



**30 Key Areas in  
Our Christian Walk**

*Bible Studies*

*for*

*Discipleship Training*

**Part 2 – Keys 11-20**

**Prepared To Equip the Saints**

**By**

**Lighthouse Missionary Church**

**East Jordan, Michigan**

# 30 Key Areas in our Christian Walk

From *The Christian Life Profile* by Randy Frazee

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## **Beliefs (transformed mind)**

**Trinity** – I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

**Salvation by Grace** – I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by God’s grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

**Authority of the Bible** – I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

**Personal God** – I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

**Identity in Christ** – I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

**Church** – I believe the church is God’s primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

**Humanity** – I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

**Compassion** – I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

**Eternity** – I believe there is a heaven and a hell, and I believe Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and establish His eternal kingdom.

**Stewardship** – I believe everything I am or own belongs to God.

## **Virtues (transformed heart)**

**Love** – I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

**Joy** – I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

**Peace** – I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

**Patience** – I take a long time to overheat, and I endure patiently the unavoidable pressures of life.

**Kindness/Goodness** – I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

**Faithfulness** – I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to that relationship.

**Gentleness** – I am thoughtful, considerate, and calm in dealing with others.

**Self-Control** – I have power, through Christ, to control myself.

**Hope** – I can cope with the hardships of life and death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

**Humility** – I choose to esteem others above myself.

## **Practices (transformed behavior)**

**Worship** – I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

**Prayer** – I pray to God to know Him, to lay my requests before Him, and to find direction for my daily life.

**Bible Study** – I study the Bible to know God, the Truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

**Single-mindedness** – I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

**Biblical Community** – I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

**Spiritual Gifts** – I know and use my spiritual gifts to fulfill God's purposes.

**Giving Away My Time** – I gave away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

**Giving Away My Money** – I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

**Giving Away My Faith** – I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

**Giving Away My Life** – I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.



*I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.*

*WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS:*

If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. <sup>2</sup> If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. <sup>3</sup> If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to

hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. <sup>4</sup> Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. <sup>5</sup> It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. <sup>6</sup> Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. <sup>7</sup> It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. <sup>8</sup> Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. <sup>9</sup> For we know in part and we prophesy in part, <sup>10</sup> but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. <sup>11</sup> When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. <sup>12</sup> For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. <sup>13</sup> And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

*I Corinthians 13 (NIV)*

Understanding Biblical love is very difficult for some people because our society has taught us that love is just an emotion. Too often it is a fuzzy, warm feeling we get when that special person comes toward us, or maybe that gaze from across a crowded room. Love causes us to take actions that we would not normally dream of doing. It is a pitter-patter of our heart, an intense euphoric sensation that comes upon us when we encounter that “certain” person. However, the Bible speaks of love in a much different way.

In the English language, love is a word that has a multitude of meanings. In the language of the Bible, both Hebrew and Greek, there are multiple words for love because it has so many aspects. Hebrew has about a dozen words to describe love and Greek has three. These words cover a range of ideas from sexual desire, intimate friendship, fidelity, and acts of mercy and kindness.

The Greek word, *eros*, is the emotional, romantic, passionate sexual love. It is not even used in the original Greek New Testament. *Phileo*, is the love that exists between friends. Jesus wept at the death of his friend Lazarus, whom he loved (*phileo*). This love is all about commitment and enduring friendship, not about passion.

The dominant New Testament word for love, *agape*, depicts the self-sacrificing love like that of a parent for their child and God’s love for the world. It is best illustrated when God sent His one and only Son to die for the sins of the world (John 3:16). This word, *agape*, is the word “love” used in I Corinthians 13.

An analysis of this chapter is absent of emotional traits. Each description of love involves a decision to take action. In most situations, our decision to love is much harder than to do the alternative. It is often much easier to let our emotions take over, harbor hatred in our heart, or to simply get mad when we encounter injustice. However, the Biblical response to adversity is much different path than what the world teaches. That is why this chapter is introduced as a “more excellent way.”

1. After reading I Corinthians 13, what is the difference between how our society views or defines love and how God defines it?
2. In verses 1 – 3, what is the difference between routine, surface-level service for God and service that is motivated by love?
3. Reading verses 4 – 8a, how are these definitions of love different in our actions toward one another when compared to how God treats us with love?
4. In verses 8 – 10, why does love endure when other “spiritual” actions or activities are done?
5. In verse 11, what is the difference between a child’s understanding of love and a mature view of what love entails? (Refer also to Psalm 131:2.)
6. In verse 12, how will we understand love more fully when we see Jesus face to face?
7. In verse 13, why is love the greatest of the three virtues mentioned?
8. According to I John 4:7-12, where does love come from and what should people do with this love?
9. Look up Deut. 6:5, 7:9, 11:1, 11:13-14, and 30:16-17. What is the theme of these verses?
10. **Discussion Question:** As Christians, are we more influenced more by the world’s view of love or the Biblical view of love?

