

## 1 Beginning Your New Life With Christ

Every Christian can have the assurance that a right relationship exists between himself and God. Without this confidence it is impossible for one to experience true happiness and complete fulfillment in life.

The moment that you, as an act of faith, receive Jesus Christ into your life to be your Lord and Savior, He comes in. This is what He Promises in Revelation 3:20

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him..."

Have you received Christ into your life in this way? \_\_\_\_\_

If so, where is Jesus right now in relation to you? \_\_\_\_\_

On the basis of Revelation 3:20, how do you know that Christ is in your life?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Now that you have received Jesus Christ into your life, you have established a personal relationship with Him.

You have now become a Christian. You do not become a Christian by living a good life or by being born into a Christian family. The Word "Christian" means "Christ in one". Christ living in you. The Bible tells us that many things happen when Christ comes to live in you.

### A NEW RELATIONSHIP

1. What does the resurrection prove to us about Jesus Christ? (Romans 1:4)  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Who is Jesus Christ? (I John 5:20)  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. What would be the result for us if Christ had not risen from the dead?  
(I Corinthians 15:1317)?  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. a. What did you become when you received Christ? (John 1:12)  
\_\_\_\_\_

b. Since other Christians are also God's children, what is your relationship to them?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Salvation is God's favor freely given to man when he puts his faith in Jesus Christ as Savior resulting in the forgiveness of sin.

5. a. Is salvation the reward of a man's good works? (Ephesians 2:8) \_\_\_\_\_  
b. How is salvation obtained? \_\_\_\_\_

6. Have you received forgiveness for your sins? (Colossians 1:13,14)  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. a. Will Christ ever leave you? (Hebrews 13:5) \_\_\_\_\_

b. Since Christ has promised never to leave you, how many times do you have to invite Him to come into your life? \_\_\_\_\_

### A NEW LIFE

1. Read I John 5:1113

2. Where is eternal life found? (I John 5:11) \_\_\_\_\_

3. If a person has Christ in his life, what kind of life does he have? (I John 5:13)  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. a. Can a person know that he has eternal life right now? (I John 5:13) \_\_\_\_\_

b. Do you know that you have eternal life? \_\_\_\_\_

c. How do you know?  
\_\_\_\_\_

### A NEW ADVENTURE

1. Now that you have Christ in your life, what have you become? (II Corinthians 5:17)  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. What can separate you from Christ? (Romans 8:3839)  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Who can take you away from Christ? (John 10:2729)  
\_\_\_\_\_

### CONCLUSION

1. On the basis of this study, what are some of the things that you know are true of your life right now?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Would you like to thank God right now for what He has done for you?  
Thanking God demonstrates faith!

SUGGESTED READING John 3

## BIBLE VERSES CONTAINED IN THIS LESSON

1. Romans 1:4 "And who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by His resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord."
2. I John 5:20 "We know also that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding, so that we may know Him who is true. And we are in Him who is true even in His Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life."
3. I Corinthians 15:13,17 "If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that He raised Christ from the dead. But He did not raise Him if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins."
4. John 1:12 "Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God."
5. Ephesians 2:8,9 "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God not by works, so that no one can boast."
6. Colossians 1:13,14 "For He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."
7. Hebrews 13:5 "Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.'"
8. I John 5:11,13 "And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life."
9. II Corinthians 5:17 "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"
10. Romans 8:38,39 "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."
11. John 10:27,29 "My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of My Father's hand. I and the Father are one."

## 2 Beginning Your New Life in Fellowship With Christ

Every Christian can experience fellowship with God moment by moment as he learns to confess sin in his life. To live in fellowship with Jesus Christ is to experience a full and abundant life.

When you received Jesus Christ, you established a personal relationship with Him. You became a child of God (John 1:12). You received His life so now you bear His name "Christian."

A common question that many Christians ask is, "What happens when I sin and do things that are displeasing to God?" In other words, "Is my relationship broken?" "Does Jesus leave my life?"

