
 - *Matthew 22:37-39 ~ Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all you mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”*
 - *Luke 9:23-24 ~ Then He said to them all: “If anyone would come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for Me will save it.*

IV. MAN’S VIEW OF “SELF”

- A. The wisdom of this world teaches that many of your problems stem from a “bad self-image” or “low self-esteem.” The natural man’s wisdom also states that you must learn to love yourself before you can love others, that you must raise your self-esteem, that your “perceived” needs must be met so you can help others, that you must forgive yourself before you can find peace, that you are of infinite worth because of “the god within” you, or that you must “get in touch” with yourself and your feelings before finding fulfillment in living. All of these views are in error, since they conflict with the truth of God’s Word.**
- B. Here are some of man’s mistaken explanations for a poor or low “self-esteem” — circle the ones that apply to you:**

- Poor surroundings
- Unfulfilling work
- Physical handicaps
- Belittlement by others
- Rejection by parents
- Lack of money
- Minimal education
- No respect from others
- Inability to communicate
- Misunderstood
- Slow to learn
- No job opportunities
- Nagging spouse
- Abused as a child
- Poor relationships
- No friends
- I have a disease . . .
- I am a victim of . . .

C. Here are some of man’s futile ways of building up “self” for “high self-esteem” and for gaining “rights.” Circle the ways you have followed:

- Accept myself as I am
- Don’t get mad, get even
- If I feel like it, I do it
- Do whatever it takes to get what I want or think I need
- Learn to love myself
- Discover the “god” within
- Listen to my “child within”
- Forgive myself
- Get in touch with myself
- Pursue self-actualization
- Assert myself
- Talk about my accomplishments
- Be my own person
- Rationalize
- Blameshift
- Set my own boundaries
- Give myself permission to . . .
- Practice visualization
- Consult the stars

V. MAN’S VIEWPOINTS ABOUT “SELF” BEING TAUGHT TODAY:

A. Man’s Way: “You have to love yourself before you can love others.”

CONTRADICTS God’s Way:

- *John 15:12-13 ~ [Jesus said:] My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.*
- *I John 4:7 ~ Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.*

B. Man’s Way: “You are created in God’s image, which makes you inherently worthy of God’s grace.”

CONTRADICTS God’s Way:

- *Romans 5:8 ~ But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*
- *Romans 5:10 ~ For if, when we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to Him through the death of His Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through His life!*
- *I Corinthians 1:26-31 ~ Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before Him. It is because of Him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: “Let him who boasts boast in the Lord.”*

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- C. **Man’s Way:** “Without good ‘self-esteem,’ you cannot solve problems, relate to others effectively, and grow spiritually.”

CONTRADICTS God’s Way:

- *II Corinthians 3:5-6 ~ Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.*
- *Philippians 4:13 ~ I can do everything through Him who gives me strength.*
- *James 4:6 ~ But He gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”*

- D. **Man’s Way:** “The most serious *sin* in the world is the one in which a person says he is unworthy. The need for self-worth is the greatest of all human needs in the world today.”

CONTRADICTS God’s Way:

- *Jeremiah 9:23-24 ~ This is what the LORD says: “Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight,” declares the LORD.*
- *Luke 17:10 ~ So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, “We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.”*

- E. **Man’s Way:** “In order to accomplish anything of significance, positive thinking about one’s self is a necessity.”

