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THE KING AND THE KINGDOM

A 30-DAY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE FOR NEW BELIEVERS



CONTENTS

Pages 3-9

FACTS ABOUT GOD'S OFFER

Four simple steps on how to receive this Special Gift

Pages 10-42

THINGS THAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ON ACCEPTANCE

This 30 day devotional guide will help you understand who you are in Christ and what God's plan is for you here on earth

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WHY DO I NEED GOD'S GIFT?

The Bible, which is the reliable record of what God has told us tells us four good reasons why we need God's gift.

These are...

Firstly

WE NEED IT BECAUSE WE ARE ALL SINNERS

Ever since the first man on earth, Adam, sinned by disobeying God (when he and his wife, Eve, ate a fruit God said was not for them), we have all been born with an invisible, destructive force in our lives, called SIN. We do not become sinners because we sin. Rather we sin because we are born sinners. The Bible tells us:

"All have sinned and fallen short of God's standards" Romans 3:23

David the Psalmist said "I arrived into this world in iniquity and as a sinner I was brought into life from my mothers womb". Psalm 51:5

Secondly

THE GIFT CAN REMOVE OUR GUILT AND SHAME

God's law tells us that all sin will be judged. Every man and every woman has to pay a penalty for their sin. This penalty is death, resulting in eternal separation from God and banishment to hell. No person can avoid the penalty which we have to pay for sin because God's justice demands it. The Bible tells us:

That God warned Adam, in the Garden of Eden:

"[Adam], of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat it, you shall surely die". Genesis 2:17

Paul the Apostle tells us ;*"For the wages of sin is death..."* Romans 6:23

Thirdly

THE GIFT JOINS US BACK TO GOD

God loves us because He made us for Himself and has no desire that any person goes to hell and be separated from Him. He wants to be our Father and have us as His child. But for this to happen someone else would still have to pay the price for sin by dying. This person would have to be without sin but there was nobody who did not have it. This was why God became a man Himself and offered His life as a perfect man to die in our place. The Bible tells us:

"But God so loved the world that He gave us His only begotten Son and whoever believes in Him will not perish but have everlasting life".
John 3:16

Fourthly

THE GIFT IS AN OFFER WE CAN'T REFUSE

We have just seen that our sin makes us guilty and God's justice demands a penalty. We could not pay what was necessary to appease God's wrath so He paid our debt on our behalf by dying on the cross. He paid a debt He did not owe and now we owe a debt we can never repay. The Bible tells us:

"When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having cancelled the written code, with its regulations that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross".
Colossians 2:13,14



STEP 1 • CONFESS

Confess to God the Father that you are a sinner and that you accept His free gift of salvation. The Bible tells us:

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and will cancel the judgement against us". 1 John 1:9

STEP 2 • REPENT

This simply means that I turn my back on those things I previously did, which I know are wrong. It shows the Lord that I value what He has done for me. The Bible tells us:

"Repent and believe". Mark 1:15

SO WHAT MUST I DO TO ACCEPT THE GIFT

STEP 3 • BELIEVE

After confessing and repenting, I must believe what the Bible tells me about God's love and complete forgiveness towards me. I must believe that Jesus Christ has paid the full price for my sin at Calvary and freed me from the judgement of sin and death. The Bible tells us:

"For God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life". John 3:16

STEP 4 • RECEIVE

Once I have believed, I must personally receive Jesus into my life. As I do this, I am made a 'new person' in God's sight by the Holy Spirit and all my past is forgiven and forgotten by my heavenly Father. The Bible tells us:

"But to as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become children of God, to all those who believe in His name".
John 1:12

THE PRAYER OF RECEIVING

(Let the new convert repeat each line after you)

DEAR HEAVENLY FATHER

I confess that I am a sinner
and I am sorry for the way I have lived
I have been independent and self centred

I repent and make a quality decision
with your help my God

I turn my back on my old life-style
I will not go back to my old ways

I believe that your Son Jesus became a perfect man
that He died on the cross for me
I believe that when He died
the judgement and penalty for my sin was paid in full

I receive Jesus Christ into my life
as my Lord and my Saviour
I thank God for the Holy Spirit
who is coming into my life right now as I pray

Amen

If you have
read the
four steps and
want to accept
God's gift, use
this prayer
to tell Him.

**Welcome to the family
of God! Your new life
has just begun!**

BAPTISM THE DOORWAY TO A NEW LIFE

FIRST THINGS FIRST

The Bible tells us that the first step of obedience to Jesus Christ, once we have accepted Him as Our Lord and Saviour, is to follow His example of Baptism.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

Matthew 3:3-16 "and Jesus was baptised"

Acts 2:38 "and Peter said repent and be baptised"

Acts 8:12 "and when they believed, both men and women were baptised"

Acts 10:48 "Peter commanded them to be baptised"

Acts 18:8 "Many Corinthians believed and they were baptised"

Acts 19:5 "When the Ephesians heard, they were baptised"

Acts 22:16 "Why are you waiting? Arise and be baptised"

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE FURTHER TELL US?

- A person must be baptised in a lot of water (John 3:32)
- A person must first be 'born again' ie. repent and confess Jesus Christ as their Lord (Mark 16:16, Acts 22:16) before being baptised.
- The New Testament never speaks of infants being baptised
- The person being baptised must be totally immersed in the water to associate with Christs death, burial and ressurection. (Romans 6:4, Acts 8:39)

Speak to the leadership at the congregation where you fellowship and arrange a date to be baptised.



Prayer Thought

Thank God this morning that He has chosen to live in you and longs to develop a special relationship with you. Thank the Father for His wonderful family.

ALL BABIES HAVE RELATIVES!

Scripture Readings Ephesians 2:19-22

God arranged His plan so that no baby is ever born without a family. Every baby has a mother, a father and a string of relatives. What would happen if babies were born without a mother and father to feed and care for them? From the moment of birth, they should be surrounded by parents who give them tender loving care. (Unfortunately, that's an ideal that doesn't exist for many people. How about your life?) When you became a Christian you entered a new family -a spiritual one. In 1 Timothy 3:15 Paul said, "know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth." The first Christians immediately organised themselves into 'households', i.e. Communities. They didn't use special buildings for their meetings. Instead they went from house to house, sharing their food and encouraging one another. They were sensitive to each other's needs. Over the centuries, the people of God moved away from being a family to being an organisation. The church became an institution.

It took several centuries, but gradually the family life of God's people was replaced by a lot of meetings held in formal buildings called 'churches'. Actually, the word 'church' should never be used to refer to a building. The word 'church' comes from a Greek word which means 'called out people'. God's plan was not to build a kingdom recognised by steeples but by special relationships among His people. From this day onwards you are part of the church with many, many family members.

Although we thank God for church buildings, it is the people who attend who are our family members.