**Close your session with a time of prayer.** Ask God examine our methods of love toward others.



*I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.*

*WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS:*

<sup>10</sup> If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. <sup>11</sup> I have told you this so that my **joy** may be in you and that your **joy** may be complete.

*John 15:10 - 11 (NIV)*

A dictionary definition of joy says: the emotion evoked by well-being, success, and good fortune or by the prospect of possessing what one desires; the expression or exhibition of such emotion; a state of happiness or felicity; a source of cause of delight. However, a biblical prospective of joy is not exactly like that of the world's definition. The theme statement of this key states "I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances." This means that joy is more than simply an emotion that is the by-product of good times or getting whatever we want.

Our circumstances should not dictate our mood or determine our level of joy or contentment. It is an expression of our inner being that transcends the day-to-day circumstances that we face. Are we controlled by the ups and downs of life? Life is not always easy, nor is life without its challenges and disappointments. Remaining in the Father's love is the key to having a complete sense of joy.

When we have a sense of purpose for our life it becomes a source of excitement and focus in life. Then, when we encounter the vicissitudes of life, (the mundane, the hard things,) we know that they are simply events that we can and will overcome as we reach toward the ultimate goal. This ultimate goal is keeping the Father's commands and remaining in God's love.

Contentment with what we have, our money and possessions, is something that we all struggle with at times. Some people allow "things" to takeover as the primary desires of life. This can lead to the world's definition of good fortune or possessing what one desires. The biblical model is to find joy that is not subject to daily variations. As the Psalmist David asked God in chapter 51:10-12, "create in me a pure heart and restore the joy of your salvation."

If you cannot find joy, you should seek God to know Him more. It may require you to change your perspective and attitudes about life. But, it is appropriate to seek more of God and to ask the Holy Spirit to fill you. Seeking Him will help to produce joy in your life. In Galatians 5:22-23, the fruit of the Spirit includes joy. In fact, it is number two on the list of fruits! Reading the scripture will help to bring joy into your life. 1 John 1:4 states, "We write this to make our joy complete." This suggests that joy should not be lacking in your life. God desires that people experience life to the fullest. John 10:10 says; "I have come that they may have life and have it to the full."

It is important to thank God everyday for the blessings you experience in life. People often overlook the very basic things that God provides for us. Running water, automatic heating, a warm and private bathroom, a soft and warm bed are all things that we too often take for granted. Yet they are wonderful blessings that should bring us joy and appreciation. Having a thankful heart for all we have is a great beginning place for us to change our perspective and attitudes about life.

A great way to view **JOY** in your Christian life is to see things this way: **J**esus first, **O**thers second, **Y**ourself last. As you live this way, you will find that joy will fill your life! It is a joy that the world can't give you nor can it take it away!

1. Look up these verses: Nehemiah 12:43, Psalm 19:8, 28:7, 126:3, Isaiah 49:13, Acts 13:52, Romans 15:13, and 1 Thessalonians 1:6. Where does joy come from?
2. See John 15:11, 16:14, Philippians 2:2, Deut. 16:15. What do you think is “complete joy?” Is there also an “incomplete joy?”
3. According to Nehemiah 8:10, what does joy do for us?
4. In Isaiah 35:9-10, 61:7, and John 16:22, how long does joy last?
5. In James 1:2-3, it describes a way to be joyful. What is it? How is this even possible?
6. Look up Psalm 16:11, 51:12; describe joy from these two verses.
7. According to Psalm 96:11-12, how do we see joy in nature?
8. **Discussion Question:** What is your level of contentment in regard to your possessions and the “things” you own? To what degree do you think this issue affects the level of true joy in your life?

**Close your session with a time of prayer.** Ask God examine the level of joy in your life and ask Him to bring additional joy, even when circumstances are difficult.



*I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.*

*WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS:*

<sup>6</sup> Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. <sup>7</sup> And the **peace** of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. *Philippians 4:6-7 (NIV)*

<sup>3</sup> You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you.

*Isaiah 26:3 (NIV)*

Although the dictionary may say that peace is the absence of war, Biblical peace is living in harmony with others and having a right relationship with those that may not always have a good attitude toward us. “Make every effort to **live in peace** with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.” (Hebrews 12:14.)

In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word for peace is *shalom*. It often is associated with a covenant or a promise being kept. It is the desire status among nations, people, and between God and man. Shalom was the standard greeting and is still used today.

Peace is related to individual actions and attitudes but is ultimately a gift of God. The presence of peace is the result of God blessing people due to their obedience and faith. As for wicked people, there is no peace.

