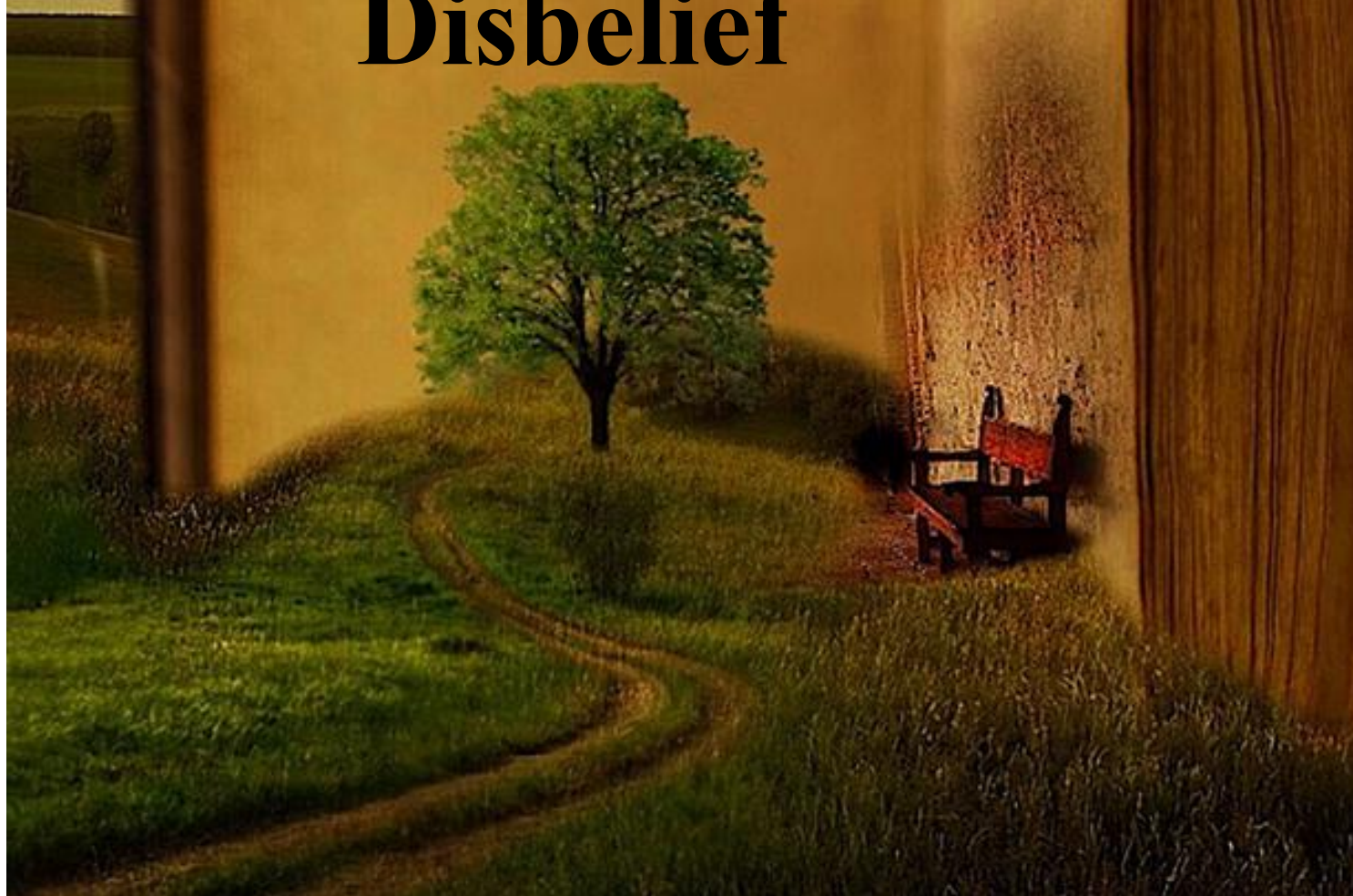


New Christian Growth Series

Topical Study:

Doubt and Disbelief





Instructions:

1. Please fill in the blanks in these lessons and the review booklet, using a King James Version of the Bible.
2. When you are finished, keep this lesson book and **return the completed review booklet** by U.S. mail or e-mail to:

Plowman's Academy

575 US Highway 250

Greenwich, OH 44837

OR

plowman@mapministry.org

3. When we receive your review booklet, we will grade it, send it back to you, and send the next course in this volume.
4. When you have completed all 12 books in this course, we will send you a certificate.

Plowman's Academy was started to provide the opportunity for teens and adults to study God's Word more deeply, imitate Jesus more closely, and be more sensitive and obedient to God's Holy Spirit—all through the means of correspondence (communication by letters or mail) courses. Jesus taught us that when we set out to follow Him, we ought to do so with no regrets, no second thoughts, and no turning back. We welcome you to join us as we aim to turn from sin, surrender to God, seek Him until He rains righteousness upon us, and then follow Him faithfully and fully forever. Let us look always to Jesus and live always for eternity, for Jesus Christ is our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

Thank you for joining us. An academy is a place of study or training in a specific subject or skill. At Plowman's Academy, the subject is Jesus. Put your hand to the plow and do not look back.



And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

~Luke 9:62

Giving Credit and Appreciation to Ray Witmer

Ray Witmer, author of this Bible study curriculum, has given us permission to use his studies taken from the Word of God.

We are very grateful and appreciate Brother Ray's heart for God and his willingness to let us use his resources to spread God's Word among this generation of people.

Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the Lord, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.

~Hosea 10:12

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INSTRUCTION SHEET FOR BIBLE LESSONS

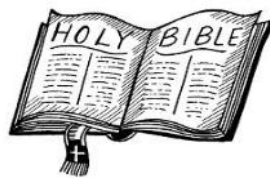
- A. The Bible verses used in this study are taken from the King James Version of the Bible, translated out of the original tongues with the former translation diligently compared and revised.
- B. Before doing each lesson, take time to ask God to open your understanding and show you the truth.
- C. For the best results, do only one lesson each day. Meditate on each day's lesson (there are four weeks of lessons per book).
- D. Keep in mind that these lessons are based on what the Bible says and not on man's opinion.
- E. These lessons are designed to help you to know the truth, to know the Lord in a personal way, and to trust what the Bible says and teaches you.
- F. Remember, it is not what you, I, or any preacher says, but what the Bible says.
- G. You must learn to stand on what the Bible says to “study to show yourself approved unto God, workman that needed not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth.” (2 Timothy 2:15)
- H. Who wrote the Bible? (2 Peter 1:21).
- I. All Scripture is inspired by God (2 Timothy 3:16).
- J. Regardless of what man says, the believer (Christian) has direct access to the throne of God and is responsible directly to God. This access is through Jesus Christ and Him only (1 Timothy 2:5).
- K. These studies are to help you have peace of mind (Isaiah 26:3-4).
- L. These studies will help you know if you are going to heaven or hell (Romans 10:13).
- M. These lessons will help you with assurance and security; these are not the same. The securing of the believer is God's work. It is a part of God's great work of salvation depending solely upon His infinite grace. Assurance is the believer's acceptance of the security provided for him in Christ. It is the result of the human soul resting in what God has promised in His Word to accomplish. This is why it is important to know what the Bible says (1 John 5:11-13).