GROWING UP TAKES TIME

Scripture Readings Hebrews 5:11-14

Physically, it takes about 20 years to become an adult from infancy. Growing up spiritually also takes time. However, unlike physical growth, spiritual growth doesn't happen to everyone at the same rate. Furthermore, in the Kingdom you will observe some who mature in a lopsided fashion - such as studying the Bible but never sharing their faith. You can't tell how mature a Christian is by his or her physical age. Some who have been Christians for years may not have grown as rapidly as others who have belonged to the Lord for months! First, you must digest a special milk formula! Babies develop by drinking milk and progressing to solid food. The writer of Hebrews says it's possible for you to quit growing if you don't progress to solid food! In verse 13 and 14, we are given the exact formula of the food that feeds us and makes us grow. He says that we must start to drink it in - *"teaching about righteousness."* If we do so, by constant use we will train ourselves *"to distinguish good from evil."*

You are entering the Kingdom without previously distinguishing good from evil. All your life you have lived without this ability! Have you ever watched a one-year-old child grab a pair of scissors when Mother was not watching? Why did the mother panic when she saw what was happening? It is because the child was not able to distinguish the good use of the scissors from the evil use. In these first few weeks of your Kingdom life it's going to be necessary to learn to distinguish good from evil. It is the first time in your life that you will have the spiritual ability to do just that. Many changes will take place so please be patient with yourself.

DAY 02

Your new
family



Prayer Thought

Thank the
Father this
morning that
He has made
you a brand
new creation
in Christ Jesus
and ask Him to
lead you into
righteous living.



Prayer Thought

Thank the Father
for the person
who led you to
Christ and ask
the Lord to equip
and use you in
the same way in
the future.

WHO ARE THE FATHERS?

Scripture Readings

1 John 2:12-14

According to this passage, there are three stages of maturity among those who live in the Kingdom.

1. Children, the beginning stage is that of a child. In the next stage is:
2. Young Men, who are in the intermediate stage. In the final stage, we find
3. Fathers, Fathers are the models you need to observe first of all ("Fathers" describes both men and women). The most important thing about a father is that he reproduces.

As you get to meet new people in your local mid-week group and local congregation, observe those who bring the lost to Christ. You may discover some who know a lot about the Bible, or those who pray a lot, and you may think, "That person is a father." Perhaps - but a good test of who qualifies to be a father is one who reproduces!

Go out of your way to also spend time with such persons. The Spirit of Christ is moving within them. They are being used to draw others into the Kingdom. If it were not for one or more 'fathers' who knew Christ and who took time to know you also, you would still be drifting in the darkness of Satan's kingdom, wouldn't you?

In John 1:41, we are introduced to Andrew, one of the twelve disciples. We are told that after meeting Jesus, the first thing he did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah." Andrew was a father to his own brother!

WHO ARE THE YOUNG MEN?

Scripture Readings 1 John 2:13-14;
Ephesians 6:11-17; Titus 2:11-12

The best athletes seem to be those in their late teens and early twenties. They have lived long enough to develop co-ordination and muscle skills and also to gain experience in playing sports. In the same way a spiritual 'young man' has grown past the child stage of the Christian life and has some "battle scars" from bouts with Satan. Someone has said, "You can't fight the battles without until you have learned to fight the battles within!" You may refer to them as 'weaknesses' in your life; Satan uses another name for them - 'strongholds'. A stronghold is a fortified place where a power has control. However, the power doesn't have total control of everything - it has control only where the stronghold exists. It is also used to describe a Christian with an inner condition where Satan still has power to control. Paul taught about strongholds in 2 Corinthians 10:4: "The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of this world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds." In the next verse, he describes what he means by 'strongholds'. "We demolish reasonings and every high thing that sets itself up against the knowledge of God and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ." Strongholds involve our thought life. The term 'high thing' is a reference to those in Genesis 11:4 who started to build "a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves over the face of the whole earth". Satan's desire is to encourage the Christian to question God and to glorify self instead of the Lord Jesus. He will fill our minds with fear, scepticism, and doubt if we permit him to do so. Let us always stay focused on our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

DAY 04

Your new
family



Prayer Thought

Thank God today
for defeating
Satan at the cross
and for giving you
the ability to say
'no' to temptation.
You now have
the power to live
victoriously.



Prayer Thought

Thank God
for the other
Christians He
has placed
in your small
group to
assist you in
your spiritual
journey as you
progress in
your life with
God.

WHO ARE THE DEAR CHILDREN?

Scripture Readings Galatians 4:19;
Ephesians 4:15; 1 Thessalonians 2:7,8

Dear children are very special people. They are totally trusting and innocent. At the same time they lack good judgement because they are inexperienced. They may step into dangerous situations without knowing the consequences of their actions. Until they understand their world they will need continual help.

In Galatians 4:19, Paul writes to the Christians who are 'dear children'. He likens them to a woman agonising in childbirth. His birth pains are caused by his great desire for Christ to be 'formed' in them. Yet, in Galatians 2:20 Paul said, "Christ lives in me". In what way did he mean that Christ needed to be 'formed' in them? He knew that the full character of Jesus Christ had not yet developed in their lifestyles. In Ephesians 4:15 he shared how maturing takes place: "speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into Him who is the Head, that is Christ."

The study of the Scriptures is a very important ingredient in the growth of 'dear children', and it must include relationships with fellow believers who can "speak the truth in love."

There are many things in the lives of 'little children' they cannot comprehend without the help of others who love them. In your new family - your Cell Group - others will see needs in your life revealed by the Lord to them, which will help you grow. The Bible says we are to 'build up' (edify), one another. As a new Christian you can expect the 'young men' and 'fathers' in your community (mid-week group) to care for you by speaking into your life.

THE THREE HEAVENS

Scripture Readings Luke 17:20-21

There are three 'realms' where kingdoms can exist. This is shown in Scripture where for example, Jesus taught us to pray to the Heavenly Father in this manner: *"Your Kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven"* (Matthew 6:10). God's Kingdom activity links 'earth' with 'heaven'. The Bible speaks of three Heavens:

The First Heaven is earth's atmosphere where man lives. The devil and some of God's angels live here as well. There is a continual conflict taking place in the heaven where we live. Isaiah 55:9,10 refers to *"the heavens that are higher than the earth"* and mentions that *"the rain and the snow come down from it"*.

The Second Heaven is the home of Satan and the fallen angels as explained in Ephesians 2:1,2 (Please read). A spiritual battle ground, kingdoms of the world are controlled from here. This is where the will of God is always resisted. Ephesians 6:12 teaches that our struggles are with the spiritual forces of the second heaven.

The Third Heaven is the Home of God (Isaiah 63:15). Christ is enthroned here at the right hand of the Father (Ephesians 1:20). Angels minister constantly, this is where the will of God is never challenged. When we became citizens of His Kingdom, Ephesians 2:6 says that *"God raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus."* Previously you spent your life under Satan's rule from the second heaven but now you are free from his reign with the Kingdom of God dwelling within you - even though you live in the first heaven.