The New Testament word for peace is usually the Greek word, *eirene*. It refers to rest and tranquility. The advent of Christ was announced by the angels as “Peace on earth” for all mankind. Isaiah’s prophecy of the coming Messiah included the title, Prince of Peace. Romans 5:1 states that through Christ we have peace with God.

Knowing that God has forgiven us through the work of Christ on the cross, we need to extend the same forgiveness to others. As the Lord’s prayer states, forgive us our sins as we forgive as those that have sinned against us. We cannot have peace with God if we insist on holding unforgiveness toward others. Unforgiveness leads to bitterness and anger in our hearts. When we harbor these feelings, we cannot experience peace because our peace with God is completely destroyed.

Giving in to our human emotions and holding tightly to the idea of getting even, we think it will make us feel better. Our sinful, human nature wants to return evil for evil. Society encourages us “don’t get mad, get even.” Holding on to unforgiveness is like drinking a cup of poison yet expecting your enemy to die. We end up being worse off than our enemy. Holding on to our feelings of anger, and hanging on to unforgiveness, destroys relationships with our family, friends, and God. However, when we forgive those that have hurt us, we experience peace from God. As Philippians 4 states, the peace we experience “transcends all understanding” and will change our hearts and minds in a way that only Christ can make changes.

As believers, it is our obligation to “let the peace of God rule” in our hearts (Colossians 3:15). So, we have a choice to trust God’s promises or to rely upon our own resources and efforts and reject the peace that God offers to us. Peace is a fruit of the Holy Spirit as listed in Galatians 5:22-23. When we operate in the Spirit, we experience God’s peace. Through Christ, we can experience peace in the midst of war, conflict, and circumstances that seem to work against us because Christ is our peace.



1. Look up these verses: Romans 1:7, 15:33, Isaiah 9:6-7, Luke 2:14, and John 14:27. Where does peace come from?
2. Why is there NO peace for some people? See: Isaiah 48:17, 57:21, 59:8, and Romans 8:6.
3. According to Colossians 3:12-17 and Matthew 6:9-15, why is forgiveness an important key to bringing peace into your life?
4. In Matthew 6:25-34, how does depending on God bring peace into your life?
5. Read Colossians 3:15, Romans 12:18, Hebrews 12:14 and Psalm 34:12-16; how should we exercise peace with each other?
6. Look up Colossians 3:18-21; what should our family relationship be like in order to have peace in our homes?
7. **Discussion Question:** What is your level of peace with God, yourself, and with others? Are you ready to forgive others that have deeply hurt you? What action steps do you need to take to begin the process of forgiveness?

**Close your session with a time of prayer.** Ask God, examine me in the area of forgiveness and living in peace with all people and in holiness so I can enjoy eternity with God.



*I take a long time to overheat, and I endure patiently the unavoidable pressures of life.*

*WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS:*

<sup>29</sup> Whoever is **patient** has great understanding, but one who is quick-tempered displays folly.

*Proverbs 14:29 (NIV)*

<sup>12</sup> Be joyful in hope, **patient** in affliction, faithful in prayer.

*Romans 12:12 (NIV)*

<sup>2</sup> Be completely humble and gentle; be **patient**, bearing with one another in love. *Ephesians 4:2 (NIV)*

The dictionary states that patience is the act of being able to remain calm and not become annoyed when waiting for a long time or when dealing with problems or difficult people; or done in a careful way over a long period of time without hurrying. That really does not describe our society today. We live in an age of instant communications, drive thru meals and fast food, instant potatoes, meals in 30 minutes or less, up-to-the minute news, instant gratification, on demand videos ... the list could go on and on ... we want it and we want it NOW!

You've heard that patience is a virtue. It seems to be in short-supply for most people today. We read stories of instant road rage. We hate waiting in line. Patience is not something that our society embraces. Yet, the Bible is clear that we need it. Galatians 5:22-23 lists "patience" as one of the fruit of the spirit. It is interesting that it comes right after "peace." Just maybe, if we exercised more patience we would experience more peace.

Since patience is a fruit of the spirit, it is not something we naturally have; we need the Holy Spirit to help us develop this characteristic. Patience is a choice just as impatience is a choice. Patience puts others first and our own "wants" second. Impatience is all about taking care of "me" first and having it "my" way.

We all experience trials, testings, and tribulations in life. Our reactions to these difficult situations reveal our character. Many times we grumble and complain about things and we think it makes us feel better. However, that is not what God wants from us. We are to do everything without grumbling and complaining according to Philippians 2:14. We all must decide how we will react to adversity, our way or God's way.