CONTRADICTS God’s Way:

- *John 15:4-5 ~ [Jesus said:] “Remain in Me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in Me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in Me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing.”*
- *Philippians 3:7-14 ~ But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ.
⁸What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things.
I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ
⁹And be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.
¹⁰I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death,
¹¹And so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.
¹²Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.
¹³Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead,
¹⁴I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.*

F. Man’s Way: “We should not talk of sin, hell, or eternal separation from God; we should only build up people.”

CONTRADICTS God’s Way:

- *Ezekiel 33:8 ~ When I [the LORD] say to the wicked, “O wicked man, you will surely die,” and you do not speak out to dissuade him from his ways, that wicked man will die for his sin, and I will hold you accountable for his blood. But if you do warn the wicked man to turn from his ways and he does not do so, he will die for his sin, but you will have saved yourself.*
- *Luke 3:7 ~ John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?”*
- *Luke 12:5 ~ But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear Him.*

G. Man’s Way: “You must learn to forgive yourself in order to find peace and fulfillment in life.”

CONTRADICTS God’s Way:

- *John 16:33 ~ [Jesus said:] “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.”*
- *I Corinthians 1:18-20 ~ For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written: “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate.” Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?*
- *I Corinthians 2:14 ~ The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

H. Man’s Way: “God wants us all to feel good about ourselves; after all, Jesus possessed the greatest self-esteem in the history of mankind.”

CONTRADICTS God’s Way:

- *Philippians 2:3-8 ~ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not 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 a cross!*

I. What is your way? Explain:

VI. OVERCOMING “SELF” GOD’S WAY

A. You can quickly overcome self-belittlement, self-exaltation, or self-pity. This is possible when you realize that a preoccupation with self is sin:

- *Matthew 23:12* ~ For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.
- *Luke 9:23* ~ Then He said to them all: “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me.”
- *Romans 14:7-8* ~ “For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone. If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.
- *II Corinthians 5:15* ~ And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.
- *Galatians 2:20* ~ I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

B. You must confess your focus on “self” and immediately begin to live in accordance with God’s Word:

- *Psalms 51:10* ~ Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.
- *Philippians 3:12-14* ~ Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.
- *I John 5:1* ~ Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves His child as well.

VII. GOD’S WAY FOR CONTENTMENT IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES

A. Your contentment in all circumstances is dependent on your obedient response to God in your thoughts, words and actions:

- *Genesis 4:7* ~ If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it.
- *Psalms 119:165* ~ Great peace have they who love Your law, and nothing can make them stumble.
- *Isaiah 26:3* ~ You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in You.

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- **Luke 11:28** ~ He [Jesus] replied, “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it.”
- **John 15:10-11** ~ [Jesus said:] If you obey My commands, you will remain in My love, just as I have obeyed my Father’s 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.
- **II Corinthians 4:7** ~ But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.
- **II Corinthians 4:16-18** ~ Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.
- **Philippians 4:6-11** ~ Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. 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. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you. I rejoice greatly in the Lord that at last you have renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you have been concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.

B. By obeying the Lord in your daily walk, you show your love for the Lord Jesus Christ:

- **John 14:15** ~ [Jesus said:] “If you love Me, you will obey what I command.”
- **John 14:21** ~ [Jesus said:] “Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves Me. He who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I too will love him and show Myself to him.”
- **John 14:23-24** ~ Jesus replied, “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and I will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love Me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent Me.”
- **I John 2:4-5** ~ The man who says, “I know him,” but does not do what He commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But if anyone obeys His word, God’s love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in Him: . . .

C. You demonstrate Christ’s Lordship in your life when you obey Him:

- **Matthew 7:21** ~ [Jesus said:] “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven.”

D. God is delighted and pleased in your obedience of faith: .

- *I Samuel 15:22 ~ But Samuel replied: “Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the LORD? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams.*
- *Hebrews 11:6 ~ And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him.*

E. God is not interested in your vows of loyalty:

- *Proverbs 20:6 ~ Many a man claims to have unfailing love, but a faithful man who can find?*
- *Matthew 7:21 ~ (See above)*
- *I John 2:4 ~ The man who says, “I know Him,” but does not do what He commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him.*

F. God is not interested in excuses:

- Example: *I Samuel 15:24 ~ Then Saul said to Samuel, “I have sinned. I violated the LORD’S command and your instructions. I was afraid of the people and so I gave in to them.*