The answer to this question can best be understood if we distinguish between our relationship to God and our fellowship with God.

### RELATIONSHIP

We can illustrate the difference between our relationship to God and our fellowship with God by the father-son relationship in a human family. When a boy is born into a family, he is the son of his father because he has his father's life in him. He then bears his father's name.

Let's suppose the son decides to leave his home and does many things to disgrace his father. Is he still his father's son? The relationship of the father and son is permanent. This relationship exists regardless of the behavior of the son.

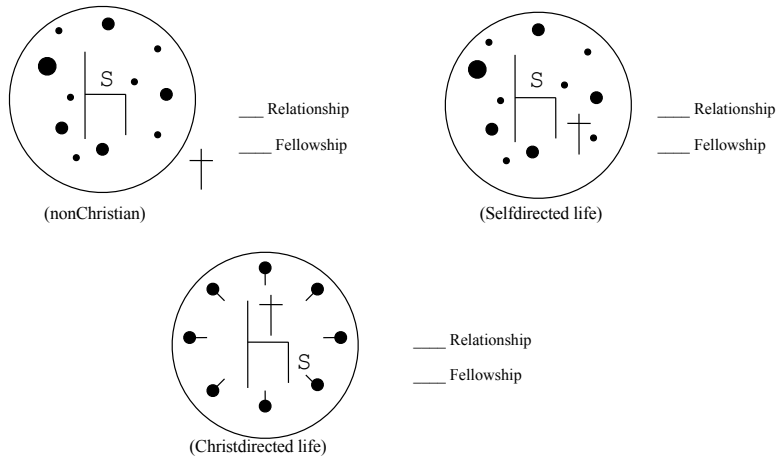
### FELLOWSHIP

However, what would happen to their fellowship? Because of the action of the son, their fellowship has been broken. What must the son do to restore their fellowship? The son must go to his father, admitting his wrongs and asking for forgiveness.

Let us relate this illustration to our relationship with God. Our relationship with God, our Father, is permanent. We are His children. The relationship never changes. But when we sin and do things that are displeasing to God, our fellowship is broken. So, in order for our fellowship with God to be restored, we must tell Him that we have been wrong and accept His forgiveness.

We can illustrate the difference between our relationship and fellowship with God using three circles. Write the answers in the blanks below. First, read I Corinthians 2:14:3.

- How is the nonChristian described in 1 Corinthians 2:14? \_\_\_\_\_
- How is the Christdirected man described in 2:15 \_\_\_\_\_
- How is the selfdirected man described in 3:1? \_\_\_\_\_



Now, let us examine each circle to see which one has both a relationship and fellowship with God. Write the answers on the corresponding blanks.

While the natural man is not a Christian, Christ is in the lives of both the spiritual and carnal man, they are Christians.

- Does the natural man in circle #1 have a relationship with God? \_\_\_\_\_
- Does the natural man in circle #1 have fellowship with God? \_\_\_\_\_
- Does the spiritual man in circle #2 have a relationship with God? \_\_\_\_\_
- Does the spiritual man in circle #2 have fellowship with God? \_\_\_\_\_

The carnal man is a Christian who is living a selfdirected life because of sin.

- Does the carnal man in circle #3 have a relationship with God? \_\_\_\_\_
- Does the carnal man in circle #3 have fellowship with God? \_\_\_\_\_

The carnal man in circle #3 can restore his fellowship with God by confessing his sins. Confession involves three things: agreeing, thanking, and repenting.

When we confess, we AGREE with God that we have sinned. We also THANK God that this sin has been paid for by Jesus Christ's death on the cross. Confession also involves REPENTANCE. Repentance is a change in attitude which will result in a change of action.

The Christian needs to understand that when he does sin and takes over the direction of his life once again, he should immediately confess his sin and God will restore him to fellowship.