**TAKE TIME TO READ BELOW
BEFORE DOING THIS LESSON**

Meditate on the Scriptures of This Lesson and
Ask Yourself These Questions:

1. What do these verses teach me about God and myself?
2. Is there an example here to follow or avoid?
3. Is there a command, a promise, or a warning that I need to apply?
4. What action do I need to take to align my life with this truth?



The Bible is the Word of God

LESSON 1

REPLACE DOUBT AND DISBELIEF WITH FAITH

This week's Bible verse to memorize: Psalm 31:24

Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the LORD.

Faith is dead to doubts, dumb to discouragements, and blind to impossibilities.

“And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for _____. But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. And Peter answered Him and said, Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water. And He said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he _____ on the _____, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth His hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little _____, wherefore [why] didst thou _____?” (Matthew 14:26-31).

Until you discover what it means to have faith, you cannot begin to walk by faith; doubts and disbelief will take over your mind and life.

“Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and _____, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done. And all things, whatsoever ye shall _____ in _____, _____, ye shall receive” (Matthew 21:21-22).

Faith in God is more than just believing He exists; it is living with confidence and having no doubts that He will fulfill all His promises and bring salvation to you.

“It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. Hast thou _____? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that _____ is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of _____: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin” (Romans 14:21-23).

You must discover whether you have placed your faith in God or whether you doubt Him. As your faith is tested, the true spiritual state of your heart is revealed.

“And they were offended in Him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house. And He did _____ many mighty works there because of their _____” (Matthew 13:57-58).

As you begin to walk by faith and not disbelief, there will be times when you will stumble and fall. However, falling and getting up is part of learning how to walk. Once you get up and dust yourself off, you can take your next step with more wisdom, more strength, more faith, and fewer doubts.

Today's Bible reading is Hebrews chapter 11.

LESSON 2

WHAT IT MEANS TO BELIEVE IN JESUS

This week's Bible verse to memorize: Psalm 31:24

Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the LORD.

Laying a solid foundation of faith is essential to gaining a sense of unshakable peace. If you are unclear about who Jesus is and what place He holds in your life, then your faith will be flimsy.

“And He asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child. And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us. Jesus said unto him, If thou canst _____, all things are _____ to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; _____ mine _____” (Mark 9:21-24).

“Afterward He appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided [rebuked] them with their _____ and _____ of _____, because they believed not them which had seen Him after He was _____. And He said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that _____ and is baptized shall be _____; but he that believeth not shall be damned [condemned]” (Mark 16:14-16).

To believe in Jesus Christ is to have a confident conviction that He is who the Bible says He is and that He keeps His promises. By placing your trust in Him, you enter into a personal and eternal relationship with the Son of God.

“For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be _____, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest _____ when thou art judged” (Romans 3:3-4).

Jesus came to earth to deliver you from sin's grasp. He came to set you free from the power of guilt and shame.

“I am come a _____ into the _____, that whosoever _____ on me should not abide in _____” (John 12:46).

“Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by _____. Be not highminded, but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee” (Romans 11:20-21).

“Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the _____ of our Lord was exceeding abundant with _____ and _____ which is in _____” (1 Timothy 1:13-14).

Jesus' life is more than a footnote in history—He changed history. However, your salvation from sin and death, both in this lifetime and for eternity, comes when you believe in Jesus, and not just when you believe that He lived.

Today's Bible reading is 1 Timothy chapter 1.

LESSON 3

THE FAITH THAT WAVERS (PART I)

This week's Bible verse to memorize: Psalm 31:24

Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the LORD.

Losing faith in God in the midst of difficult circumstances would undermine what you claim to believe about Him. However, faith tested and proven yields immeasurable fruit in the kingdom of God.

“Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of _____, in departing from the _____. But _____ one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence _____ unto the end;...” (Hebrews 3:12-14).

God's desire is to mold and shape you into His image so that you reflect His beauty, love, and grace to a dying world. He allows certain situations to touch your life so that your faith in Him will be strengthened with no doubt.

“And to whom swore He that they should _____ enter into His _____, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of _____” (Hebrews 3:18-19).

The testing of your disbelief gives you an answer to questions like these: Do you really say what you believe? Or are you spouting off biblical truths without trusting them in your heart? The Bible says, “The testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing” (James 1:3-4, NASB).

“He that _____ shall inherit all things; and I will be his _____, and he shall be My _____. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death” (Revelation 21:7-8).

When your beliefs go on trial, you should slow down and set your focus on Christ. Attempting to get to the other side of adversity too quickly will sometimes prevent you from learning the lessons God wants to teach you.

“And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, _____ on the _____, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house” (Acts 16:30-31).

Learning to endure hardships will benefit you and mature you as a believer; it will strengthen the foundation of your beliefs. Instead of allowing yourself to be swayed by your emotions in the moment, you can live victoriously by faith when you refuse to let your beliefs be shaken. God always brings to completion the works He begins in you.

Is your faith being shaken from doubt or disbelief?

Today's Bible reading is Acts chapter 10.

LESSON 4

THE FAITH THAT WAVERS (PART II)

This week's Bible verse to memorize: Psalm 31:24

Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the LORD.

When circumstances appear to take an unexpected turn, sometimes your faith can be rocked. You may wonder how you will ever be able to endure the tragedy or injustice unfolding before you.

If any of you lack wisdom, let him _____ of _____, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in _____, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord" (James 1:5-7).

However, adversity should never become the end of your belief; it should become the beginning. No matter how your world is rocked, a strong belief system will enable you to endure life's toughest hardships.

"A double minded man is _____ in all his ways. Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is _____: But the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away" (James 1:8-10).

What should you do when you discern that your circumstances are indeed rattling your beliefs? How do you regain your footing? Make a decision to choose to believe that God is trustworthy and faithful.

God always keeps His promises. He desires the best for your life. At times, what you think is the best and what He knows is the best may be conflicting. However, God's way always produces the most spiritual fruit, the strongest character, and the most perfect results.

"For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways. Blessed is the man that _____ temptation: for when he is _____, he shall receive the crown of _____, which the Lord hath promised to them that _____" (James 1:11-12).

Refuse to doubt God. The enemy hopes to thwart you by infusing doubt into your mind that will lead you to question your beliefs. When you refuse to look at your circumstances through worldly eyes, God gives you a sense of peace and rest.

"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own _____, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth _____: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth _____. Do not err, my beloved brethren" (James 1:13-16).

Read God's Word and meditate on His promises. Searching the Bible for God's promises is one way you can quit the wavering of your beliefs and stand on all His promises with the deep assurance that God always keeps His Word.

Today's Bible reading is James chapter 1.

LESSON 5

THE REQUIREMENTS OF BELIEF

This week's Bible verse to memorize: Psalm 31:24

Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the LORD.

Your desire to walk by faith, stepping solely within the will of God for your life, begins with a desire to hear what He is saying. When you have no idea where God is leading you or what He wants to change in your heart, listening is the first and most crucial component to greater belief.

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the _____, and shalt _____ in thine heart that God hath _____ Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto _____” (Romans 10:9-10).