The Bible is full of examples of people who practiced patience and those who did not. The Israelites did not exercise patience. God delivered them out of Egypt and they immediately started grumbling and complaining. The result was that an eight-day walk turned into a 40 year journey. Every time that they murmured and complained, God had them take another lap around the desert. Even Moses got frustrated with the people and ended up never getting into the promised land because he hit the rock instead of following God's command to speak to the rock so that water would flow out.

On the positive side, Abraham waited patiently for the promise (Heb. 6:15); Job persevered through his disaster (James 5:11); the prophets endured suffering (James 5:10); Paul patiently endured shipwrecks and beatings (2 Tim. 3:10); and the Apostle John endured hardships and finally was isolated to the isle of Patmos (Rev. 1:9). They are examples of faithfulness and patience.

As we go through our time of grief, agony, and despair, we can choose patience that will result in drawing us closer to God, or we can become bitter and be separated from Him. As we pray and wait on God for His answer, our patience shows that we have trust in His timing and in His answer. After all, God is never too early, never too late, always on time, and always on budget ... and He is never surprised by anything. We know He is faithful and does not forsake his own (Deut. 31:6).

We have a choice, be patient and trust God or be impatient and trust in our own resources. It really is not a choice if you consider how our own selfish plans end up in total disaster. As we draw closer in our relationship to God, we will learn to rely on His promises and know that His ways are always better than our ways!

1. Read James 5:7-11. How should we “wait” as we anticipate the Lord’s return?
  
2. See Romans 12:12, 15:5-6, Colossians 1:9-12, and James 1:2-4. Considering our present circumstance, what should be our reactions to difficult situations?
  
3. Read Exodus 34:6-7, Psalms 30:5, 37:1-9, and 78:38. What is God’s example of patience? How are we living up to His standards?
  
4. In 1 Timothy 1:15-16 it says Christ had “immense patience.” What do you think that means? Can you share an example of how your patience is increasing?
  
5. See James 1:12 and Galatians 6:9. What does exercising patience lead to in your life?
  
6. Look up Romans 12:17-21; how should we respond when the world “ruffles our feathers?”
  
7. **Take your pulse:** Where do you think you are presently on the “patience” scale?  
Great Patience Impatience  
1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5  
  
What can you do to help work your way to improving you level of patience?
  
8. **Discussion Question:** How is patience a part of helping you achieving eternal life?

**Close your session with a time of prayer.** Ask God examine the level of patience in your life and ask Him help you remain patient, even when circumstances are difficult.



***I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.***

***WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS:***

<sup>15</sup> Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always strive to do what is good for each other and for everyone else. *1 Thessalonians 5:15 (NIV)*

<sup>5</sup> Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers and sisters, even though they are strangers to

you. <sup>6</sup> They have told the church about your love. Please send them on their way in a manner that honors God. <sup>7</sup> It was for the sake of the Name that they went out, receiving no help from the pagans.

<sup>8</sup> We ought therefore to show hospitality to such people so that we may work together for the truth.

*3 John 5-8 (NIV)*

Kindness and goodness include showing hospitality and a friendly attitude toward other people. Both are included in the list of the fruit of the spirit in Galatians 5:22-23. Kindness comes from the Greek word *chrestotes* and includes goodness as a quality of purity. It also includes tenderness, compassion, and sweetness. This word is used in Matthew 11:30 to describe the yoke of Jesus; “For my yoke is easy (*chrestos*) and my burden is light.”

When Christ accepted this yoke, it was an act of obedience and submission to His Father’s will. It was based on commitment and love. It was an act of servitude. As a Christian, we have a Master whom we serve because we love Him. It is our privilege to serve Him.

Like all the qualities on the “fruit” list, they seem to be in short-supply for most people. These qualities come from the Holy Spirit and are given to Christians as they grow in their faith and open themselves to being completely filled by God’s spirit.

As you study Galatians 5, you will find that we need to live and walk in the Spirit. It means that we deny self and our sinful desires. As we get rid of the “junk,” the Holy Spirit begins to clothe us with new attitudes and qualities. Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, humility, and self-control began to grow within us as we rid ourselves of sexual immorality, impurity, hatred, jealousy, and fits of rage. What a wonderful exchange occurs in our life!

The natural man, or our sinful nature, delights in doing things that destroy others. Instead of doing what is right, we embrace our selfish nature. We take things away instead of giving things away to those who are in need. We hang on to our “stuff” thinking that more is better and the one with the most toys wins. This is how the world entices us with excessive counterfeit goals. The Holy Spirit has true and eternal rewards that make life better here on Earth as well as preparing us for life with God in heaven.

As we extend kindness and goodness to others, we not only encourage them but also improve their quality of life. It is free to be kind to others. Every word and action should be a gift to someone else. When we do this we are also enriched and become all that God wants us to be! Christ is our example. A life of service is what we are called to live. Jesus clearly showed the disciples and us when he washed their feet that night in the upper room. He also showed us His love when he willingly went to the cross. He was the sin offering for all of mankind, an offering of love.