Read 1 John 1:9

- According to this verse, what are we to do with our sins? \_\_\_\_\_
- What did God promise to do when we confess our sins? \_\_\_\_\_

SUGGESTED READING

Read 1 John 1

#### BIBLE VERSES CONTAINED IN THIS LESSON

- 1 Corinthians 2:14 "The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that are from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned."
- 1 Corinthians 2:15,16 "The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgement: 'For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?' But we have the mind of Christ."
- 1 Corinthians 3:13 "Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men?"
- 1 John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

### 3Beginning Your New Life in the Holy Spirit

Everyday can be an exciting adventure for the Christian who knows the reality of being filled with the Holy Spirit and who lives constantly, moment by moment, under His gracious control.

For three years the disciples had walked and talked with Jesus. They knew Him, trusted Him and loved Him. On one particular night, however, Jesus told His disciples some very upsetting news: **He would soon die.**

Put yourself in the disciples' place. How would you feel? Confused? Frightened? Helpless? They probably did, too.

But then imagine hearing Jesus tell you that as a result of His going to be with God the Father, another friend would come one who would be with you, one who would be in you.

The friend who was to come is the Holy Spirit. An amazing thing that Jesus told His followers was that the Holy Spirit would reside in them. Even better, He would "be with them forever." Imagine the encouragement this offered to those individuals.

God would make His home within the lives of those people who would love and receive Him.

In this way, the disciples would not be left with the impossible tasks of trying to imitate the character of Christ and attempting to continue His mission. Instead, through the Holy Spirit, the very life of Christ with all His character, authority and strength could be lived through their individual lives and personalities.

Twenty centuries later, Christ's promise still holds true. He offers hope to those who are to live as He lived. Anyone who has sincerely attempted to reach that goal knows that, worthy as it is, it is a hopeless ideal. Only Jesus Christ can act like Jesus Christ.

And that, of course, is the uniqueness of Christianity. Instead of frustrating us with the inevitable failure of attempting to live up to impossibly high standards, the only person who ever perfectly fulfilled all those standards offers to do it again through each of us. Once Jesus has entered into a life that person has the potential to let Him live out His life in and through him. This is available to anyone!

It sounds good, doesn't it? The obvious question is "How can I experience the resurrected Christ living His life through me?" The following lesson will help to explain.

Turn to the booklet entitled "Have You Made the Wonderful Discovery of the Spirit filled Life?" Read it through before proceeding with the rest of this lesson.

1. Who is the carnal Christian relying on? (page 7) \_\_\_\_\_
2. Who is the spiritual Christian relying on? (page 5) \_\_\_\_\_

A spiritual Christian becomes carnal when he refuses to confess sin in his life.

3. What are the two aspects of spiritual breathing? (page 15)

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

4. What three things are involved in exhaling (confession of sin)? (page 15)

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

5. What does inhaling mean? (Page 15)

\_\_\_\_\_

6. We can know that we are filled with the Holy Spirit by faith based on His \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_.

#### SUGGESTED READING

The Gospel of John

## 4Beginning Your New Life of Growth in Christ

Receiving Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior is the most important decision of life. The act of receiving Jesus Christ by faith starts a whole new life. Just as physical life requires air, food, rest, and exercise, so spiritual life has its requirements for growth and development.

The moment you received Christ, you were born into God's family and you received everything you need to live the abundant Christian life. Spiritual growth results from trusting Jesus Christ. "The righteous man shall live by faith" (Galatians 3:11). A life of faith will enable you to trust God increasingly with every detail of your life.

The nourishment for Spiritual wellbeing is provided in the following Principles of Growth:

1. Prayer
2. Bible Study
3. Obedience

### PRAYER

Prayer is the inspiring experience of talking and sharing with God. Failures in the Christian life can most often be traced to prayerlessness.

GOD 1. How does man speak to God? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Read Philippians 4:67

PRAYER a. What are we told to do? \_\_\_\_\_

b. What should we pray about? \_\_\_\_\_

MAN c. As we pray about everything, what does God promise we will experience?  
\_\_\_\_\_

We talk to God through prayer as illustrated in the diagram; He talks to us through the Bible.