DAY 06

Kingdom
Lifestyles



Prayer Thought

Thank the Father for freeing you from Satan's rule. Today you are a citizen of the "third heaven" and have His Kingdom and presence within your life while living on earth.



Prayer Thought

Thank God for the free access you have into the third heaven right now in Christ. Talk to God as often as you can throughout the day.

THE THIRD HEAVEN

Scripture Readings 2 Corinthians 12:2-4

The third heaven is our final home! After Paul visited the third heaven he had a desire to depart from this life and go there. In 1 Corinthians 2:9 he writes, *“No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him.”* As far as God is concerned, the moment you prayed to receive Christ as your Lord, you were allowed admission into the third heaven. You can come and go from there any time you desire. It is like having an open telephone line that is never disconnected!

A lot of Christians you will meet don't understand that. As a result, they don't bother to communicate with the Father. Paul said in 1 Thessalonians 5:17, *“pray continually.”* You don't have to be in some building with stained glass walls to reach the third heaven! In the world of the supernatural you are located there this very moment. Your greatest privilege as a resident of the Kingdom of God is that you are *“already seated with Christ”* in the third heaven. *“Set your heart on things above.”* Keep the line open at all times.

Later we are going to talk about the importance of having a 'Listening Room' in your life - a special time when you go to the third heaven, praying in the Holy Spirit. It's a wonderful experience!

Never forget that you are never separated from the presence of God and that He longs for you to speak to Him as often as you can through the day about any and everything.

THE SECOND HEAVEN

Scripture Readings Revelations 12:7,8;
Ephesians 6:12; Romans 8:38,39

"And there was war in heaven..." Obviously, that passage is not talking about the third heaven. It is referring to the second heaven. There has not always been a 'second heaven'. It's important for you to know that the second heaven is not the place Jesus refers to as 'hell', the place where those who die without Christ will spend eternity (Matthew 10:28). Rather, it is the realm where spiritual battles take place. The battlegrounds for 'principalities and powers' (Ephesians 6:12).

The second heaven began when Lucifer, one of the highest angels in the third heaven decided he wanted to be equal with God - the conflict began millenniums ago (Read Isaiah 14:12-15). Evil is always rooted in saying, "I will". This was the pride-filled statement of Satan as he chose to rebel against God. Pride and rebellion against authority - these are the marks of the evil one. Whenever you see them, you see his works. Along with him were *"the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home"*, mentioned in Jude 6 and 2 Peter 2:4. It was at that time, before God created the world, that the second heaven was formed. The angels who chose to follow Satan are described in Revelation 12:7-9 as assisting Satan in warfare and are to be cast into hell. As a 'little child' in God's Kingdom, it is important that you quickly understand about the second heaven. You will be deceived if you do not realise that you are, for the first time, free from Satan's domination and he will try to trip you up. But do not fear - simply remain close to God by speaking to Him often through the day.

DAY 08

Kingdom
Lifestyles



Prayer Thought

Thank God for freeing you from Satan's rule. Today you are also a citizen of the "third heaven" and because of that God is hearing your every prayer right now.



Prayer Thought

Thank God for
the greatness
of His love and
forgiveness
toward you.
Thank Him for
giving you what
you did not
deserve.

THE FIRST HEAVEN

Scripture Readings 1 Kings 8:35,36;
Romans 8:19-23; 2 Peter 3:10-12

When God made the heavens and the earth, He chose to make Adam and his descendants the caretakers of them (Genesis 1:28). Satan could not stand for that - how could this new creature take control of the world and the heavens above it? So Satan put together a plan. He appealed to the pride within Adam and Eve. In Genesis 3:5 he tempted Eve and she disobeyed God. The Scriptures tell us that the first man and woman were the first to disobey God but not the last. We are told in Isaiah 53:6 that every single one of us has done the same thing!

One of the greatest tragedies of history is that man from the start has not cared about the heavens and the earth God entrusted to him. In every case without exception - the goal of Satan is to destroy. Do you like the smell of garbage? One whiff - and you've had enough - correct? Pity this poor suffering planet that has had to suffer under all the human filth for centuries. Both forests and seas are being destroyed yet this is a relatively minor issue when one compares it with the evil that man is capable of against his own kind. Think of the atrocities, the genocides, murders, wars, broken families you personally know about. You can understand why "Creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed" (Romans 8:19). Things are not always going to be like they are. Romans 8:20-23 tells us that before creation can be different, man must be different. In 2 Peter 3:10-12 God explains that at the end of this age He will destroy everything on this planet with fire. All this will pass away. That is why we need to live for the Kingdom of God right now because God's Kingdom is a Kingdom that will never end.

CUSTOMS INSPECTION

Scripture Readings Ephesians 2:1-6;
2 Timothy 3:2-5

My seat allocation placed me next to a young man who seemed to be very nervous. As we approached Singapore, he asked, "Is it true that they hang those who bring drugs into their country?" "Absolutely!" I answered. "It's as drug-free a nation as you will find on the earth today. If they catch someone at the border, he goes straight to prison, and if they find him guilty before the court they hang him". He became strangely silent. Suddenly he got up and went into the bathroom. When he came back he had a look of relief on his face. I guessed what had happened, and said, "You got rid of something too dangerous to keep, didn't you?" He looked at me with shame and said, "You won't tell anyone will you?" Because of his dress, his hairstyle, and his age, he was taken aside by the Customs Inspector when we landed. He made a very wise decision. He had gotten rid of baggage that was not permitted in the Republic he was about to enter! For years our lives were filled with habits and values described in our two Scripture portions for today. As you think about the way you have been 'programmed' in the past, are you carrying baggage that needs to be discarded? Here is a prayer that can help release you from any old baggage you may still be carrying with you.



DAY 10

Kingdoms
of this world

Prayer Thought

"Father, this baggage has been with me for a very long time. When I've tried to get rid of it before I have always failed. I don't carry this baggage in my hands. It's deep inside me. It is as much a part of me as my skin and bones. I am helpless before it. I want to be released from it. I believe in You and I believe You have the power to release me. You have come from the third heaven to live in my life. I now invite You to work in my life. I give this baggage to You. Thank You for being my Deliverer and for setting me free from this thing."

DAY 11

Kingdoms
of this world



Prayer Thought

Father help me
to know what
my 'rights' are
as a child of God
and to leave
behind cultural
mindsets that
interfere with our
relationship.

LEAVING OLD KINGDOMS BEHIND

Scripture Readings Isaiah 37:15,16; 60:12;
Galatians 3:22; Philippians 3:20

Every nation or kingdom considers itself to be the most important of all. Those outside are called 'aliens', a word describing the 'alienated'. They have no rights of citizenship.