So, we are faced with a choice. Will we accept the counterfeit life that the world offers? Smiling at people while we stab them in the back with our words, actions, and attitudes. Or, will we follow the example of Christ who offers the world a better way? In 1 Peter 2:3 it says to taste and see that the

Lord is good and Psalm 34:8 repeats, “Taste and see that the Lord is good.” Let kindness and goodness be our choice!

1. See Proverbs 19:17. What should our attitude be toward those who are poor?
2. Read Ephesians 4:29 – 5:2; what does imitating God look like in your life? How should I treat other people?
3. According to Proverbs 3:27-28, when is a good time to show kindness?
4. What does Proverbs 16:24 say are the positive benefits of treating others kindly?
5. How does God treat us when we don't deserve it?
  - A) Genesis 32:9-10
  - B) Exodus 34:5-7
  - C) Isaiah 54:10
  - D) Hosea 11:4
  - E) Acts 14:15-17
  - F) Titus 3:3-7
6. **Discussion Questions:** After reading the verses above, how should you be treating others? What are some areas of weakness in your life?

**Close your session with a time of prayer.** Ask God to examine your life and to show how you can extend kindness and goodness to others.



***I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to that relationship.***

**WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS:**

<sup>3</sup> Let love and **faithfulness** never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. <sup>4</sup> Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man. <sup>5</sup> Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; <sup>6</sup> in all your ways

submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

*Proverbs 3:3-6 (NIV)*

A dictionary definition of faithful says: adhering firmly and devotedly, as to a person, a cause, or an idea; loyal; and having or being full of faith. Worthy of trust or belief: reliable. Consistent with truth or actuality: “a faithful reproduction of the portrait.” In Christian terms, to be faithful is when we allow the Lord to reproduce Himself in us and we are devoted to Christ, allowing Him to transform us completely.

The Greek word for faithfulness is *pistis*. It is used as both active and passive; referring to faith, belief, and trust. Many times it is used to refer to an attribute of God. In Hebrew, the words for faithfulness are *emun*, *emuna*, and *emet*. In all of these words, there is the element of being firm, steady, or lasting. The prophet Jeremiah sums it up in Lamentations 3:23 with the phrase, “great is Thy faithfulness.”

The Bible has many examples of faithfulness by people like Noah, Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Elijah, Elisha, David, and Daniel. In addition, there were the disciples, Paul, Timothy, Titus, and many others. They experienced trials and temptations but turned to God and persevered in spite of the challenges set before them. In Hebrews, chapter 11, there is a hall of fame that pays tribute to them for following their faith even when they faced hostility from the world around them. Some were sawn in two, others were stoned, put into pits, beaten and left for dead, and some even died for their faith.

Of course, Jesus was the ultimate example and model of faithfulness. He was willing to go to the cross to take our place and receive the punishment that we deserved for our sins. Jesus was sinless and did not need to do this for us; but out of love, He took our place and endured our punishment. The price that must be paid for sin is the shedding of blood. In the Old Testament, the blood sacrifice came from an animal that had no flaws and was given as a substitute for the sin that a person had committed. Each time a person sinned, another sacrifice had to be given. However, when the blood of Jesus was given as a sacrifice for our sins, it was once and for all of mankind. It was the perfect sacrifice given by a sinless person on our behalf. John 3:16-18 explains that God, the Father, gave mankind this plan, a perfect plan. It was a more perfect plan than the Old Testament system of sacrifices of bulls, goats, and other animals. Jesus gave Himself and God gave His one, and only Son, to die in our place. This was the ultimate example of faithfulness.

Because of God’s faithfulness, we are challenged to also follow His example. Once we accept God’s gift, we are exhorted to remain faithful in our life. Since God did all of this for us, we must remain faithful as well. Throughout life, we will face hardships, troubles, and tribulations but we must remain steadfast. One day, we will face God and then He can say, ‘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!’ (Matt. 25:23)

1. How is God faithful to us?
  - A) Psalm 23:5-6 –
  - B) 1 John 1:9 –
  - C) Hebrews 13: 5 –
  - D) Psalm 143:1-2 –
  - E) Psalm 36:5 –
  - F) Lamentations 3:21-23 –
2. Look up Isaiah 7:9, 1 John 5:1-5; what is our source of faith?
3. According to John 15:1-8, how does abiding in God lead us to faithfulness?
4. In 2 Corinthians 10:5, what does it mean to take captive every thought and how does this lead to faithfulness?
5. Read Hebrews 12:1-6 and Psalm 15:1-5. Do we follow God when it involves suffering; do we remain faithful?
6. **Discussion Question:** Why are we so easily diverted from our faith in God when we experience the “hard stuff” in life?