As you deepen your relationship with the Lord, you can improve your hearing of God's voice through the following:

- **Meditate upon God's Word.** If you know the Word of God, discerning His voice clearly will be easier.
- **Establish a time to listen to God.** Your prayers are more effective when you're willing to hear God's heart.
- **Expect God to speak.** If you don't believe that God desires to communicate to you today, you won't be as inclined to listen. However, when you do believe the truth that He does want to speak to you, you will hear Him loudly and clearly.

“By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. But without _____ it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must _____ that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that _____ Him” (Hebrews 11:5-6).

In your excitement to see God work in your life, you may forget that He knows the big picture, and He also knows what is best for you. Your zeal apart from His divine knowledge can send you racing into the unknown when it's best for you to wait upon Him for guidance.

“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to _____; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained _____, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to _____” (1 Timothy 1:15-16).

You may forget that some of your greatest personal growth as a believer—and the preparation necessary for God's next step in your life—takes place in the stillness of your heart.

“Wait on the LORD: be of good _____, and He shall _____ thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD” (Psalm 27:14).

Today's Bible reading is Psalm chapter 27.

LESSON 6

LEARNING IN TROUBLED WATERS

This week's Bible verse to memorize: Psalm 31:24

Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the LORD.

God promises that when you face challenging times, He will keep His divine eye upon you. He wants to teach and guide you through the difficult times, but you must position yourself to respond to His signals. That is, you need to have a real longing to follow God's way and His way only. Scripture compares this kind of yearning to a deer panting for water:

“As the hart [deer] panteth [longs] after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after _____, O God. My soul _____ for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God? My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?” (Psalm 42:1-3).

Be willing to be taught by God. He will transform trials into times of learning for those who look to Him for guidance. Such was the case with Hannah as she pleaded for a child:

“So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk. Now Eli the priest sat upon a seat by a post of the temple of the LORD. And she was in bitterness of soul, and _____ unto the LORD, and _____ sore. And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if Thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget Thine handmaid, but wilt give unto Thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the _____ all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head” (1 Samuel 1:9-11).

It was also true for Mary and Martha when their brother Lazarus died:

“Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know, that even now, _____ Thou wilt ask of God, _____ will _____ it Thee. Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again” (John 11:21-23).

Yield to His will. You must have a willing spirit if you want to learn what God wants to teach you in the “classroom” of His choice. Most of us would design a comfortable, pleasurable setting in which to gain understanding. God, however, knows the best way to instill wisdom and may choose to use pain, fears, or rejection to do so.

“I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that _____ in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much _____: for without Me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned” (John 15:5-6).

Troubles are an unwelcome fact of life, but they can have value. Often what you wanted to avoid turns out to be the very thing you needed. God asks that you have a tender heart, a teachable spirit, and a yielded will; He doesn't want you to doubt what He is doing in your life. Does this describe you?

Today's Bible reading is 1 Samuel chapter 1.

LESSON 7

WHEN THE ODDS ARE AGAINST YOU

This week's Bible verse to memorize: John 1:12

But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God,
even to them that believe on His name:...

Do you need special encouragement today? Does it feel as if all your sources of security have crumbled around you? Gideon understood the feeling of having all odds against him. He faced the challenge of his life: fighting the mighty battalions of Midian with an army of only 300 men.

“And the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the children of the east lay along in the valley like grasshoppers for _____; and their camels were without number, as the sand by the sea side for multitude. And when Gideon was come, behold, there was a man that told a dream unto his fellow, and said, Behold, I dreamed a dream, and, lo, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto a tent, and smote it that it fell, and overturned it, that the tent lay along. And his fellow answered and said, This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel: for into his hand hath _____ Midian, and all the host” (Judges 7:12-14).

Can you imagine how Gideon's heart must have sunk upon seeing the view of his enemies? However, God did not allow Gideon to remain discouraged. When he returned to his camp, he heard two men discussing a dream which, being interpreted, was of God giving Midian over to the Israelites.

“And it was so, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream, and the interpretation thereof, that he _____, and returned into the host of Israel, and said, _____; for the LORD hath _____ into your hand the host of Midian. And he divided the three hundred men into three companies, and he put a trumpet in every man's hand, with empty pitchers, and lamps within the pitchers. And he said unto them, Look on me, and do likewise: and, behold, when I come to the outside of the camp, it shall be that, as I do, so shall ye do. When I blow with a trumpet, I and all that are with me, then blow ye the trumpets also on every side of all the camp, and say, The sword of the _____, and of Gideon” (Judges 7:15-18).

Gideon's boldness was renewed, and yours can be, too. Such courage is available to you, even when odds appear stacked against you. This is because you can know for sure without any doubts that God will not let you face your enemies alone.

Do you have any doubts and disbelief? What means will you take to overcome them?

Please write down a Bible verse you will use to fight doubt and disbelief:

No matter what you face today, God is greater. Trust him, and he will use you in a mighty, wonderful way!

Today's Bible reading is Judges chapter 7.

LESSON 8

OVERCOMING INSECURITY

This week's Bible verse to memorize: John 1:12

But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God,
even to them that believe on His name:...

No quick solution exists for overcoming insecurity. Instead, you should try to identify which circumstances generate those insecure feelings, and then in the end, you must decide to overcome that state of mind. "Drifting" into security is impossible; you must instead work toward it.

"What shall we then say to these things? If _____ be for us, who can be _____ us? He that _____ His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely _____ us all things?" (Romans 8:31-32).

Having a sense of security is more than simply building self-esteem. Jesus Christ is your genuine source of strength and confidence—if you attempt to overcome doubt without Him, you will simply be masking it with your own efforts.

"Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that _____. Who is he that condemneth? It is _____ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh _____ for us" (Romans 8:33-34).

The way you see yourself is not necessarily the way you truly are. Instead, you have to ask how the Lord sees you. To shift your focus off yourself and off your mistakes, you must get into God's Word. Therefore, to overcome disbelief, you must first deal with any doubt you may have about the Bible. The Bible is so powerful that when you read what God says about you, your thinking will start to change, and you will be able to step out of insecurity's destructive mindset.

"Who shall _____ us from the _____ of _____? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." (Romans 8:35-36).

To continue the process of ridding yourself of insecurities, focus on the positive qualities in your life. Take a blank sheet of paper, and ask the Lord to guide you through an honest assessment of your advantageous and good traits. You will be surprised at what God shows you; however, it is important never to look at others' talents to see how you measure up. No one is like you, so it is pointless to make comparisons. Your mission should be to follow Jesus in the way that He calls you—individually. Consequently, you can look to Him for your security.

Now, list your distinguishing features:

Today's Bible reading is Romans chapter 8.

LESSON 9

THE LANDMINE OF DISCOURAGEMENT

This week's Bible verse to memorize: John 1:12

But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God,
even to them that believe on His name:...

There are people who suffer the effects of discouragement for years; they don't know how to repair the damage caused by this devastating landmine, and they begin to doubt. How does this loss of confidence and optimism begin?

“Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? _____ thou in _____:
for I shall yet _____ Him for the _____ of His countenance” (Psalm 42:5).

Disappointment is your emotional response to a failed expectation. When you allow disappointment to fester by refusing to recognize and deal with the failure, you slip into discouragement. Disappointments are inevitable, but believers don't have to be in bondage to discouragement.