G. God is not interested in good, but meaningless, actions:

- *Psalms 40:6 ~ Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but my ears You have pierced; burnt offerings and sin offerings You did not require.*
- *Psalms 51:16-16 ~ You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; You do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.*
- *Jeremiah 6:20 ~ What do I care about incense from Sheba or sweet calamus from a distant land? Your burnt offerings are not acceptable; your sacrifices do not please Me.*

VIII. GOD’S WAY IS YOUR HOPE

A. Be thankful to God because you are fearfully and wonderfully made:

- *Psalms 119:73 ~ Your hands made me and formed me; give me understanding to learn Your commands.*
- *Psalms 139:13-14 ~ For you created my inmost being; You knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Your works are wonderful, I know that full well.*

B. Even though you might have physical deformities or a chronic affliction, God’s plans is to use them for your good and His glory:

- *II Corinthians 12:7-10 ~ To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But He said to me, “My grace is*

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sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

- **Ephesians 5:20** ~ Always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- **I Thessalonians 5:18** ~ Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.
- **Romans 5:3** ~ Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; Perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.
- **Romans 8:28** ~ And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.
- **I Corinthians 10:13** ~ No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.
- **II Corinthians 12:9-10** ~ But He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

C. God loves you with perfect love regardless of any weaknesses and “limitations” you may have, even though you do not merit, do not deserve, and cannot earn, His love:

- **Isaiah 53:6** ~ We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.
- **Luke 15:4-7** ~ [Jesus said:] “Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.’ I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.”
- **Romans 5:8** ~ But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
- **I John 4:10** ~ This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.
- **Philippians 2:12-16** ~ Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose. Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life—in order that I may boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor for nothing.

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- **Colossians 3:2-15** ~ *Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.*
³*For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.*
⁴*When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.*
⁵*Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.*
⁶*Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.*
⁷*You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived.*
⁸*But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.*
⁹*Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices*
¹⁰*And have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.*
¹¹*Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.*
¹²*Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.*
¹³*Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.*
¹⁴*And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.*
¹⁵*Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.*
- **Hebrews 12:1-2** ~ *Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*
- **James 4:8** ~ *Come near to God and He will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.*

IX. GOD'S WAY IS YOUR FREEDOM

A. You have been freed from the power of all sins:

- **Romans 6:6** ~ *For we know that our old self was crucified with Him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—*
- **Romans 6:12-13** ~ *Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.*
- **Romans 12:21** ~ *Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*
- **Colossians 3:2-17** ~ *Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.*
³*For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.*
⁴*When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.*
⁵*Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.*
⁶*Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.*
⁷*You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived.*

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⁸But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.

⁹Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices

¹⁰And have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

¹¹Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

¹²Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

¹³Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another.

Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

¹⁴And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

¹⁵Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.

¹⁶Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

¹⁷And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

B. You have been freed of all sins, including envy, jealousy, covetousness and greed, which result from focus on self. You can be content in any circumstance and can have the attitude of Christ developed within you:

- *Philippians 2:5 ~ Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:*

REMEMBER:

C. Your Heavenly Father is the Sovereign God of the universe and He has your best interests at heart:

- *Jeremiah 29:11 ~ “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”*
- *Matthew 6:7-8 ~ [Jesus said:] “And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.”*
- *Romans 8:28 ~ And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.*

D. God will accomplish His purposes in your life:

- *Isaiah 46:9-11 ~ Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me. I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please. From the east I summon a bird of prey; from a far-off land, a man to fulfill My purpose. What I have said, that will I bring about; what I have planned, that will I do.*
- *Romans 8:29 ~ For those God foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brothers.*
- *Philippians 1:6 ~ Being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.*

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- **Philippians 2:13** ~ *For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose.*