**Close your session with a time of prayer.** Ask God examine your faith and commitment to God. Ask Him to make you willing to remain faithful in spite of the circumstances.



*I am thoughtful, considerate, and calm in dealing with others.*

*WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS:*

<sup>4</sup> Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!  
<sup>5</sup> Let your **gentleness** be evident to all. The Lord is near. <sup>6</sup> Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which transcends all

understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

*Philippians 4:4-7 (NIV)*

Gentleness is a fruit of the Holy Spirit as listed in Galatians 5:22-23 and it is characterized as calmness, tenderness, meekness, and personal strength under control. It does not indicate weakness but requires great control that is provided to us as we surrender our will to the direction of the Holy Spirit. The fruit produced by the Holy Spirit is not something we can manufacture in our own goodness and efforts, but the fruit is produced by the Holy Spirit as we allow Him to take over and reform our character in His image.

The Greek word *prautes* is translated as both gentleness and meekness and the words are often interchanged from one translation to another. A Greek lexicon includes meanings of humility, courtesy, and considerateness. This word is used in Psalm 45:4 “In your majesty ride forth victoriously in the cause of truth, humility and justice; let your right hand achieve awesome deeds.” In this context, you can see that gentleness is not weakness nor is it becoming a doormat, but rather you move forward with triumph and power to victory.

We must consider our own shortcomings as we confront the failures of others. Galatians 6:1 states, “Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted.” Speaking the truth in love (Eph. 4:15) is not always easy to do. Others may resent what we say or may resist correction. That is why gentleness must be exercised, and we must operate with the power of the Holy Spirit and not in our power. There is no place for harshness or condemnation. According to 1 Corinthians 4:20-21, “For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power. What do you prefer? Shall I come to you with a rod of discipline, or shall I come in love and with a gentle spirit?”

We all encounter situations that involve conflicts with people. In our flesh, it may be natural to react with anger or violence. However, as a Christian, we need to operate under the direction of the Holy Spirit and allow His fruit to become a part of our response. As we trust in the Holy Spirit to help us, we can react with gentleness when conflicts come our way. Jesus showed true gentleness in the middle of conflict. “My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.” (James 1:19-21)

Let us cultivate the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. May our goal be to replace our human reactions with Spirit-filled qualities. May we show a gentleness that is powerful and exhibits the love of God to the world around us. Let our gentleness be evident to all!



1. Read 1 Timothy 3:2-4, Ephesians 4:1-3. How would you define gentleness?
2. Examine Titus 3:1-8, what can be done to develop an attitude of gentleness?
3. According to Matthew 11:28-30, what does it mean when Jesus says He is gentle and humble in heart?
4. What does 1 Peter 3:14-17 say about the importance of showing gentleness to others?
5. Our theme verses, Philippians 4:4-7, talk about gentleness. What are some of the results that are evident when we practice gentleness?
6. Compare Colossians 3:5-11 to 3:12-14. Why should we have gentleness and the other qualities of the Spirit when compared to the human reactions described in verses 5-11?
7. **Discussion Question:** What should you be doing to develop your attitude of gentleness? Is there something blocking you from doing this?

**Close your session with a time of prayer.** Ask God examine the level of gentleness in your life and ask Him help you develop the fruit of the Spirit, even when you'd rather respond in other ways.



*I have power, through Christ, to control myself.*

*WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS:*

<sup>11</sup> For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. <sup>12</sup> It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live **self-controlled**, upright and godly lives in this present age, <sup>13</sup> while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, <sup>14</sup> who gave himself for us to

redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

*Titus 2:11-14 (NIV)*

A dictionary definition of self-control says “restraint exercised over one’s own impulses, emotions, or desires.” From a Christian viewpoint, it implies a battle between our flesh and what the Holy Spirit desires for us. In Luke 9:23, Jesus told us that we must deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Him. It is vital to our Christian walk to deny “self” or in other words, control our selfish desires so we follow God with complete devotion.

The pathway that leads to heaven is narrow and is not easy to follow according to Luke 13:24. However, whatever is impossible with man is possible with God. It requires us to submit our “self” to the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. As stated in Galatians 5:22-23, the fruit of the Holy Spirit includes self-control. Again, we do not have enough willpower to achieve goodness, godliness, or any of the fruits of the Spirit. In the paradoxical statement of John 12:23-26, Jesus says we must die in order to live. This principle can be applied to this situation of dying to “self” and living in the power of the Holy Spirit.