Those who put their nation before God may not physically bow down to an image of stone but they break the first Commandment: "You shall have no other gods before Me." Through the nationalistic worship of nations whole generations have been maimed and slaughtered. In the 20th century one hundred million lives have been offered on the altars of kings who are determined to rule regardless of the cost. The Jewish holocaust of the 20th century demonstrates what can happen.

Romans 13:1-7 instructs us to submit to those in authority over us. Just as we are to be loyal citizens of our nation, there is also the need to be loyal to our citizenship in the Kingdom of God. This may be a difficult thing for you to grasp but you might as well face it early in your Christian life. When you swear allegiance to the Kingdom of God you must set aside your loyalty to anything within your culture which conflicts with Kingdom values.

In the days ahead we are going to work through what it means for you to think through the values which have impregnated you from childhood. We all carry the indelible marks of our 'kingdoms', for either good or bad.

WHO'S RUNNING THE KINGDOMS?

Scripture Readings Luke 4:5-8

Satan was really frightened when Jesus was born. He did his best to have this baby destroyed. His family had to hide away in Egypt for a time. Throughout His life on earth Satan tried to inspire religious leaders who hated Jesus to murder Him (Matthew 12:14 / Mark 3:6). Satan was most threatened by what Jesus preached "Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is near" (Matthew 4:17). Having controlled the kingdoms of this world for centuries, the devil's power was now being challenged by the offer of a new kingdom. Satan had developed powerful supernatural systems in the heavenlies with fallen angels serving as controlling 'princes' over every kingdom (Daniel 10:20-21). All of them blocked the knowledge of God. False values and deceit controlled them all. If Jesus established His Kingdom, Satan would lose his power. His 'kingdoms' were actually prison systems to capture mankind.

Following His public baptism by John the Baptist, Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. From God's viewpoint, this was a positive test. From the devil's standpoint, it gave him an opportunity to control Jesus. If he could do so, God's power would be broken. Satan offered two things to Jesus i.e. authority and splendour. He offered an exchange but Jesus never fell for it. Jesus responded by telling the devil we are not to worship the kingdoms of this world or anything inside them. Two of the things most valued by humans are the control of others (authority) and being recognised as 'special' (splendour).

DAY 12

Kingdoms
of this world



Prayer Thought

Help me renew
my value
system based
upon what You
consider really
important in my
life. Let me not
seek for things
which will give
Satan control
again in my life.

DAY 13

Kingdoms
of this world



Prayer Thought

Thank You for giving
me a real reason
to live again. Help
me pursue those
things which are of
Kingdom value.

SOLOMON'S CONCLUSION

Scripture Readings Ecclesiastes 1:1-2;
Ecclesiastes 2:4-11; 12:13

When Solomon became king of Israel, the Bible says God gave him a “wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be” (1 Kings 3:12). At the end of his life, he wrote Ecclesiastes. This was his pessimistic verdict about life in the kingdoms of this world.

In Ecclesiastes 2:3, he describes how he came to this conclusion and explains that he experienced all the activities of life through the guidance of carnal wisdom. He says, “I wanted to see what was worthwhile for men to do under heaven during the few days of their lives.” He had the power and the wealth to try everything for himself. He had many wives, the finest houses, and built many beautiful things. All the values that we think will make life worth living were tested by him. His conclusion is very significant!

Satan is no fool! If he offered most of us a lifestyle of lust and immorality, thievery and violence, we would turn away from him. Therefore he offers values which seem harmless, promising that they will bring us happiness. We are deceived by him and spend our lives seeking happiness in all the wrong ways. At the end of Ecclesiastes Solomon comes to a single conclusion about what makes life worthwhile. “Fear God and keep His commandments.” Doing the will of God is the most important pursuit in the Kingdom of God. What are the present pursuits of your life? Do they need to be re-evaluated in the light of this devotion?

WHO CONTROLS YOU?

Scripture Readings 1 John 5:19;
Romans 6:20

The word for 'control' used in both these verses refer to Satan's power "spread over" the world. In both passages we are told that unbelievers have no freedom. All live under the dominion of Satan. He usually controls people by placing them under the manipulative control of others. One of Jesus' disciples was named Peter. His courage to stand up for Jesus faded when he was alone in a hostile crowd. He denied his Lord three times in one night. When we find ourselves controlled by Satan's crowd, we have decisions to make.

A 55 year old Chinese lady explained to her community (mid-week group) that she could not make a public confession of her faith in Christ "because she did not want to offend her mother who worshiped idols." Not offending her mother was a higher priority to her than her faith in Christ. She did not understand Jesus' words in Luke 9:26 that being ashamed of sharing Jesus would cause God to be ashamed of us. She had spent her life pleasing her mother who had manipulative control over her. In reality, the control of Satan had blinded her mother to the love of God for over 75 years. The daughter's silence stopped the grace of God flowing through her to her mother who was facing eternal separation from God in a place Jesus called "Hell." Now that you have chosen to follow Jesus, one of the ways Satan will try to manipulate you, is through people whom you feared in the past.

Purpose today to make a quality decision to always remember that no one or nothing has the right to control you through manipulation at any time.

DAY 14

Kingdoms
of this world



Prayer Thought

**Father help
me to never be
ashamed of Your
Son Jesus Christ
and to tell others
about my decision
to have Him as my
Lord and Saviour.**



Prayer Thought

Father when
I came to you
I gave up my
rights, my
will and my
possessions.
I never want
to withhold
anything from
you again.

THE END OF THE KINGDOMS

Scripture Readings Daniel 2:44;
Deuteronomy 5:8,9

While the primary way God speaks to us is through the Bible, He does speak in other ways too. This Scripture in Daniel is part of a story of a wicked king named Nebuchadnezzar who received a message from God through a dream. The prophet Daniel interpreted the dream for him and described a time yet future, when Satan's "kingdoms of this world" will be replaced. You will discover many things in your Bible about the time when Jesus returns to the earth to reign as King of Kings. The important thing for you to remember is that you don't have to wait for His Kingdom to appear at the end of time before experiencing it. Jesus said in Luke 17:20, "The kingdom of God is within you." As Christians live in the kingdoms of this world, Christ's Kingdom lives within them! While unbelievers worship the gods of this world, we worship the true God. We have put away old gods to focus our attention exclusively on Jesus Christ who is not only the Son of God, but God Himself. Since we know that the possessions, powers and pleasures of this age are 'gods' to many, how should we value them? Some say we should have nothing at all to do with 'worldly' things. As you come into this new Kingdom how should you see your possessions? Idols are not always things worshipped in foreign temples. Idols are things that rob God of our affections. It can be a car, a home or people. God loves us and it is OK to have possessions but we must never let the possessions own us. That is idolatry. It is good to have those things money can buy but not at the expense of losing those things money cannot buy such as love, joy and peace. Enjoy your possessions and always be ready to give to God's work.