“O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I _____ Thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar. Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of Thy waterspouts: all Thy waves and Thy billows are gone over me” (Psalm 42:6-7).

You will periodically face events that make you feel weak. Discouragement, however, should be temporary. Just as you drive through a tunnel, you can enter moments of discouragement and then come out on the other side. I have experienced situations in which I was very discouraged for a season of time. On occasion, I have had to get on my knees during the night to cry out to God for encouragement. After asking Him for a change in attitude and help to lay down my burdens, I have been able to fall back to sleep.

“Yet the Lord will command His _____ in the day time, and in the night His _____ shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my _____. (Psalm 42:8).

In order to gain victory, you must first look within yourself. You need to admit your specific discouragement as well as the unresolved conflicts in your heart. Identifying the root cause of your disbelief and disheartened feeling allows you to work through them.

“I will say unto God my rock, Why hast Thou _____ me? why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy? As with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me; while they say daily unto me, Where is thy God? Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? _____ thou in _____: for I shall yet _____ Him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God” (Psalm 42:9-11).

Most importantly, you must turn to God. As long as you keep dwelling on your hurt, your suffering, your embarrassment, or your doubts and shattered dreams, you will wallow in despair. But the moment you lift your head and say, “Father,” you take the first step toward breaking free from doubt, disbelief, and discouragement.

Today's Bible reading is Psalm chapter 42.

LESSON 10

SPIRITUAL DISCOURAGEMENT

This week's Bible verse to memorize: John 1:12

But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God,
even to them that believe on His name:...

Discouragement, doubt, and disbelief can be the result of many different causes, but Satan is always the instigator. He will do anything he can to dishearten you and keep your focus on negative things instead of on God.

"I will bless the Lord at all times: His _____ shall _____ be in my mouth. My soul shall make her boast in the LORD: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad. O magnify the LORD with me, and let us _____ together" (Psalm 34:1-3).

A subtle form of spiritual discouragement is the idea that you cannot please God. This is a trap of the devil, and too many Christians are ensnared by it. If you were to write down everything you thought you must do to please God, how long would that list be before it was complete?

"I _____ the LORD, and He _____ me, and _____ me from all my fears. They looked unto Him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed. This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him, and _____ him out of all his troubles" (Psalm 34:4-6).

You probably assume you should read the Bible more, pray more, give more, and witness more. You could probably fill up both sides of a paper with things you should be doing more. Then, you would probably look at your list and realize it would be impossible to accomplish all of it. That's the trap. What pleases the Lord is your obedience, and not your adherence to a long checklist of duties.

"The angel of the LORD _____ round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them. O taste and see that the LORD is _____: blessed is the man that _____ in Him. O fear the LORD, ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear Him" (Psalm 34:7-9).

Unanswered prayer is another source of disbelief. When you make a request of the Lord, He does not always answer in the manner you want or with the timing you would prefer. When this is the case and you don't get what you asked for, you far too often will allow disbelief to creep in, and from there, you might even decide to give up on prayer.

"The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that _____ the LORD shall not want any good thing. Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD. What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it. The eyes of the LORD are upon the _____, and His ears are open unto their _____" (Psalm 34:10-15).

Break the chains of disbelief by turning to God. Pray to God about three things aloud: 1) Thank Him for being with you through your disbelief; 2) Admit He is in control of your life; and 3) Acknowledge that He is good and will ultimately work the circumstances out for your benefit.

Today's Bible reading is Psalm chapter 34.

LESSON 11

WHAT HINDERS US

This week's Bible verse to memorize: John 1:12

But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God,
even to them that believe on His name:...

Because God has complete knowledge and wisdom, He knows exactly how each of His children should live. You, however, must struggle to figure it out.

“O the depth of the riches both of the _____ and _____ of God! how _____ are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor? Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen” (Romans 11:33-36).

Doubt is one reason you will miss what God has planned for you. You may wonder whether He is really interested in your problems and may even question the practicality of His solutions. Feeling unworthy will also cause you to stumble. When you think you are undeserving, you are refusing to believe Him.

“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the _____ which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with _____ the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the _____ and _____ of our faith; who for the _____ that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:1-2).

Busyness often leads people to drift away from godly ways. Because you are too tied up in other things, you will stop asking what God wants for you, and you will make mistakes. In each of these cases, you miss His will.

Fear comes in two forms to cause you to stumble. One apprehension is that God might ask you to do something you don't want to do. The other apprehension is that you will fail at whatever He gives you to accomplish.

When you continue in your thoughts or actions, even when you know they are wrong by God's standards, you are committing willful sin. Such transgression prevents you from living in the center of the Father's purposes. Your holy God will not tolerate such sin.

“For consider him that _____ such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against _____” (Hebrews 12:3-4).

The cross of Christ reveals both God's trustworthiness and your worth to Him. It establishes Jesus' importance in your life, emphasizes the perfection of God's plans, and points to your freedom from slavery to sin.

Today's Bible reading is Hebrews chapter 12.

LESSON 12

THE REAL WAR

This week's Bible verse to memorize: John 1:12

But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God,
even to them that believe on His name:...

The enemy's primary strategy against the believer is deception by doubt and disbelief.

"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode _____ in the _____, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a _____, and the father of it" (John 8:44).

It is hard to avoid deception when you are not aware of the adversary's schemes.

"For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things. To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ; Lest _____ should get an advantage of us: for we are not _____ of his devices" (2 Corinthians 2:9-11).

One of Satan's oldest deceptions, which goes back to Adam and Eve, is the temptation to doubt what the Lord has said. To do so means to doubt God's heart and character, which is similar to a soldier on the front line setting down his weapon as the enemy approaches—mistrusting God sets you up to be knocked down repeatedly by the enemy. If you listen to this voice of doubt, you give Satan a foothold; that will weaken you so that he can bring about further destruction.

"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth _____ against the knowledge of God, and bringing into _____ every thought to the _____ of Christ;..." (2 Corinthians 10:3-5).

Another scheme of the devil is to distract the believer. A distraction is anything that drags you away from what is most important and makes you so busy that you lose focus. Satan doesn't use just blatantly sinful or superficial things to divert you from abiding in Christ; he will even use good things to subtly build up a wall of "noise" around you, so that you gradually stop listening to the Lord's voice.

"And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your _____ is fulfilled. Do ye look on things after the outward appearance? if any man trust to himself that he is Christ's, let him of himself think this again, that, as he is _____, even so are we Christ's. For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your destruction, I should not be ashamed:..." (2 Corinthians 10:6-8).

Ask God to reveal any areas in your life where you may be susceptible to deception. List the areas:

Today's Bible reading is 2 Corinthians chapter 10.

LESSON 13

WINNING STRUGGLES WITH DOUBT

This week's Bible verse to memorize: Mark 9:23

Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.

Doubt has a tendency to lead to anxiety, frustration, and fear, all of which can short-circuit your faith. Such a nagging sense of insecurity can come from a variety of sources: A lack of knowledge about God's character, confusion regarding His promises, or a misunderstanding of His plans.

"If any of you lack _____, let him _____ of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (James 1:5).