### BIBLE STUDY

Physical food is necessary for physical life. Without food, one becomes weak and eventually ill. This is true spiritually as well. The Bible is our spiritual food.

GOD

Bible  
Study

Prayer

MAN

1. How does God speak to man? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How will reading the Bible help us? (II Timothy 3:1617) \_\_\_\_\_
3. How does faith grow? (Romans 10:17) \_\_\_\_\_
4. When should we read the Bible? (Acts 17:11) \_\_\_\_\_

As we read God's Word, the Bible, God talks to us as illustrated in the diagram.  
As we pray, we talk to God. We need to constantly practice both.

It is necessary to read God's Word daily for daily strength.

### OBEDIENCE

The key to continual growth in the Christian life is obedience to the will of God. To know the importance of prayer and Bible Study is of little value unless they are applied to our lives.

GOD

Bible  
Study

Prayer

MAN

### Daily Reading for Daily Strength

1. Read James 1:22
  - a. According to this verse, is it enough to read the Bible? \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. After we have read the Bible, what are we supposed to do? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How can we prove that we love Jesus? (John 14:21) \_\_\_\_\_

## CONCLUSION

1. In light of our study and discussion, what three things do you think God wants you to do daily?
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Realizing that prayer and Bible study are essential for my spiritual growth, I am going to set aside from \_\_\_\_\_ (time) to \_\_\_\_\_ (time) each day to pray and study the Bible.
3. What will be the result of keeping Christ's commandments? (John 15:10)  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Where do we get the power to obey the will of God? (Philippians 2:13)  
\_\_\_\_\_

## SUGGESTED READING

Gospel of John

## BIBLE VERSES CONTAINED IN THIS LESSON

1. Philippians 4:6,7 "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."
2. II Timothy 3:16,17 "All Scripture is Godbreathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."
3. Romans 10:17 "Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the Word of Christ."
4. Acts 17:11 "Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true."
5. James 1:22 "Do not merely listen to the Word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says."
6. John 14:21 "Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him."
7. John 15:10 "If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed My Father's commands and remain in His love."
8. Philippians 2:13 "For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose."

## 5 Beginning Your New Life in God's Word

The Bible is God's inspired Word to man. He has something to say to you. Much of the adventure of the Christian life comes from discovering through the Bible more of what God is like and what His plans are for you.

Throughout history God has desired to communicate with the people of His creation. Before Jesus came, God spoke to and through the committed people of the Old Testament who recorded His Word. God then sent His Word to earth personally, in the person of Jesus Christ (John 1:14). While Jesus was on earth, as well as after His death and resurrection, God again directed committed men to record the words and ministry of the Son of God. The result of their faithfulness and availability is the New Testament. The Bible is the entire record of God's communication to us. It has been given to us by God who desires our fellowship and worship.

This lesson will help to explain how to understand and enjoy the Bible.

### LEARNING TO LISTEN TO GOD

The Bible is the most important book one could read. Many people do not know how to listen to what God is saying to them in His Word. A meaningful relationship with the Lord is dependent on hearing and understanding what He is sharing with us. Following are some hints to help you begin your study of God's Word.

Understand that reading the Bible is not like reading any other book. The Bible is God's inspired Word to man. In this book, God has something to say to you. Therefore, read with the attitude, "Lord, this is Your personal letter of love and instruction to me. Help me to understand and obey Your counsel and commands."

### PREPARATION

In addition to the Bible, you will need a pen or pencil, paper and a quiet place to study. Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to guide you in your study. Your study will normally involve three steps: Observation, Interpretation and Application.

#### I. OBSERVATION

In this step you observe in order to find out what the passage says. You may need to read the passage several times or you may wish to write out the passage concentrating on "What does the passage say?"

#### II. INTERPRETATION

The second step involves the question, "What does this passage mean?" Ask: "What does it say about God and man?"