E. He promises to meet every need that you will ever have:

- **Psalms 34:10** ~ *The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.*
- **Psalms 34:15-18** ~ *The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous and His ears are attentive to their cry; The face of the LORD is against those who do evil, to cut off the memory of them from the earth. The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears them; He delivers them from all their troubles. The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.*
- **Psalms 37:23-25** ~ *If the LORD delights in a man’s way, He makes his steps firm; Though he stumble, he will not fall, for the LORD upholds him with His hand. I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread.*
- **Matthew 6:33-34** ~ *[Jesus said:] But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.*
- **Philippians 4:19** ~ *And my God will meet all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus.*

F. God promises to equip you fully for every good work:

- **I Corinthians 12:7** ~ *Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.*
- **II Timothy 3:16-17** ~ *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*
- **I Peter 4:10-11** ~ *Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully ministering God’s grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.*

G. God promises to be with you through every circumstance of your life:

- **Psalms 23:1-6** ~ *The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.
²He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters,
³He restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for His name’s sake.
⁴Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.
⁵You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.
⁶Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.*
- **Psalms 121:1-8** ~ *I lift up my eyes to the hills--where does my help come from?
²My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.*

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³He will not let your foot slip—He who watches over you will not slumber;

⁴Indeed, He who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.

⁵The LORD watches over you—the LORD is your shade at your right hand;

⁶The sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night.

⁷The LORD will keep you from all harm—He will watch over your life;

⁸the LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.

- **II Timothy 4:18 ~ The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.**
- **I John 5:18 ~ We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the one who was born of God keeps him safe, and the evil one cannot harm him.**

X. CHANGING YOUR THOUGHTS, WORDS AND ACTIONS GOD’S WAY

A. You must take the focus off yourself in daily situations and relationships:

- **Luke 9:23-24 ~ Then He said to them all: “If anyone would come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for Me will save it.**
- **John 3:30 ~ He must become greater; I must become less.**
- **John 12:24-26 ~ I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves Me must follow me; and where I am, My servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves Me.**
- **Romans 12:3 ~ For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.**
- **Romans 14:7-8 ~ For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone. If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.**
- **II Corinthians 5:15 ~ And He died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for Him who died for them and was raised again.**

B. You must follow God’s commandments:

- **Matthew 22:37-39 ~ Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”**

C. Instead of sinning through *self-belittlement*, *self-exaltation*, or *self-pity*, you must regard others as more important than yourself and be a servant to God and others — no matter how you may feel:

- **Matthew 20:26-28 ~ Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.**

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- **Luke 4:8** ~ *Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God and serve Him only.’”*
- **John 13:3-9, 12-17** ~ *Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under His power, and that He had come from God and was returning to God;*
⁴*So He got up from the meal, took off His outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around His waist.*
⁵*After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash His disciples’ feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around Him.*
⁶*He came to Simon Peter, who said to Him, “Lord, are you going to wash my feet?”*
⁷*Jesus replied, “You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand.”*
⁸*“No,” said Peter, “you shall never wash my feet.” Jesus answered, “Unless I wash you, you have no part with Me.”*
⁹*“Then, Lord,” Simon Peter replied, “not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!” ...*
¹²*When He had finished washing their feet, He put on His clothes and returned to His place. “Do you understand what I have done for you?” He asked them.*
¹³*“You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am.*
¹⁴*Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet.*
¹⁵*I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.*
¹⁶*I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.*
¹⁷*Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.*
- **Romans 15:1-3** ~ *We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. For even Christ did not please Himself but, as it is written: “The insults of those who insult you have fallen on Me.”*
- **I Corinthians 9:19** ~ *Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible.*
- **I Corinthians 10:24** ~ *Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others.*
- **I Corinthians 10:32-33** ~ *Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God—Even as I try to please everybody in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved.*
- **Philippians 2:3-8** ~ *Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not 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 a cross!*
- **Colossians 3:23-24** ~ *Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.*
- **I Peter 4:10** ~ *Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.*

D. You are to *put off* the sins of envy, jealousy, covetousness, and greed, which characterized your life apart from Jesus Christ. Rather you are to delight yourself in the Lord, commit your ways to Him, and wait patiently for Him:

- *Psalms 37:1-9* ~ Do not fret because of evil men or be envious of those who do wrong;
²For like the grass they will soon wither, like green plants they will soon die away.
³Trust in the LORD and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.
⁴Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart.
⁵Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this:
⁶He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun.
⁷Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for Him; do not fret when men succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes.
⁸Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret—it leads only to evil.
⁹For evil men will be cut off, but those who hope in the LORD will inherit the land.