The presence of sin in your life may prompt you to question the truth of the Scriptures in order to justify yourself.

"But let him ask in _____, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed" (James 1:6).

Focusing on circumstances instead of the Lord's sufficiency can cause hope and joy to drain away.

"For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A _____ man is unstable in all his ways" (James 1:7-8).

Previous failures might lead to a more pessimistic outlook about current and future situations.

"Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted: But the _____, in that he is made _____: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away" (James 1:9-10).

Other people's criticisms can throw you into doubt. Whatever the cause, when you become overwhelmed with skepticism, your usefulness to God will be limited.

"Blessed is the man that endureth _____: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath _____ to them that love Him" (James 1:12).

Believers' doubts are a tool of the enemy, who will often add his own words to increase your negative thinking. He reminds you of past mistakes and times when your prayers appeared to go unanswered.

"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, _____ any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his _____, and enticed" (James 1:13-14).

Asking yourself, "Did God really say...?" makes you wonder if you truly know God's will. As the Father of Lies, Satan tries to twist the truth to serve his purposes.

"Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth _____: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth _____. Do not err, my beloved brethren" (James 1:15-16).

When doubts surface, confess them as sin; recall past instances of trusting God and His faithfulness, and meditate on God's promises. The Holy Spirit will guide you into truth so you can overcome your doubts.

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from _____, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no _____, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17).

Doubt doesn't fit who you are if you are truly a child of God.

Today's Bible reading is James chapter 1.

LESSON 14

WHEN DOUBT IS AT WORK

This week's Bible verse to memorize: Mark 9:23

Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.

Doubt is destructive. It will fill you with uncertainty, make you indecisive, and affect your ability to connect with God and receive His wisdom. You can know doubt is at work when you struggle to believe the following truths:

God loves you all the time. Most of us accept the Lord's deep affection for us when we are "good," but how about when we're disobedient?

"But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet _____, Christ _____ for _____" (Romans 5:8).

His love for you does not fluctuate with your behavior. You can be certain of this because, "God demonstrates His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." That is amazing grace—God loving you even while you rebelled against Him!

"Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be _____ from wrath through _____. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by _____ life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the _____" (Romans 5:9-11).

God has forgiven you for your disobedience. You know that God promises to forgive you when you confess your sins, but you may have trouble believing that you are forgiven. You must not allow feelings to determine truth. God's Word is true, and it says:

"He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our _____. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is His _____ toward them that fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He _____ our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear Him" (Psalm 103:10-13).

God has called you to serve Him. The Father often invites His children to join Him in His work—teaching a Sunday school class, helping a person in need, taking a leadership role, or speaking words about Jesus to another person. The presence of doubt means you will make excuses why you cannot obey, just as Moses did.

"And Moses said unto the Lord, O my LORD, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since Thou hast spoken unto Thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. And the LORD said unto him, Who hath _____ man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD? Now therefore _____, and _____ will be with thy mouth, and _____ thee what thou shalt say" (Exodus 4:10-12).

God promises He has equipped you with everything you need to do the work He has chosen for you.

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto _____, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10).

The opposite of doubt is faith. What best describes your state of mind?

Today's Bible reading is Psalm chapter 103.

LESSON 15

TURNING DOUBT INTO BLESSED ASSURANCE

This week's Bible verse to memorize: Mark 9:23

Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.

Have you ever heard someone say, “I used to be a Christian,” or “I was saved when I was a child; does that count?” Statements such as these are troubling, especially in light of the fact that assurance of one's salvation can be attained.

“The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the _____ of _____, which taketh away the _____ of the _____” (John 1:29).

The Bible says that Jesus died for all your sins and that nothing can separate you from the love of God.

“Who shall _____ us from the _____ of _____? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through _____ that _____ us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:35-39).

Still, there are people who think they can “undo” their salvation through sin or periods of disbelief.

“For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be _____, and to come unto the _____ of the _____. For there is one God, and one _____ between God and _____, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a _____ for all, to be testified in due time” (1 Timothy 2:3-6).

To combat doubts, you must understand the meaning of “being saved.” Salvation, which is through Christ alone, is God's deliverance of the believer from all the effects of sin. It also includes all the benefits God bestows upon you now and through eternity. If doubts are in your mind, approach God with a prayerful spirit and consider these questions:

Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, the Son of God, Who died on the cross for the sins of mankind?

Do you trust in Jesus Christ alone to save you from your sins?

Have you confessed your sins and humbly asked for God's forgiveness?

A person is either saved or not—there are no in-betweens. If you do not truly know, ask Him to save you today.

Today's Bible reading is Romans chapter 10.

LESSON 16

NEVER GIVE UP

This week's Bible verse to memorize: Mark 9:23

Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.

Winston Churchill, United Kingdom's Prime Minister during World War II, introduced a now-famous quote in a speech to students of his former school: "Never give in—never, never, never, never, in nothing great or small, large or petty... Never yield to force; never yield to the apparently overwhelming might of the enemy."

"By _____ Abraham, when he was tried, offered up _____: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that _____ was _____ to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure" (Hebrews 11:17-19).

As a Christian, you are called to wait upon God until He acts on your behalf. In order to resist the urge to give up, you must not focus on your circumstances. The Bible says that Moses endured his trials by "seeing Him who is unseen"—he consistently looked for God and His will.

"And Moses said unto the people, _____ ye _____, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The LORD shall _____ for you, and ye shall hold your _____" (Exodus 14:13-14).

Standing on the shore of the Red Sea while the Egyptians prepared an attack, Moses clung to God's promise of protection and called out, "Do not fear! Stand by, and see the salvation of the Lord." The sea parted, and the Israelites escaped from what seemed to be an impossible situation.

"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be _____ with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I will never _____ thee, nor _____ thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my _____, and I will not fear what _____ shall do unto me. Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the Word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation. Jesus Christ the _____ yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Hebrews 13:5-8).

Moses triumphed over many dangerous and difficult situations because he was committed to doing God's work. Too often, modern believers are devoted to pleasure, comfort, or their "rights." When the Lord's will interferes with those priorities, their obedience to God's call may falter. A genuine commitment to God, however, with no exceptions, means that nothing can cause you to give up or doubt.

Our unchanging Lord never deserts His children; He encourages you to cast your cares on Him

Please list the things you have quit or doubted:

Today's Bible reading is Hebrews chapter 11.

LESSON 17

THE SWAYING BATTLE OF FAITH

This week's Bible verse to memorize: Mark 9:23

Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.

Faith is oftentimes a battle. You may wake up in the morning feeling drawn toward the Lord and trusting in Him, but by the end of the day, you're finding yourself on the other side of the spectrum, doubting Him entirely. The pendulum of your thinking and emotions swings from doubt to faith, from faith to doubt. In 2 Chronicles, you can find the story of King Jehoshaphat and the key to stabilizing your faith.

“It came to pass after this also, that the children of Moab, and the children of Ammon, and with them other beside the Ammonites, came against Jehoshaphat to battle. Then there came some that told Jehoshaphat, saying, There cometh a great _____ against thee from beyond the sea on this side Syria; and, behold, they be in Hazazontamar, which is Engedi” (2 Chronicles 20:1-2).