### III. APPLICATION

In this step you ask the question, "How does this passage apply to my life?" You may ask the following questions:

Is there a command to obey?  
Is there a promise to claim?  
Is there sin to confess?  
Is there an attitude to change?  
Is there an example to follow?

PASSAGE	OBSERVATION	INTERPRETATION	APPLICATION
The whole verse is written out in this column.	Write out what the passage says.	The meaning of the passage is written in this column.	Personal application is written in this right column.

### EXAMPLE

Here is an example of how to follow the three steps using I Peter 5:7

PASSAGE	OBSERVATION	INTERPRETATION	APPLICATION
I Peter 5:7 "Casting all your cares upon Him because He cares for you."	What does "casting" mean? What are these "cares?" To whom shall we cast these cares? Why?	Casting means give away. Cares can be problems, concerns, worries. Him refers to God. Because He cares.	I should not worry about any problem. I can pray and trust Him to help me for He cares for me.

### EXERCISE

Read John 15:10-12. Using the three steps and following the example, let God speak to you. This chart is an example for you to follow.

PASSAGE	OBSERVATION	INTERPRETATION	APPLICATION
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Apply the three steps as you study the Bible daily. Consider buying a notebook to record your study of the Bible.

## 6Beginning Your New Life in Prayer

Prayer is talking with God. Every Christian has the privilege of communicating directly with God. If we desire a vital and fulfilling Christian life, we need to learn to talk with God. Through prayer, we can appropriate all of God's resources for us in Jesus Christ.

Any fulfilling relationship involves twoway communication. A look at the biographies of people recorded in the Bible clearly shows the importance of communication between God and His people. As long as these individuals listened to God, obeyed Him and prayed, their spiritual lives were radiant. When these same people, however, failed to hear and obey God and talk with Him through prayer, spiritual problems crowded in.

The same thing can happen to us today. God communicates with us through His Word, the Bible. If we desire a rich and fulfilling Christian life, we also need to learn to talk with God. To pray is simply to converse or talk with Him.

Prayer was an important emphasis in the life of Jesus Christ. His desire to seek His Father's presence and know His will through prayer is apparent throughout His earthly life. The life of Christ was a living conversation with God the Father; prayer was the backbone of Christ's life and ministry. To become like Christ, we need to learn to pray.

Prayer should include the following elements: Worship and Praise, Thanksgiving, Confession, and Specific Requests.

### WORSHIP AND PRAISE GOD

1. In Psalms 95:6 we are told to \_\_\_\_\_
2. According to Psalms 95:7, why should we worship God? \_\_\_\_\_
3. According to Psalms 135:3, why should we praise God? \_\_\_\_\_

God is worthy of our worship and praise. As His children, we should praise Him for His love, mercy, patience, holiness and power.

4. Read I Chronicles 29:11, 12. What does this passage tell us about God's character?  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Worship and Praise God Through Prayer

Take a few minutes to worship and praise God now. Tell Him how much you appreciate Him and why. Considering the character of God described in I Chronicles 29:11, 12, tell God your thoughts about Him.

If you are studying this lesson with a friend, pray together. Take turns talking aloud to God.

### THANK GOD IN EVERYTHING

1. Read Psalm 106:1. According to this verse, what should we do?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Read I Thessalonians 5:18. According to this verse, for what should we thank God?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Read Romans 8:28. According to this verse, why can we thank God for everything?  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Thank God in Everything Through Prayer

1. Take a few minutes and in the space below list various things that God has done in your life for which you wish to thank Him.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Now list any unpleasant experiences and difficult areas in your life for which you have not thanked God.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Now thank God for these things.

### CONFESS YOUR SINS

1. According to Psalms 66:18, what happens when we pray and when there is unconfessed sin in our lives?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. According to I John 1:9, what does God say He will do when we confess our sins?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Are you aware of anything in your life that is not pleasing to God? If so, confess your sin:

- A. Agree with God that what He has revealed to you as sin as sin.
- B. Thank God for His forgiveness on the basis of what Christ has done on the cross.
- C. Repentchange your attitude and action.