ALL ABOUT 'OIKOS'

Scripture Readings Ephesians 2:19-22;
1 Corinthians 12:12-21

The Bible's original word for 'household' is 'oikos'. An 'oikos' is a small group of people who have a very special relationship with each other. They spend at least a total of one hour a week talking with each other. That makes them an 'oikos' or a household. It may surprise you to learn that most of us have a very small 'oikos'. We don't spend that much time talking with other people. There are very few people that we know that we talk to for a full hour, spread in minutes here and there over 7 days. You have always had an 'oikos' in your life. There have always been special people you considered 'family' even when you were not a blood relative. Households are never large. They are made up of small groups of people who become very close to one another and who care for each other. Sometimes we call an 'oikos' a Community or a mid-week Group. The Holy Spirit forms it and makes it an intimate family, a 'body', with each person attached to the rest. Usually, one 'oikos' will comprise not more than 15 people. After that, the 'family' can become too large to spend quality time with one another.

In Matthew 28:18-20, Jesus told us that after the Holy Spirit has baptised us into His body we are to make a special testimony for others to observe. It is done by being fully immersed in water, telling the world you have died to an old lifestyle and have been raised in newness of life (Romans 6:10). If you have not yet been baptised as Jesus commanded, you should do so as quickly as possible. Discuss this with your community leader or elder.

DAY 16

Kingdoms
of this world



Prayer Thought

**Father thank you
for adopting me
into your family
who are found in
every church in
every town and
city around the
world.**



Prayer Thought

Thank Jesus for the people who loved you into the Kingdom of God, and who, although different, are nevertheless important in your life.

YOUR NEW RESPONSIBILITY

Scripture Readings Genesis 4:8-10;
Galatians 5:25 & 6:4; Acts 5:1-11

In Genesis 4:9 Cain had murdered his brother. When God asked him where his brother was he said, "Am I my brother's keeper?" His jealousy of his brother caused him to be a murderer. Before that jealousy developed he had a more basic problem: he did not feel responsible for him! A Polish sociologist examined a society of people for many months. Her report revealed that we divide people into three groups. She called the first group the People People. They were described as those we accept as our equal, and desire to have relationships with them. The second group she called the Machine People. They were described as those we are polite to because we need them to service our needs. They may include a repairman, a household servant, or someone who cashes our cheques or waits on us in a store. The final group she called the Landscape People. These are the hundreds we pass by each day on the streets, the elevators etc. We have no interest at all in them. They are totally unimportant to us. Newspapers constantly repeat stories of murders, muggings, and rapes which take place on crowded streets with disinterested people watching the episode. It is no small matter to belong to God's 'oikos'. Yesterday, we read 1 Corinthians 12:21: "The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I don't need you!'". True followers of Jesus become responsible for those around them because Jesus lives within them. The value of your brother or sister in your community is something to ponder over. Sooner or later the behavioural "warts and pimples" will begin to show in each person. That is not the time to decide on your commitment toward them. The time to commit yourself is now.

SONS OR SERVANTS?

Scripture Readings Matthew 12:18; 14:1-2;
1John 4:13 & 17

Today we're going to have a Bible study about a word that reveals a significant truth. This word 'pais', is the Greek word in your Bible for 'child'. It is also translated by the English word 'son' (Matthew 17:18). If you are a 'pais' of God, you are a 'child' of God, or a 'son' of God. The word is used to describe a relationship between a father and his son. That's the point, the word 'pais' describes a relationship! Now let's look at another use of the word, causing an amazing truth to be seen. Look at Matthew 14:1-2. A totally different word in English is used to translate 'pais' here - a most unexpected word! *"At the time Herod the tetrarch heard the news about Jesus, and said to his servants [pais]..."* Here is a new use of the word 'pais'. In the first example, it meant child, or son. Now, in the second example, it means servant! How can this be? This double use of the word is really a key to understanding an important truth. The significance of what we do is the result of who we are. To be a son or a child is to automatically become a servant of God. The word 'pais' has two meanings which are interchangeable. Jesus the Son was Jesus the Servant. To be a son was to be a servant! The very nature of God's Son, Jesus, was to be a servant - and that is true for us as well. Sonship makes us servants!

Jesus, the Son and the Servant of God, has given us His Spirit. If His Spirit lives within us, our new nature is going to be His nature - and His nature is that of a Servant! In the Kingdom of God, being a servant is a lifestyle and it is not optional!

DAY 18

Kingdoms
of this world



Prayer Thought

Praise God that we are both His sons and His servants! Father help me to see what needs to be done, and to do it as a member of your household.



Prayer Thought

Thank the
Father for all
the possessions
which you have
and ask Him
how you can
practically bless
others through
them.

'OIKONOMOS'

Scripture Readings Luke 12:42;

1 Corinthians 4:1-2; 1 Peter 4:10; Malachi 3:8

In our life in the Kingdom, being a servant means we must learn to think in a new way about assets. The Greek words 'oikonomos' and 'oikodomeo' are both members of the 'oikos' family tree. Learning their meanings will help us discover what our ministry involves. Today we'll consider the first of these words. 'Oikonomos' is translated 'manager' or 'steward' in Luke 12:42. This person is described as one the master has assigned to meet the needs of his household (oikos) servants. The 'oikonomos' gives the servants their food allowances at the proper time. Obviously, the 'oikonomos' does not use his own funds to do this. The only resource he has available is what has been entrusted to him by the master. He cannot distribute food unless it is first provided for by the master. In the Kingdom of God we serve knowing that the only resources we have are those provided by the Master. He gives to us so that we may give to others. There is a great responsibility in serving as a 'pais' (a servant of God). A Christian must be sensitive to those who need rations. The Scripture says the food allowance must be given at the proper time. This requires a close relationship with those who are to receive the rations. He must know how much each person needs and the proper time for it to be provided.

A relationship with those in need is just as important as time spent with the Master to receive the resources. Serving as an 'oikonomos' in the Kingdom requires us to recognise that the assets we 'own' (money, property etc.) actually belong to the Master. These tangibles (as well as our spiritual gifts - 1 Peter 4:10) have been entrusted to us for 'proper distribution'. Scripture shows us that a tenth of all we earn as stewards is to go directly to His ministry (Malachi 3:8).