What is it that causes you to swing toward doubt? When you focus on your circumstances rather than on God's power to overcome them, your faith becomes finite. When you give your feelings more credence than your knowledge of God, you will begin to doubt Him.

“And Jehoshaphat _____, and set himself to _____ the _____, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. And Judah gathered themselves together, to ask _____ of the LORD: even out of all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD” (2 Chronicles 20:3-4).

What will bring you back toward faith? The antidote to forgetting God's faithfulness can be found in the Word, where you can meditate on His promises. As you are reading His Word daily, try to recall the things He has done in your life.

“And Jehoshaphat stood in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court, And said, O LORD God of our _____, art not Thou God in heaven? and rulest not Thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in Thine hand is there not _____ and _____, so that none is able to withstand Thee? Art not Thou our _____, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before Thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham Thy _____ for ever?” (2 Chronicles 20:5-7)

Finally, ask the Lord for His perspective when you are faced with a difficult situation. Talking to the Lord directly will diffuse doubt more quickly than any other remedy.

In order to stabilize wavering faith, you must commune with God daily. Pray right now, and ask God to take away your doubts and to have His will be done in your life.

Today's Bible reading is 2 Chronicles chapter 20.

LESSON 18

THE FOUNDATION OF UNWAVERING FAITH

This week's Bible verse to memorize: Mark 9:23

Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.

When they set sail on a stormy sea, even Christ's disciples were afraid. Jesus said to them, "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?" Then He got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm.

"And His disciples came to Him, and awoke Him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish. And He saith unto them, _____ are ye _____, O ye of little faith? Then He arose, and _____ the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm. But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the _____ and the _____ Him!" (Matthew 8:25-27)

You may be faced with similar situations in life. It is easy to give in to fear and doubt when things all around you are in a state of tumult. The important thing to remember, though, is that if Christ is in you, He will be faithful to you. With Jesus on board, the disciples' boat would not have gone anywhere God did not ordain it to go; the same is true of your life. Although you cannot see Him, God is aware of your situation and will navigate it successfully.

"While He [Jesus] spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and _____ Him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay Thy hand upon her, and she shall _____. And Jesus arose, and followed him, and so did His disciples. And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind Him, and touched the hem of His garment: For she said within herself, If I may but touch His garment, I shall be whole" (Matthew 9:18-21).

Ironically, the faith of a woman who had never previously seen Christ was greater than that of His own disciples. Because she earnestly believed that Jesus could heal her, she dared to touch the hem of His garment.

"But Jesus turned Him about, and when He saw her, He said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee _____. And the woman was made whole from that hour" (Matthew 9:22).

Jesus is faithful to all of His followers regardless of the degree to which they trust Him. However, you might find that you miss out on the richness of His blessings when you give in to doubt, disbelief, and fear.

What are your goals to correct your disbelief?

What are your goals to correct your doubt?

Today's Bible reading is Matthew chapter 9.

LESSON 19

SUFFERING A DOUBT FAILURE

This week's Bible verse to memorize: Mark 9:23

Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.

By nature, you are a person of belief because faith is the foundation of your relationship to God, but every once in a while, you might experience what can be called a “doubt failure.”

“The LORD also will be a _____ for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble. And they that know Thy name will put their _____ in Thee: for Thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that _____ Thee” (Psalm 9:9-10).

Often, these doubts will happen when you hesitate or cease to trust God during challenging times; yet, there are many other causes for doubt failures such as:

- Fear of being unsuccessful
- Failure to understand the nature of God
- Forgetting God's power
- Focusing on obstacles

“I will bless the LORD, who hath given me _____: my reins also instruct me in the night seasons. I have set the LORD always before me: because He is at my _____, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is _____, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall _____ in _____” (Psalm 16:7-9).

So, how do you avoid doubt failures? Truthfully, you will experience doubts from time to time, but you can be prepared for these episodes by filling your mind with God's truth. When you know the character of your heavenly Father, you will be prepared to respond with spiritual maturity when your faith is tested.

“I will _____ Thee, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my _____; my God, my strength, in whom I will _____; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower. I will _____ upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be _____ from mine enemies” (Psalm 18:1-3).

As you spend time with God today, focus on His true nature. Which of His characteristics has He shown you—faithfulness, goodness, mercy?

The Lord longs for you to know and trust Him, so that His perfect will may be carried out in your life.

List what you are willing to trust the Lord for with no doubts:

Today's Bible reading is Psalm chapter 18.

LESSON 20

WHEN WE FEEL GUILTY

This week's Bible verse to memorize: Psalm 27:14

Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.

Can you remember the worst sin you ever committed? How did you handle it? Did you attempt to bury it, trying desperately to forget it ever happened, or did you confess it to the Lord and give it over to Him? If you have not acknowledged your sins before God and allowed Him to bring healing into your life, you will suffer the burden of guilt until you do.

“For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the _____ and _____ of God our Saviour toward man appeared,...” (Titus 3:3-4).

When you confess your sin, you will be released from doubt and broken fellowship with God. While you still experience the consequences of that sin, there will no longer be cause for feelings of disbelief. Forgiveness came at Calvary once and for all.

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to _____ He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our _____;...” (Titus 3:5-6).

Unfortunately, many people who confess their sins and receive forgiveness still suffer from enormous disbelief. It is not the Lord who reminds you of past sins that you have already confessed to Him; God would never haunt you about something for which He has forgiven you. Such haunting memories are inspired from the enemy of your soul, the devil.

“That being _____ by His grace, we should be made _____ according to the _____ of _____. This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men. But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain” (Titus 3:7-9).

People suffer from false feelings of guilt resulting from doubt and disbelief when they ask God to forgive them but can't forgive themselves. Remember, Christ's death releases you completely from God's judgment. He doesn't need your help, and you only need to ask Him once.

Make a list of things that are causing you to feel feelings of doubt and disbelief:

Today's Bible reading is Titus chapter 3.

LESSON 21

CONQUERING DOUBT AND DISBELIEF

This week's Bible verse to memorize: Psalm 27:14

Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.

A faithful child of God will gain victory by applying the strategy David used against Goliath.

“And the Philistine came on and drew near unto David; and the man that bare the shield went before him. And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he _____ him: for he was but a _____, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance” (1 Samuel 17:41-42).

Fight the battle before the battle. Get on your face before God and pray through the challenge. Fight it in your heart, spirit, and mind. Let the Lord prune, sift, sand, and weed you as you hash over the situation with Him. Do this until you are certain that you know the will of God.

“And the Philistine said unto David, Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine _____ David by his gods. And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field” (1 Samuel 17:43-44).

Reaffirm in your heart that the battle is the Lord's. Only the Lord can work in your situation for good, and only He can bring about true victory.

“Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the _____ of the _____ of hosts, the _____ of the armies of _____, whom thou hast defied. This day will the _____ deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a _____ in Israel” (1 Samuel 17:45-46).

Declare the victory. David not only promised to slay Goliath, but also said the Lord would destroy the entire Philistine army. David had the most ambitious of declarations because he served the most certain, true God.

“And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the _____ is the _____, and He will give you into our hands. And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came, and drew nigh to meet David, that David hastened, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine. And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth” (1 Samuel 17:47-49).