Confess your sin through prayer

Take a few minutes and ask God to show you what is not pleasing to Him. Privately list these on a separate sheet of paper. Now pray and confess this sin. Claim the promise of I John 1:9 and write this verse across your sheet. Then destroy your list.

SPECIFIC REQUESTS

1. According to James 4:2b, why are the needs of some Christians not met?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. According to Matthew 7:7, what does Jesus say will happen when we tell God our needs?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. According to I Timothy 2:1, for whom should we pray?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Specific Requests Through Prayer

Take a few minutes and list your specific needs and requests. When your requests to God are specific, you will know when He has answered them. Thank God when He does.

Requests	Answers
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

PRAY REGULARLY

Prayer can become enjoyable when you write your requests every day in your devotional notebook. This provides a permanent record of your requests. It is also exciting to review your requests periodically and see the many ways God has answered and actively involved Himself in your life.

SUGGESTED READING

Book of Psalms

BIBLE VERSES CONTAINED IN THIS LESSON

1. Psalms 95:6 "Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker."
2. Psalms 95:7 "For He is our God; and we are the people of His pasture, the flock under his care."
3. Psalms 135:3 "Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good; sing praise to His name, for that is pleasant."
4. I Chronicles 29:11,12 "Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours, Yours, O Lord, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all. Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all."
5. Psalms 106:1 "Praise the Lord. Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; His love endures forever."
6. I Thessalonians 5:18 "Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."
7. Romans 8:28 "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to His purpose."
8. Psalms 66:18 "If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened; but God has surely listened and heard my voice in prayer."
9. I John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."
10. James 4:2b "You do not have, because you do not ask God."
11. Matthew 7:7 "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."
12. I Timothy 2:1 "I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone."

## 7- YOUR NEW LIFE IN RELATIONSHIP WITH THE OPPOSITE SEX

Remember- As you grow in your relationship with God, He will reveal His character and His will. The Holy Spirit enables us to live a life which reflects both.

A father will tell his son not to touch a hot stove top. He does so not because he wants to squelch his son's curiosity or take away his fun. Rather, he gives the prohibition because he knows that the stove will burn his child. His motivation is to protect his son from harm as well as provide safety.

Just as this is true with earthly fathers, so it is true in our relationship with our Heavenly Father. God's guidelines for relationships are an expression of His love.

### 1. WHY WAIT FOR SEX?: BECAUSE GOD SAYS TO WAIT

Read 1Thessalonians 4:1-8

The apostle Paul was complimenting the Thessalonians on their walk with God. Because their desire was to walk and please God, Paul was encouraging them "to excel still more." His emphasis was in the area of purity in relationships and, specifically, the sexual area.

By whose authority is this commandment given?  
What is God's will?

#### Key Points:

A. God desires our comprehensive sanctification. In other words, it is His will that we develop His character in every area of our lives. Purity and holiness are part of God's character.

"For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality..."  
1 Thessalonians 4:3

B. God desires Christians not to defraud each other in relationships. We defraud someone when we cause them to step outside the boundaries God has established.

"...See that no man transgress and defraud his brother in the matter..."  
1 Thessalonians 4:6

On the surface, the Bible appears to be full of negative commandments which seem imposing and dreary. However, we need to remember that God only has one motivation--love. When we understand that He always seeks what's best for us, these commands become positive.

### 2. GOD'S COMMANDS: BOTH TO PROTECT YOU AND PROVIDE FOR YOU

Behind every negative command are two positive principles. One is to protect us, the other is to provide for us. In other words, when God says, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," He is not being a cosmic killjoy, as we will see.

God's command to wait for sex until marriage is given in order to:

Protect: Your mind from the images of past relationships.

Provide: Freedom to enjoy your future spouse without detracting mental images.