'OIDODOMEO'

Scripture Readings Romans 15:2;
1 Corinthians 14:26

The word 'oikodomeo' is translated to 'build up' in some Scripture passages. Some of these refer to the construction of a building. Other passages, including the two above, use the word to describe the 'edifying' or 'building up' of fellow Christians. It introduces us to a new understanding of what it means to serve the Master by 'building up' other people (Romans 15:2). In His Kingdom, God desires to build you up through your fellow community members. As a young Christian, no one told me this. I was told to go into my 'secret room' and have a 'quiet time' with the Lord. Just me and God - nobody else. I am glad someone talked to me about being alone with God. It has become a lifelong habit and I strongly recommend it. But no one told me about God coming to me through another believer to 'oikodomeo' or 'build me up'. When a friend away to College he disappointed the Lord and began to live in a way that disgraced His Kingdom. One day, from the stress of wrong living, he passed out on the steps of his dormitory. An older student took him to his room, put him on his bed, and spoke frankly. It was a major turning point in his life. It was the first time someone in the Lord's family was 'building him up'. He 'oikodomeoed' him, not just by the words he spoke but by the presence of Christ in him. The Spirit flowed through him to cleanse, correct and encourage. There is much loneliness among the people of God. We have broken folk who need to be built up and made whole. It cannot be done individually. Christ comes to me through others. My healing requires someone else to touch my pain! The whole purpose of a small community is to 'oikodomeo' its members. If each person is an 'oikonomos', in touch with God, then the community will 'oikodomeo'.

Kingdoms
of this world

**Prayer
Thought**

Thank God for the people He is using to build you up. Ask the Father to use you to do the same for someone else in need.



Prayer Thought

Make me sensitive to your Holy Spirit's prompting in my life and help me to respond to anything that needs to be dealt with, immediately.

TO BE OR NOT TO BE FILLED...

Scripture Readings Galatians 5:16-21;
John 7:37-39

Have you already experienced ups and downs in your life as a Christian? Have you been shocked to discover that many of your old habits and attitudes still plague you? Are you disgusted because of the mess in your life? Perhaps you have already heard a voice whisper in your ear, "You can't make it in the Kingdom! This isn't for you!" If so, you are hearing the voice of Satan. He would be delighted to see you become discouraged with your new life. There is another voice you are hearing. It's a voice that says, "You don't have to live on a rollercoaster. There is a solution to your problem!" When you prayed to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as your Lord and Master, you were given His Holy Spirit. He resides in your life all the time. Scripture says there are four ways you can respond to His presence:

1. You can resist the Spirit. In Acts 7:51, we read about people who went through religious rites, but who had no sensitivity to the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Whenever we clearly hear His voice speaking to us and refuse to listen, we resist Him.

2. You can grieve the Spirit. In Ephesians 4:30-32, if we have bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, or spitefulness and ill will, we grieve the Holy Spirit within us.

3. You can quench the Spirit. In 1 Thessalonians 5:19, we can "put out the Spirit's fire." It's a sad event when we lose our zeal for good works.

4. You can be filled with the Spirit. In Ephesians 5:18, the term for "be filled with the Spirit" is a continuous verb. Paul is saying, "be filled - and be filled - and be filled with the Spirit."

Three steps to let the Spirit take control of your life are: 1. Come to Him. "If a man is thirsty, let him come to me and drink." 2. Ask Him. 3. Surrender to Him and receive.

BEING FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT!

Scripture Readings Luke 11:11-13; Acts 9:17

A child in a science class was asked to fill an eight ounce glass with water. The teacher then poured four ounces of sand into the glass. Of course, half the water ran over the sides and was lost. The children were taught the law of displacement. That is, two substances cannot occupy the same space at the same time. When we ask to be filled with the Spirit, we must first examine ourselves. If the substances of disobedience and unbelief fill our minds and hearts there is little space left for His Spirit to reign. Thus, being filled means there must also be an emptying. If we have a cynical spirit, there is no room for faith. If we have bitterness in our soul, there is no room for joy. When our 'inner man' is empty, there is plenty of room for the Holy Spirit to fill us with His own presence.

Thousands of believers live in the Kingdom of God without being filled with the Spirit. They are the ones who have dug in their 'spiritual heels' and have said, "This is as far as I feel comfortable going in the Kingdom of God. I will never be overly zealous. I must always be in control!" Often they will settle for doctrinal positions to justify their unwillingness to be totally emptied of self. They are never baptised into the deeper things of God! Ask a Christian friend to pray for you if you have the desire to be filled with His Spirit. If you want to have hands laid upon you for prayer, be sure the persons who do so are full of the Spirit of Truth. Remember no person has any 'special' power to be transmitted to you through them. Instead they are only vessels of His grace to release His power already in you. We are filled from the inside and need nothing more from the outside.

DAY 22

The
Servant
Life



Prayer Thought

Father, help
me to not only
confess my sin
but to commit
that area to
You so that you
can control and
fill me with Your
Holy Spirit.



Prayer Thought

**Thank You
for giving me
supernatural
power to enable
me to minister to
others. Help me to
always recognise
the Holy Spirit as
the source of this
power.**

THE SPIRIT'S ENERGISING: PART 1

Scripture Readings 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

The reason we should desire to be filled with the Holy Spirit is so that we can minister to others as His power flows through us. These supernatural activities are called 'gifts'. In the original text, there are several words used to describe this work of the Spirit. Verse 1 speaks of them as the 'supernaturals' or 'breathings'. In Verse 4 these are called 'grace gifts', and in verse 6 and elsewhere, 'energising'. These spiritual energies come from the Holy Spirit. They do not exist apart from Him. They are not available to unbelievers. The Christian does not decide when and where they will be exercised, but responds to the prompting of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit fills us and flows His power through us according to His own will, time and space. The work of the Holy Spirit is to take place not only in us, but also through us. The gifts are used for the benefit and growth of the body of Christ. That is why your community places major emphasis on each person being available to 'build up' (oikodomeo) others as the gifts are manifested.

Don't be anxious about whether the Spirit will give you a certain gift or another. It's not necessary to go on praying for the gift of healing or word of knowledge. Relax! Enjoy your fellowship with Him! Your availability and fellowship with Him will cause ministry to flow through you. Gradually, you will discover something about the way God uses you. It will be appropriate to your personality. When you are full of the Holy Spirit you will find yourself naturally ministering to others.

THE SPIRIT'S ENERGISING: PART 2

Scripture Readings 1 Corinthians 12:31-14:1

Think of the gifts of the Holy Spirit as 'spiritual pipes' God uses to allow the current of love to flow from Him, through us, to others. Paul explains in this chapter that if we try to separate our understanding of the spiritual gifts from their purpose, they are totally worthless. Therefore, the focus should be on the activity of the gifts, not their possession. 1 Corinthians 14:1 tells us to *"Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts..."* This truth gives us a powerful basis to evaluate the source of spiritual gifts. Sometimes they are used in a situation where people are awestruck by their presence and the person manifesting them is seen as a 'super Christian'. One way to evaluate the use of a gift is the desire which motivates it. If that motive is love, we may be sure it comes from above. If not, its source is to be questioned. In fact, 1 Corinthians 14:29 tells us to *"weigh carefully what is said."* Paul's extensive teaching in chapter 13 makes it plain that the gifts should flow from love and if love is not present, something is out of order. The word for 'love' used in this passage in the original language, is 'agape'. 'Agape' speaks of a love that comes from the character of the one doing the loving, not from the beauty of the person receiving the love. In your community there may be people with problems which you may not find very appealing. Your first reaction may be, "Oh no, I want to leave this person alone!" At that instant, you may be sure there are two problems in the group and you are the second one! If there is no love, there will be no need for the gifts to be manifested through you. The first requirement of being a channel for the grace gifts is to have 'agape' love for other people.