Wait on God's timing. This is sometimes the most difficult aspect of waging spiritual war or traversing difficult challenges. It wasn't until David declared what the Lord would do through him that the Lord brought about the victory. Sometimes, God asks us to wait; His timing is always perfect.

Trust God. Pray unceasingly. Fight with confidence. Believe God's promises. Take Him at His Word. Wait for His victory.

Today's Bible reading is 1 Samuel chapter 17.

LESSON 22

EXTINGUISHING SATAN'S FIERY DARTS

This week's Bible verse to memorize: Psalm 27:14

Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.

News of war fills our newspapers and televisions all year. As time passes, we long to see war come to an end so we can return to our "normal" lives; however, we who belong to Christ are in a spiritual war that will last an entire lifetime. Do you believe that? Are you one of many who ignore this reality and pretend that there is no spiritual battle? Scripture makes it clear that war is a fact, and our enemy is real.

"Finally, my brethren, be _____ in the _____, and in the _____ of His _____. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the _____. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against _____ in high places" (Ephesians 6:10-12).

The Word of God instructs you that you are not to wage this war as the world does with human plans and methods. Rather, you are to use God's mighty weapons to fight against your enemy, the devil.

"But I beseech you, that I may not be bold when I am present with that confidence, wherewith I think to be bold against some, which think of us as if we walked according to the flesh. For though we walk in the flesh, we do not _____ after the flesh: For the weapons of our warfare are not _____, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;..." (2 Corinthians 10:2-5).

Your weapons for fighting this war are invisible, but powerful. God tells you what those weapons are and promises that when you wear His full spiritual armor, you will be able to stand against the enemy's flaming missiles.

"Wherefore take unto you the whole _____ of God, that ye may be able to _____ in the evil day, and having done all, to stand" (Ephesians 6:13).

Jesus' crucifixion has proven these weapons effective. His very words comfort us:

"These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have _____. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have _____ the world" (John 16:33).

Tell us which weapons you use against doubt and disbelief:

With the help of God, you can make yourself ready to fight Satan.

Today's Bible reading is Ephesians chapter 6.

LESSON 23

THE DANGER OF HARDENING YOUR HEART

This week's Bible verse to memorize: Psalm 27:14

Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.

“Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became _____ in their imaginations, and their _____ heart was _____” (Romans 1:21).

The Bible describes a group of wicked men whose conduct led them into a state where “their foolish heart was darkened.” This passage reveals a quick way to darken a heart. Even though the individuals in this passage had seen creation that bore the unmistakable imprint of a Creator, they had failed to acknowledge Him.

“O come, let us _____ unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the _____ of our _____. Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving, and make a _____ noise unto Him with psalms. For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods” (Psalm 95:1-3).

This failure was followed by another: the failure to give thanks. Here the Bible reveals that a grateful heart is an antidote for hardheartedness. First, recognize God at work, and then thank Him for what He has done.

When you think of God, do you visualize Him as a power or a person? When you fail to see His personal nature, you put yourself in an awkward position. Only by experiencing God's mighty power are you able to trust His ability to achieve His will, but without a personal connection, you lose sight of why God should even concern Himself with you at all.

“In His _____ are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is His also. The _____ is His, and He made it: and His hands formed the dry _____. O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our _____” (Psalm 95:4-6).

The Bible teaches that each of us will one day stand before God and give an account of our lives. This is not an event to be fearful of if you have been born again, and are seeking to walk in His will and not in disbelief. Rather, it will be a time of great reward and rejoicing. Are you listening for God, or are you being distracted by doubt and disbelief forces pulling at your own life? Ask God to quiet the noise so that you can learn to hear His soft, life-changing whisper.

“For He is our God; and we are the people of His pasture, and the _____ of His hand. To day if ye will hear His voice, Harden not your _____, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work” (Psalm 95:7-9).

Tell us your plan of doing away with doubt and disbelief.

Make no mistake—our heavenly Father still speaks to His people. As you read His Word today, ask Him to make His call in your life more clear.

Today's Bible reading is Psalm chapter 95.

LESSON 24

WHEN WE FEEL HELPLESS

This week's Bible verse to memorize: Psalm 27:14

Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.

In adventure movies, you will often see people trapped and helpless, frantically looking for a way to escape. Real life may feel the same way for you at times, and you might start looking for the way out, too. Your prayers are filled with requests for rescue—physical healing, changed circumstances, and additional provision.

“And _____ upon _____ in the day of trouble: I will _____ thee, and thou shalt _____ Me. But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare My statutes, or that thou shouldest take My covenant in thy mouth? Seeing thou hatest _____, and casteth My words behind thee” (Psalm 50:15-17).

Did you ever consider that even more important than physical rescue is spiritual liberation?

“Put on the whole _____ of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual _____ in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of _____, that ye may be able to _____ in the evil day, and having done all, to stand” (Ephesians 6:11-13).

First and foremost, Jesus delivered you from the power and penalty of sin. As your living Savior, He also knows your continued helplessness in the face of sinful habits, uncontrolled emotions, and ungodly thoughts. He wants to free you from these sins, so whether or not a physical crisis looms over you, seek out His offer of spiritual rescue.

“Seeing thou hatest instruction, and casteth My words behind thee. When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers. Thou _____ thy mouth to _____, and thy tongue frameth _____. Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother's son. These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself: but I will _____ thee, and set them in order before thine eyes. Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver” (Psalm 50:17-22).

Follow the example of the psalmist, who cried out to God for deliverance. Start by admitting your helplessness to God and yourself. Confess any fears, disbelief, or self-reliance. Surrender all attempts at change done apart from God. Then, turn your gaze toward God. Think about His relationship with you, who He is, and what He desires.

Commit yourself to what God would desire for you. Trust God, and wait upon Him to change you from the inside out.

Today's Bible reading is Psalm chapter 50.

LESSON 25

HOW TO SET RIGHT PRIORITIES

This week's Bible verse to memorize: Psalm 27:14

Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.

The Bible contains many cautionary examples of men and women who had misplaced priorities. Often, these men and women were otherwise godly people who had a momentary lapse. This should cause every believer to pause and consider the importance of taking captive doubtful thoughts and desires.

“He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap. As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou _____ the _____ of _____ who maketh all. In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good” (Ecclesiastes 11:4-6).

For good purposes or bad, you set priorities in one of three ways:

1. By evaluating which things ought to carry the most importance.

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto _____, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:10).

2. By succumbing to pressure and letting people or disbelief dictate how you should prioritize.

“And he said O LORD God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham. Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water: And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, _____, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that Thou hast appointed for Thy servant Isaac; and _____ shall I _____ that Thou hast shewed kindness unto my master” (Genesis 24:12-14).

3. By drifting into habits and doubts of thinking that become a way of life.

“That I may _____ Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the _____ of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; If by any means I might attain unto the _____ of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:10-12).

Wise believers will certainly want to avoid doubts and disbelief, as these feelings accompany a life that feels meaningless. Priorities ought to be in place before you face trying and difficult circumstances.

“Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, _____ those things which are _____, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I _____ toward the mark for the prize of the high _____ of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:13-14).

Today's Bible reading is Philippians chapter 3.