Protect: You from mistrust and suspicion in relationships.

Provide: A foundation of trust for your current and future relationships.

Protect: You from confusing the intensity of sex with the intimacy of love.

Provide: You with intimacy: true knowledge of the other person outside of the physical.

Protect: You from the fear and consequences of sexually transmitted diseases.

Provide: You peace of mind as you enter a marriage commitment.

Protect: Your Christian testimony.

Provide: Integrity in your Christian witness that ministers to others.

Protect: Your fellowship with God.

Provide: The abundant life

Why do you think God wants to protect and provide for you? Look at the following verses and answer in your own words. Romans 8:38-39, Psalm 103:17-18, Deuteronomy 10:12

God protects us by giving us boundaries and limitations to our activities. They are an expression of His love and wisdom, to keep us from doing ourselves harm. Not only do His commands keep us safe from harm but they are also targeted to provide for us in specific ways.

### 3. CLEAN HEART FOR A NEW START

One of the greatest mistakes people can make is to assume that since they have failed to keep God's command regarding sex, God wants nothing to do with them. That is simply not true. God is well aware of our sinful tendencies: that is why Jesus Christ came.

For King David, what began with a stare led not only to adultery, not only to an unwanted pregnancy, but also to murder. David really blew it. But consider what happened next.

Read Psalm 51:1-17.

David admitted his sin and asked God for forgiveness. Like David, we can receive God's complete forgiveness and make a clean start.

Here are several important steps to take.

- A. Confess the sin.  
Specifically name your sin before God and ask His forgiveness. 1 John 1:9
- B. Forgive yourself.  
If you are not willing to forgive yourself, you are saying two things to God:  
(1) Christ's death was not enough for your sins; and  
(2) you are a higher judge of what can be forgiven than God is. God's grace is extended to you out of His heart of love. When you do not forgive yourself, you throw God's grace right back into His face. If God's grace can't cover your sin, it can't cover any sin. Romans 1:8
- C. Be filled with the Holy Spirit.  
Allow God's Spirit to fill you with His power to say no to future temptation. Ephesians 5:18
- D. Show fruits of repentance.  
Repentance means turning around, changing one's mind. Matthew 3:8 says, "bear fruits worthy of repentance." This might mean breaking off a relationship or perhaps making a decision not to be alone together. It might be something else. Whatever it is, your actions should show you have changed. The individual who professes to be a Christian but who continues to practice sin should realize that he may not be a Christian at all. John 14:21, 1 John 2:3

God's complete love and forgiveness enables us to make a clean start and live a life pleasing to Him.

#### 4. YOUR NEW LIFE IN RELATIONSHIPS

Our new life in relationships begins with a decision to live a life pleasing to Him.

Read Daniel 1:8  
"But Daniel made up his mind that he would not defile himself with the king's choice food or with wine which he drank; so he sought permission from the commander of the officials that he might not defile himself."

KEY WORD:

Defile: to become impure.

What was Daniel's decision?

What was the result? Read Daniel 11:9-13

Read Hebrews 11:4.  
Starting today, is it your desire not to defile yourself and remain pure until marriage?

Yes	Date
No	Date

The following will help you maintain relationships that please God.

- A. Prayer and Bible Study  
Regularly spending time with God will help you understand and live out His priorities for your life. Psalm 1:1-3; Ephesians 5:8-10; Jeremiah 9:23,24.
- B. Spirit Filled Life  
The Holy Spirit empowers us to live a life pleasing to God. Galatians 5:16.
- C. Accountability  
Our accountability to another person helps maintain our accountability to God. Ecclesiastes 4:9,10; Proverbs 27:17; Ephesians 5:21.
- D. Fellowship  
Seek fellowship with godly people who support and strengthen your convictions. Hebrews 10:24,25; 2 Timothy 2:22.  
As you grow in Christ, you will see how God's commandments are given with your best interest in mind. Because this is true, choosing to wait is the most rewarding decision we can make.