DAY 24

The
Servant
Life



Prayer Thought

Help me
to love the
unlovely and
to befriend
the unpopular
person at
school, college
or at the work
place.



Prayer Thought

Thank you for your spiritual gifts. Help me to step out in faith and to use them in love. Allow me to always realise that love is more important than any gift.

THE SPIRIT'S ENERGISING: PART 3

Scripture Readings 1 Corinthians 14:1,3,5,12 & 24-26

In this chapter, Paul sought to correct a problem in church life. People were gathering in their communities without showing each other love. In chapter 11:20-30, he speaks of their lack of concern for one another and says that many are spiritually sick as a result. If the gifts are not used to build up (oikodomeo) one another, they will be abused. Think about the gifts we have discussed. How many of them can be exercised without regard for their ministry to others? Healing? Helping others in distress? Discerning true or false spirits? All involve us loving others. We must recognise that all of the gifts are to involve the believer in ministry! This was not understood by this church. One of these gifts was being particularly abused i.e. the gift of tongues. Paul never forbids speaking in tongues (see v.18). His deep concern was over the use of this gift without respect for its ministry to build up the body of Christ. Other gifts can immediately carry ministry but the gift of tongues must be interpreted. The gift of prophecy is very useful. A study of the Old Testament reveals that the Hebrew word for 'prophet' is literally, 'mouthpiece'. God came upon the prophet and He spoke divinely given words. Often these were predictions of events far into the future. It was through the gift of prophecy that the Bible was written. While prophecy may still foretell future events, it has a broader purpose.

If you carefully examine 1 Corinthians 14:3 & 26, you will find that it can be seen as a general term for gifts that strengthen, encourage and comfort. It can also describe a distinct gift - prophecy. Every single person is to manifest spiritual gifts for the edification of others. Our calling as 'pais' people is to freely show agape love to one another and to become channels of God's grace.

THE LISTENING ROOM

Scripture Readings Galatians 2:20;
Romans 7:22; Thess 5:23

In the Kingdom of God you will need a 'Listening Room'. A 'pais' (a son and servant) ministers only after the Master's orders have been received. Hearing the directions of God for our needs, the needs of others and His assignments for us should have top priority. Praying is more than a one-way conversation in which you speak to God, it also involves listening to Him. There are some questions we need to consider this week about our life in the Kingdom of God. Where is God when I speak with Him? Do you think of Him as 'seated above the circle of the heaven' listening to you from outer space? Do you always look toward the ceiling when you pray? If so, that long distance may cause Him to seem remote to you. Galatians 2:20 tells us, "Christ lives in me". The presence of God should not be considered to be 'out there', but 'in here'. He is in heaven but He is also inside a believer. The fellowship we have with the Father is very intimate. He is a friend who sticks "closer than a brother" (Proverbs 18:24). Wherever you go, He is there with you. Our "Listening Room" is more an attitude, a value of our lives, than a special room built for that purpose. It is a condition in which we not only speak to Him, but also hear from Him. Remember He is always speaking. The problem comes when we do not know how to listen to His voice. To obtain peace of mind and His direction for our lives and ministry to others (through use of our spiritual gifts), we need to hear Him when He speaks. There is no more important place in the Kingdom of God than your 'Listening Room'. Dr. A. W. Tozer wrote, "the highest love of God is not intellectual, it is spiritual. God is spirit and only the spirit of man can know Him really. In the deep spirit of a man the fire must glow or his love is not the true love."

DAY 26

The
Servant
Life



Prayer Thought

Lord, help me to realise that you now live inside of me and that your Holy Spirit will tell me what to do each day.



Prayer Thought

Today I will try to
speak little, and
wait upon Your
voice to direct
me as I read and
meditate upon
Your Word.

HOW TO HEAR GOD: PART 1

Scripture Readings Luke 5:16; 6:12; 21:37;
22:39-46

The four Scriptures above speak of an important habit in the life of our Lord. In Luke 6:12, He was at the beginning of His ministry and He had a major decision to make. The Son of God was about to assemble His community. (It is important to note that even our Lord performed His ministry with close ties to twelve men and all of them had warts and pimples!) Before He made that choice, He spent an entire night in the 'Listening Room'. The decision was made only after He heard from the Father and the Holy Spirit. In Luke 21:37, Jesus was at the end of His ministry. He was busy throughout the day teaching but at night He retired to His 'Listening Room' on the Mount of Olives. This was His custom. Since the Son of God had a 'Listening Room', we need one too! Every major and minor event of our lives in the Kingdom will require time to hear the words of the Master. The Spirit of God may speak to your mind by giving an idea or an understanding of a situation. He may speak to your will by calling you to do what is best or to your spirit by giving you peace when you are troubled - or making you feel troubled when you are at peace! He may speak through your memory to help you recall His help in the past. Or He may speak to your heart by reminding you that you are breaking one of His spiritual laws, resulting in you feeling uncomfortable and convicted.

You may be certain of one thing: If you will take the time to be with Him, you will certainly hear His voice. Making time to be alone to listen to His voice will require a re-sorting of your values!

HOW TO HEAR GOD: PART 2

Scripture Readings 1 Peter 1:10-12 & 16-20;
Matthew 22:29

What is the relationship between Scripture and your time in the 'Listening Room'? First of all, let's discover the One who caused the Scriptures to be written. In 1 Peter 1:10-11 we read, *"the prophets ... searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing"*. Underline the above verses in your Bible! Jesus Christ, who dwells in you, also dwelt in the writers of Scripture and caused them to record their words. The Scripture says, *"It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you ..."*.

The Scriptures have a very important place in your life and should always be included in your 'Listening Room' time. Since Christ is the author of Scripture, you may be certain that the words He speaks directly to you will never violate His Scripture. There will be a continual relationship between what the Bible says and what you hear as you listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit. Scripture must always confirm the voice of God. Christ will never contradict the Scripture with a different word to you. Here are some passages for you to meditate on: Romans 15:4, 2 Timothy 3:15, Luke 24:27, Luke 24:32 and John 10:35. We must always have the Scriptures with us in our 'Listening Room'. Any thought which does not agree with its teaching should be instantly rejected. Remember the inspired truth of Scripture is received by the mind, as it is read and understood. Then His Spirit speaks into your heart, directly impressing His thoughts and ideas upon it. This is called illumination. At such times, you may experience the presence of God in many wonderful ways. In deep worship, heart searching or repentance, you may receive answers to questions or a word of encouragement for another.