E. Instead of being jealous and having selfish ambition, you are to be pure, peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, and unwavering without hypocrisy:

- *James 3:13-17* ~ Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such “wisdom” does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice. But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.

F. Acknowledge that you have been bought with the precious sacrifice of Jesus Christ and are not your own:

- *I Corinthians 6:19-20* ~ Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.
- *I Peter 1:17-19* ~ Since you call on a Father who judges each man’s work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear. For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

G. Acknowledge that you are God’s possession and a steward (managing servant) of all that the Lord has provided for you. As the Lord’s servant, you have the privilege and responsibility to be faithful with all that He has placed in your care:

- *Matthew 25:14-30* ~ Jesus describes the Kingdom of Heaven:
“Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them.
¹⁵ To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey.
¹⁶ The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. I
¹⁷ So also, the one with the two talents gained two more.

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¹⁸ *But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.*

¹⁹ *After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them.*

²⁰ *The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.'*

²¹ *His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'*

²² *The man with the two talents also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more.'*

²³ *His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'*

²⁴ *Then the man who had received the one talent came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. 25 So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.'*

²⁶ *His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed?'*

²⁷ *Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.*

²⁸ *'''Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents.*

²⁹ *For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him.*

³⁰ *And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”*

- **Luke 16:10-12 ~ [Jesus said:] “Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else’s property, who will give you property of your own?”**
- **I Corinthians 4:1-2 ~ So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God. Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.**
- **I Peter 4:10 ~ Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.**

H. As a servant of the Lord, you should not seek to be served:

- **Mark 10:42-45 ~ Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”**

I. You should not seek to receive credit from men:

- **Colossians 3:23 ~ Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, . . .**

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- *I Thessalonians 2:4-6 ~ On the contrary, we speak as men approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please men but God, who tests our hearts. You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed—God is our witness. We were not looking for praise from men, not from you or anyone else. As apostles of Christ we could have been a burden to you, . . .*

J. Seek to please only the Lord and you will be blessing to others as well:

- *I Corinthians 10:31 ~ So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.*
- *II Corinthians 5:9 ~ So we make it our goal to please Him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it.*
- *Hebrews 13:20-21 ~ May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing His will, and may He work in us what is pleasing to Him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

XI. LIVE GOD’S WAY (ACTIONS)

A. Examine (judge) yourself continually in a biblical manner:

- *Matthew 7:5 ~ You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.*
- *I Corinthians 11:31-32 ~ But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment. When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world.*

B. Do not compare yourself with others to determine whose approval you ultimately seek:

- *I Corinthians 10:12 ~ So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall!*
- *Galatians 6:3-4 ~ If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else, . . .*
- *II Corinthians 5:9 ~ So we make it our goal to please Him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it.*
- *Galatians 1:10 ~ Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ.*
- *Colossians 3:23-24 ~ Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.*
- *I Thessalonians 2:4 ~ On the contrary, we speak as men approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please men but God, who tests our hearts.*

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C. Love God and others without hypocrisy (play-acting, pretending):

- *Romans 12:9 ~ Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.*

D. Demonstrate the fruits of Christ’s life in your thoughts, speech, and actions:

- *Matthew 5:16 ~ In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.*
- *Galatians 5:22-23 ~ But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.*
- *Ephesians 5:1-2 ~ Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.*



*May the Lord richly bless you as you surrender your thoughts,
words and actions to His perfect will for your life.*