There are many activities that lead us away from the holiness that God requires. Ephesians 5:18 says to not be drunk with wine or be involved with debauchery, but to be filled with the Holy Spirit. In our society today, it seems that we have taken debauchery to an all time high. We engage in doing all sorts of things that satisfy our human desires: drugs, sex, material goods, loving our money, pursuing career goals, getting ahead of the neighbors, and doing whatever it takes to claw our way to the top. Self-control is not even on our radar screen. Where will that kind of life lead us? “Like a city whose walls are broken through is a person who lacks self-control.” (Proverbs 25:28) Our pursuit of all of these “things” will lead to ruin. Sadly for many people, their choice is the material world over what is eternal. Instead, we should invest our time in activities that will bring eternal rewards.

There is also another little matter we should address – our tongues. “Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless.” (James 1:26) In our sinful condition, certainly our tongue often leads us to places and situations where we never intend to go. Lies and deceit were the daily routine. Even after accepting Christ into our lives, our tongue is still an area where many people struggle. We think we are okay and then open our mouth and it all falls apart. This is where life in the Holy Spirit becomes fundamental in our total transformation from death into life.

“Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation—but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.” (Romans 8:12-13) How do we do this? We must become “children of God” and allow Him to lead us by the Spirit. “ ‘Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,’ says the LORD Almighty.” (Zechariah 4:6)

1. Read 1 Timothy 3:1-5 about the qualifications for overseers.
  - A) How does self-control contribute to the other qualities required for church leaders?
  
  - B) Do you think these qualities apply only to church leaders or should these principles apply to every Christian believer?
  
2. Examine 1 Corinthians 7:1-5. What can happen to Christians when they do not have self-control?
  
3. Study Titus, chapter 2, before you answer the following questions.
  - A) What groups should be taught to be self-controlled?
  
  - B) How does someone teach self-control?
  
  - C) How does someone learn self-control?
  
  - D) Why is self-control involved with the teaching of sound doctrine?
  
4. Read 2 Peter 1:5-9. What does this passage say about having self-control (along with the other qualities) in full measure or in increasing measure? What is the ultimate outcome for those people who make these additions to their life?
  
5. **Discussion Question:** In what areas of your life do you need to develop more self-control? What steps should you take to allow the Holy Spirit to help you achieve more self-control?

**Close your session with a time of prayer.** Ask God examine the areas where you need more self-control and then ask Him to help you become the person He wants you to be.



*I can cope with the hardships of life and death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.*

*WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS:*

<sup>18</sup> God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the **hope** set before us may be greatly encouraged. <sup>19</sup> We have this **hope** as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the

curtain, <sup>20</sup> where our forerunner, Jesus, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.

*Hebrews 6:18-20 (NIV)*

The dictionary says hope is wanting something to happen or be true and think that it could happen or be true. Therefore, hope includes some element of doubt. Biblical hope is much different. It is knowing that something will happen or that it is true. There is no hint of doubt. As our theme verse in Hebrews says, hope is an anchor for the soul. It is firm and secure. It is impossible for God to lie.

The Hebrew word for hope is *batah*, which means confidence, security, and not having a care. In Greek it is *elpis* or *elpizo*. Again, there is no doubt attached to the word. Biblical hope is a confident expectation or assurance based upon the idea of full confidence. It leads us to the conclusion that there is no doubt about it!

You have probably heard the saying, “seeing is believing.” In Hebrews 11:1, it says something that is just the opposite. “Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.” This means that we can be sure without seeing. Our faith gives us such great confidence that we do not need to see all the details. We can be certain that what God says is the pure truth. The Word of God, and what it contains, is not something we read and then say to ourselves, “I hope so.” It is something that we can be completely sure of – without a doubt it is true.

Hope is not a feeling. It is a “sure thing” because it comes directly from God, the most reliable source in the universe. We can base our life upon the Word of God and the principles that it teaches. God always keeps His promises. Therefore, we have the certainty of salvation (1 John 1:9), of eternal life (John 3:16), of the resurrection (Acts 24:15), and of heaven (John 14:3) – just to mention a few things we can be certain of as Christians.

As Christians, our hope helps us to persevere whenever the unexpected events enter our lives. Life is not always easy. Being a Christian does not give us a “pass” on the hard things of life. It may be a serious illness, financial problems, relationship issues, the loss of a job, marriage problems, difficulties with our children – the challenges of life seem endless at times. However, we do have a multitude of promises throughout the Bible. “The LORD makes firm the steps of the one who delights in him; though he may stumble, he will not fall, for the LORD upholds him with his hand.” (Psalms 37:23-24)

The world around us may seem to be falling apart. The car needs repairs, there are plumbing problems, or the house needs a new roof – all of the “things” we possess sometimes can overwhelm us. When there seems to be no end in sight, we may need to remind ourselves of the old hymn: “My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus’ blood and righteousness. I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly trust in Jesus’ Name. On Christ the solid Rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand; all other ground is sinking sand.” (Edward Mote)