DAY 28

The
Servant
Life



Prayer Thought

Thank You for
Your Word.
I have great
assurance that
You will never
contradict Your
Word when You
speak to me,
LORD. Help me to
study your Word
and apply it.



Prayer Thought

Thank You for
speaking to me.
Help me hear
your voice clearly
this morning
and to confirm
what I hear by
checking it with
the Scriptures.

HOW TO HEAR GOD: PART 3

Scripture Readings Romans 8:5-7;
8:27; 12:2

Thoughtfully read the Scriptures above in the order that they are given. They explain that our Teacher is the Holy Spirit who will guide us into 'all truth'. We have already established that whether He does that through a Scripture verse or by speaking directly to us, He will never contradict what Scripture teaches. Bible meditation combines the analysis of the mind and the spontaneity of the heart. Living in the Kingdom of God does not mean throwing your mind away. We are to use both our mind and our spirit, not either our mind or our spirit. Your mind is to process and test illumination but it is not the organ through which revelation is received. That is done by your spirit. Your mind and your spirit work together. Illumination is not irrational - it is suprarational. You take into account the reality of the spiritual world. Before you submitted to God's reign over you, the powers of darkness were free to control your mind (Romans 8:7) and your spirit. That is no longer true! Your mind and spirit can now communicate with the Holy Spirit, who will guide you into truth. Hebrews 5:14 tells us that by constantly listening to the Spirit you will be trained "to distinguish good from evil." God is speaking to you all the time. Until you begin to distinguish His voice from your own thoughts, you may simply group His words with your thoughts and not realise what He has said to you. If you are unsure of the source of your thoughts, ask yourself: "Does this thought glorify Jesus? Is it true to Scripture?" It is recommended that you create a personal 'Listening Room' diary. In it, record the unprompted flow of thoughts that come to your mind. When you are finished you can prayerfully review what you have written in the light of the Scriptures and so discern between your thoughts and God's voice.

HOW TO HEAR GOD: PART 4

Scripture Readings Luke 10:38-42;

Romans 12:11

Our value systems cause us to react to the same situation in very different ways. Martha considered her service for Jesus to be the most important matter. Mary considered being with Jesus to be most important. There have been periods in my life when I felt my service for the Lord the most important thing I could do. In every case, I began to feel His power drain away from my ministry. With alarm, I would realise I had become like Martha. Like her, one of the marks of my condition was a critical spirit towards others who, "didn't work as hard for the Lord as I did". That attitude caused the deep flow of agape love within me to be absent, and my spirit wounded those around me. At the end of those periods, my 'Listening Room' had to become my confession booth (1 John 1:9)! You and I must always remember that God does not consider us significant because of what we do but rather because of who we are! Whenever we do something for Him that stops us from being with Him, we are like Martha. It's possible to do both! In Romans 12:11 Paul writes, "*Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord.*" Another way of saying that, might be, "Don't slow down what you are doing but don't neglect time in the 'Listening Room'". It is just not possible to do the work of the Lord without His power. To become a channel of that power, we must be in constant contact with Him. Take seriously the assignment to 'oikodomeo', to 'build up' others. In your community you will learn of needs and problems in the lives of others. Take those needs to the 'Listening Room'. Hear what God says to you about the source of the problems, their solutions and how to share with others what He tells you.

DAY 30

The
Servant
Life



Prayer Thought

Father, make me a channel of blessing as You enable me to always think of others as better than myself. Help me to find some way to encourage someone today.



KINGDOM NON-NEGOTIABLES

You've completed these 30 days, but this end is just the beginning, from now on you need to...

1. Read the Bible & pray before starting out your day, start with 15 minutes.

THE BIBLE TELLS US:

"All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It straightens us out and teaches us to do what is right. It is God's way of preparing us in every way, fully equipped for every good thing God wants us to do."
1 Timothy 3:16,17

2. Belong to a local Congregation that is Bible based and who preach the Gospel. **Faithfully attend** the Sunday and mid-week community meetings.

THE BIBLE TELLS US:

"And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage and warn each other, especially now that the day of his coming back again is drawing near."
Hebrews 10:25

"They [the early church] worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity." Acts 2:46

3. Be Baptised.

It is God's will for every believer to be baptised by being fully immersed under water just as Jesus was. In doing so we paint a picture of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection.

THE BIBLE TELLS US:

"Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins." Acts 2:38

4. Ask the Holy Spirit to take control of your thoughts, actions and words every day.

THE BIBLE TELLS US:

"When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not be presenting his own ideas; he will be telling you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future."
John 16:13-15

5. Pray regularly for your church leadership and those in Government in your country.

THE BIBLE TELLS US:

"I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. As you make your requests, plead for God's mercy upon them, and give thanks. Pray this way for kings and all others who are in authority, so that we can live in peace and quietness, in godliness and dignity. This is good and pleases God our Savior." 1 Timothy 2:1-4

6. Pray for another country and look for an opportunity to go with a team and minister to them.

THE BIBLE TELLS US:

"And then he told them, 'Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone, everywhere'." Mark 16:15

7. Be faithful with God's tithe, i.e. 10% of your total monthly income, and give it to your local church.

THE BIBLE TELLS US:

"Bring all the tithes into the storehouse (your local church congregation) so there will be enough food in my Temple. If you do," says the LORD Almighty, "I will open the windows of heaven for you. I will pour out a blessing so great you won't have enough room to take it in!" Malachi 3:10, Hebrews 7:8 and 2 Corinthians 9:6-15.

8. Desire to be Christ centred and develop a love for people of all cultures and nations, locally and abroad, sharing the good news of Jesus with them.

THE BIBLE TELLS US:

"There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male or female. For you are all Christians - you are one in Christ Jesus." Galatians 3:28

9. Submit to your local Church eldership and ask them to speak into your life if they think it necessary.

THE BIBLE TELLS US:

"Obey your spiritual leaders and do what they say. Their work is to watch over your souls, and they know they are accountable to God. Give them reason to do this joyfully and not with sorrow. That would certainly not be for your benefit." Hebrews 13:17

10. Remain excited, expectant and enthused in your Christian faith, always looking for opportunities to share the good news of Jesus with others.

THE BIBLE TELLS US:

"But you, dear friends, must continue to build your lives on the oundation of your holy faith. And continue to pray as you are directed by the Holy Spirit." Jude 1:20, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

"Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again - rejoice!" Philippians 4:4

"A final word: Be strong with the Lord's mighty power." Ephesians 6:10

SALVATION COMMITMENT CARD

PLEASE COMPLETE

Date: DD / MM / 20 ____

Name: (Mr / Mrs / Miss or other) _____

Address: _____

_____ **Code:** _____

E-mail: _____

Tel: _____

Cell: _____

Age: (please tick) -15 15-25 26-35 36-50 50+

(please circle): Married / Divorced / Single / Widowed / other: _____

Prayer Requests: _____