LESSON 26

OVERCOMING LIFE'S UPS AND DOWNS

This week's Bible verse to memorize: Psalm 27:14

Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.

Have you ever heard a testimony from someone who went through a horrible tragedy? You may pay close attention to these accounts because the person involved has witnessed firsthand God's faithfulness and power to restore a broken life. Of all the witnesses to God's grace in times of doubt, none is more compelling than the life of Paul in the Bible.

"But I _____ in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked _____. Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be _____" (Philippians 4:10-11).

Paul was no stranger to hardship. Throughout his ministry, he was chased, beaten, stoned, arrested, shipwrecked, and accused of heresy by both Jewish leaders and the Roman government.

"I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to _____ and to _____. I can do all things through _____ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:12-13).

This was certainly a stark contrast to Paul's early life, in which he enjoyed the finest luxuries and opportunities that his Roman citizenship and Jewish education provided. With so many amazing ups and downs in his life, Paul earned the right to proclaim, "I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity." Because you seek to live by biblical values, the world does not understand your motivation and will therefore often stand against you.

"These things I have spoken unto you, that in _____ ye might have _____. In the world ye shall have _____: but be of good cheer; I have _____ the world" (John 16:33).

The Bible never instructs you to ignore situations that cause you heartache, doubt, fear, or worry. In fact, the Bible is quite honest about what you as a Christian can expect from a life devoted to Christ. Jesus even warned, "In this world you will have trouble." How then can you rejoice when you face troubles? It is through your hardship that Christ often makes Himself known in your life. If you lived a trouble-free life, what need would you have for a Savior?

"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the _____ of your _____ worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be _____ and entire, wanting nothing" (James 1:2-4).

"I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me." Do you have this limitless power source in your life? Ask God to reveal His Son's strength and ability to you.

Today's Bible reading is Philippians chapter 4.

LESSON 27

REINFORCING OUR POWER OVER DOUBT AND DISBELIEF

This week's Bible verse to memorize: 2 Timothy 1:7

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

Even though you have already examined some ways in which you can identify and fight doubt and disbelief, there is no way for you to avoid this destructive influence completely. Therefore, you must reinforce your faith so you can stand firm against the subversive pull of the world; but how can you build a stronger faith?

“But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy _____, praying in the Holy Ghost, Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the _____ of our Lord Jesus Christ unto _____. And of some have compassion, making a difference:...” (Jude 1:20-22).

First, you must saturate your mind with the holy, unchanging Word of God. Then, the Holy Spirit will continually refresh your mind and bring new insights as you develop Christian maturity.

“Praying _____ with all prayer and supplication in the _____, and watching thereunto with all _____ and supplication for all saints;...” (Ephesians 6:18).

Secondly, you must commit to pray. You can trust the Spirit to guide you in your prayers, leading you with regard to what, when, and how to pray.

“But God, who is rich in _____, for His great _____ wherewith He loved us, Even when we were _____ in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by _____ ye are saved;) And hath _____ us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in _____: That in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His _____ in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:4-7).

Thirdly, you must keep yourself in the love of God. Of course, you can never fall beyond the scope of God's love, but you shouldn't ever take His amazing grace for granted. With that in mind, you need to closely guard your intimacy with Him and the time you spend in His presence.

“Beloved, now are we the _____ of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this _____ in Him _____ himself, even as He is _____” (1 John 3:2-3).

Fourthly, you must wait eagerly for the return of Jesus Christ. For Christians, the Second Coming is the most anticipated event in history, and you need to keep your eyes on this goal. The thought that Christ could return at any moment should result in a purifying, exciting realization for the believer.

There is no “magic formula” for Christian growth and for keeping doubt and disbelief from coming upon you, but the simple steps laid out in Jude 20-23 can serve as a guide as you strive to protect your faith from the snares of the world.

Today's Bible reading is Jude chapter 1.

LESSON 28

REVIEW (PART I)

This week's Bible verse to memorize: 2 Timothy 1:7

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

Multiple Choice

Read each question carefully, then mark the correct answer. There is only one correct answer to each question. The questions are based on Scripture and the lessons in this book.

1. The Bible says:
 - a) Be of good cheer
 - b) Hate your enemies
 - c) Never doubt
2. A prophet is not without:
 - a) Love
 - b) Honor
 - c) Wisdom
3. If you believe:
 - a) You can be successful
 - b) You can achieve most things
 - c) All things are possible
4. Jesus came to earth:
 - a) To walk on the water
 - b) To deliver us from sin
 - c) To do miracles and help people
5. Exhort one another:
 - a) Daily
 - b) With fear
 - c) Whenever possible
6. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ:
 - a) And you will have riches
 - b) With all of your heart
 - c) And thou shalt be saved
7. If you lack wisdom:
 - a) Read lots of books
 - b) Ask God for it
 - c) Go back to school
8. Let him ask in:
 - a) Faith
 - b) Love
 - c) Understanding
9. Man is tempted primarily by:
 - a) Satan
 - b) Man
 - c) Sin
10. Without faith:
 - a) It is impossible to please God
 - b) Satan is controlling your life
 - c) It is impossible to live life happily
11. He that cometh to God must:
 - a) Believe that He exists
 - b) Pray without ceasing
 - c) Give money to the church
12. So panteth my soul after:
 - a) Water
 - b) The living God
 - c) My family and loved ones

Today's Bible reading is Psalms chapter 42.

LESSON 29

REVIEW (PART II)

This week's Bible verse to memorize: 2 Timothy 1:7

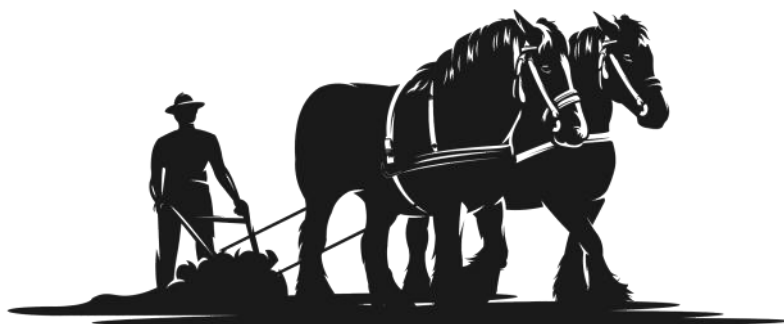
For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

True or False

Read each statement below carefully, then enter "true" or "false" in the blank. The statements are based on Scripture and the lessons in this book.

1. As soon as Gideon heard about the dream, he worshipped the Lord. _____
2. If God be for you, no one can be against you. _____
3. Nothing can separate you from the love of God. _____
4. God can forget you. _____
5. I must bless the Lord part of my time. _____
6. I sought the Lord, and He heard me. _____
7. Accept evil, but do good. _____
8. Let us run the race with patience. _____
9. Be ye obedient in all things. _____
10. Beware of false prophets. _____
11. If you lack wisdom, ask of God. _____
12. I can be tempted of God. _____
13. God loves you all the time. _____
14. God has called you to serve Him. _____
15. Sin separates you from the love of God. _____
16. Jesus is the mediator between God and man. _____
17. The Lord is not your helper. _____

Today's Bible reading is Exodus chapter 24.



PLOWMAN'S ACADEMY

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