*Many people have no hope, others have unrealistic hope that God will not send them to hell.*  
(Unknown)

1. How does the Bible define and describe hope?
  - A) Romans 4:18-21
  - B) Romans 5:1-8
  - C) 1 Peter 3:15
  - D) 1 John 3:2-3
2. See Proverbs 13:12, Psalms 33:16-22, Hebrews 6:19-20, and Titus 3:7. What is the difference between worldly hope and a Christian hope?
3. According to 1 Peter 3:15-17, how does hope prepare us to witness about our faith to other people?
4. In 1 Corinthians 13:13, it states that these three remain, faith, hope, and love. What do you think this means?
5. According to 1 Peter 1:13 and 1:21, and Hebrews 6:18-20, what does it mean to hope in God?
6. Look up Romans 8:24-26; how does our hope help us to preserve through the tough times?
7. Read Acts 2:25-28 and Colossians 1:27. What is the hope we are holding on to for the future?
8. **Discussion Question:** Do you have a problem holding on to hope when you don't see any immediate results from your prayers to God? What can be done to increase your hope and confidence in the promises of God?

**Close your session with a time of prayer.** Ask God to show you miracles, signs, and wonders about what He is doing in the lives of other people so it will increase your faith and give you more hope.



*As a child of God, I do not think too highly or too lowly of myself.*

*WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS:*

<sup>1</sup>Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, <sup>2</sup>then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one

mind. <sup>3</sup>Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in **humility** value others above yourselves, <sup>4</sup>not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

*Philippians 2:1-4 (NIV)*

A dictionary definition of humility says: the quality or state of not thinking you are better than other people; the quality or state of being humble. The word also comes from the Latin word *humus* that means “earth.” It clearly is a word that would mean that someone is “down to earth” and does not have an inflated opinion of themselves. “He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” (Micah 6:8) This indicates that God thinks that being humble is a good thing. In Christian theology, humility is a virtue and something that every believer should strive to achieve.

One story is told of the parishioner who received a pin to wear in recognition of being a very humble man. The following Sunday, he wore the pin to church but they took it away from him because he was too proud. Pride and humility seem to be opposite sides of the same coin. James 4:6 says, “God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.”

Many people today are very quick at “self-promotion.” Every chance they get they remind you that they do “great work” or they point out how it is “their idea” when a new initiative at work turns out to be a good thing. However, in God’s eyes, self-promotion is not the way that leads to success. According to James 4:10 it says, “Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.” When we are exalted by God, it is the best “promotion” that we can earn.

Jesus Christ is our model of humility. To paraphrase Philippians 2:5-8, we are told that our attitude should be like that of Christ because He humbled Himself and was obedient to death – even death on the cross. For Christ to achieve obedience to His Father, it involved humility. Proud people often resist the advice of others and believe that they can do anything on their own. However, a humble person knows that they will benefit from the help of others. Having help from God is the best kind of help any person could ever get.

In our Christian life, we need to learn to put God’s will before our own will. It takes strength and confidence to be humble. Of course, many people associate being “humble” to being “weak.” Jesus said that we should follow His example, “Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” (Matthew 11:29) It is significant that Jesus showed the people what “humble” really was.

In Luke 14:7-10, an account is given about Jesus eating at a Pharisee’s house. He noticed that some of the guests took seats at the table of honor. Then he told a parable to them about being invited to a wedding feast. You should not take a place of honor, because later, a more distinguished guest may arrive and you will be asked to move. That would be a humiliation for you. But instead, you should take the lowest position and when the host sees you, you will be moved up to a better place and you will be honored in front of the other guests.

A true test for being humble is that when you are serving others, you don't mind being called a servant. As our theme verses state, we should value others above ourselves and put the interests of others before our own.

1. How does the Bible define and describe humility?
  - A) Matthew 18:4
  - B) Romans 12:3
  - C) Philippians 2:3-11
  - D) Micah 6:8
2. What is the result of walking in humility?
  - A) James 4:10
  - B) 1 Peter 5:5
  - C) Proverbs 22:4
  - D) Matthew 11:29
  - E) Matthew 23:12
  - F) 2 Chronicles 34:27
3. According to 1 Chronicles 7:14 and Jonah 3:5-10, what is the result when a group of people (city or nation) humble themselves?
4. In Proverbs 16:19 and 29:23, what is the opposite of humility?
5. What can the lack of humility lead to?
  - A) Ezekiel 16:49-50
  - B) Luke 18:9-14
  - C) Hebrews 3:7-11
6. **Discussion Question:** What area(s) in your life could use a good dose of humility? What is your opinion about the possibility of our nation experiencing true humility?

**Close your session with a time of prayer.** Ask God to help you understand how He sees you in your struggle with humility. Also ask Him to help you see the world around you from His point of view.