

# Lessons Learnt In God's Church

I looked into the back of my main Bible and saw that I was baptised into God's church in March 1963, ordained as a deacon in April 1975 and a bi-vocational minister in February 1979, retiring from active ministry in 2009.

On meditation I asked myself what lesson have I learnt over the past years as a Christian.

Lessons that I would like to share with you who use this website.

## 1. Jesus Christ is the real head of the Christian Church

**Not** any physical leader of any religious group.

We are unable to see, hear Jesus Christ today but we can experience His hand at work.

### Healing miracles –

I have experienced miraculous healing as a minister as I have applied what we read in the letter written by James in the Christian Bible.

**James 5:14-15** [NIV] *“Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven.”*

God performed two such healings under my physical anointing early in my ministry which was a very encouraging confirmation of my ordination.

### Understanding –

**John 16:13** [NIV] *“But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.”*

I will always remember this vividly happening on a first visit to a person who was requesting baptism.

The person asked me to explain a certain scripture to them. Although it was **not** directly related to baptism, I could see it was very important to them.

I felt that I was being put on trial as a minister.

I turned to the scripture and could **not** even remember reading it before, yet I heard myself explaining it in great detail, totally to the satisfaction of the person I was visiting.

Very often even after these many years as a servant of Jesus Christ, a deeper understanding is given to me of scriptures that I have often read and quoted.

Such an experience always brings tears of gratitude to my eyes.

### Changed Lives –

This is the greatest joy that any servant of Jesus Christ can experience.

What is the most wonderful thing about this is that you see the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives, opening up the Holy scriptures, the Christian Bible to them for the first time.

You can then watch a progressive change for good in their lives.

Since my ministry has been expanded through this website my only proof that this is happening, by the work of the Holy Spirit in me and through me, is the letters and emails I receive thanking me for the website articles.

Such correspondence is very welcome and encouraging, making my long hours of study and article preparation well worth while.

I have never expected great response because I am well aware of what God told Isaiah when he offered his life to God to use as a messenger.

**Isaiah 6:8-13 [NIV]** *“Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I. Send me!” He said, “Go and tell this people: “Be ever hearing, but never understanding; be ever seeing, but never perceiving.’ Make the heart of this people calloused; make their ears dull and close their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed.” Then I said, “For how long, O Lord?” And he answered: “Until the cities lie ruined and without inhabitant, until the houses are left deserted and the fields ruined and ravaged, until the LORD has sent everyone far away and the land is utterly forsaken. And though a tenth remains in the land, it will again be laid waste. But as the terebinth and oak leave stumps when they are cut down, so the holy seed will be the stump in the land.”*

The only encouragement a servant of God can receive is that this message will be retained in the human spirit of those who do hear.

Eventually this will be brought back into their minds and they will act upon what was spoken or read.

How can I claim this?

**Isaiah 55:10-11 [NIV]** *“As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.”*

God as Sovereign ruler over all His creation chooses when, what He has sown, will produce fruit to be harvested.

### **Human Leadership –**

**1 John 4:1-3 [NIV]** *“Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because **many false prophets have gone out into the world.** This is how you can recognise the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. **This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.**”*

We are warned about false ministers, who are influenced by a false spirit who is anti the work and words of Jesus Christ, referring directly to the work of Satan and his demons.

**Matthew 24:3-5 [NIV]** *“As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. “Tell us,” they said, “when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?” Jesus answered: “**Watch out that no-one deceives you. For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many.**”*

Many will claim to be Christians and are representing Jesus Christ, yet will be deceiving those who follow them.

**Matthew 24:23-25** [NIV] *“At that time if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or, ‘There he is!’ do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect, if that were possible. See, I have told you ahead of time.”*

Even true, practising Christians could be deceived by signs and wonders.

**Matthew 24:26-27** [NIV] *“So if anyone tells you, ‘There he is, out in the desert,’ do not go out; or, ‘Here he is, in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it. For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.”*

The return of Jesus Christ to this earth will be something that **all** humanity will observe, just as the sun is seen by all humans.

**Matthew 16:13-18** [NIV] *“When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, ‘Who do people say the Son of Man is?’ They replied, ‘Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.’ ‘But what about you?’ he asked. ‘Who do you say I am?’ **Simon Peter answered, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’** Jesus replied, ‘Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for **this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven.** And I tell you that you are Peter, and **on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.**”*

Jesus builds just one church **not** many differing churches.

This church would **not** be founded on a human being.

The Greek word that Jesus called Peter is “*petros*” meaning a stone, but the rock, on which the church would be founded Jesus used the Greek word “*petra*”, meaning a massive mountain.

**The foundation of the true church is the acknowledgement of Jesus as the very Son of God, that the Holy Spirit had just revealed to Peter.**

**Matthew 7:24** [NIV] *“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.”*

The Greek word used again was “*petra*” you don’t build a house on a pebble, a “*petros*.”

**Ephesians 2:19-22** [NIV] *“Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow-citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household, **built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.** In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. **And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.**”*

Two things are revealed about God’s true church in this scripture.

**a) Jesus Christ is the foundational cornerstone on which the whole church rests.**

**1 Corinthians 3:11** [NIV] *“For no-one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.”*

Paul acknowledges that there is **only one** foundation for us to build on, Jesus Christ.

**Isaiah 28:16** [NIV] *“So this is what the Sovereign LORD says: “See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation; the one who trusts will never be dismayed.”*

“Zion” Hebrew meaning a fortress, a place of safety, that is the church.

The foundation was a tested and trusted rock, referring to Jesus Christ.

**Romans 9:30-33** [NIV] *“What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith; but Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it. Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the “stumbling-stone”. As it is written: “**See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.**”*

Paul saw Jesus Christ and His message as a stumbling block to the Jews and many other religious people.

A fulfilment of **Isaiah 8:13-15** and **Isaiah 28:16**.

#### **b) The church will be built by the active indwelling of the Holy Spirit.**

**Romans 8:9** [NIV] *“You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does **not** have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.”*

Only those who have the active indwelling of the Holy Spirit are Christians who make up the true church that Jesus Christ is building.

**Colossians 1:17-18** [NIV] *“He [Jesus Christ] is before all things, and in him all things hold together. **And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.**”*

Jesus Christ is head of the spiritual body, His church and has supreme authority over the church.

**Ephesians 4:11-13** [NIV] *“It was he [Jesus Christ] who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, **so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fulness of Christ.**”*

This is **not** a chain of authority in the church but different spiritual gifts, all to build up the church into one unified body.

All of the apostles introduced themselves as bond slaves of Jesus Christ, and every other true church leader looks upon themselves as people who serve the church **not** as rulers in the church.

## **2. It is hard physical work that leads to spiritual growth**

Being “*spiritual*” is just the way we respond to the physical things we do in our day-to-day life.

**Matthew 5:13** [NIV] *“**You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men.**”*

True Christians will add savour to the community in which they live by acts of kindness and concern for others.

**Matthew 5:14-16** [NIV] *“**You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.**”*

Notice it was the “*good deeds*” that were the “*light*” to other people.

The way that we respond to a need in others’ lives.

### **Even prayer is hard physical work.**

Prayer is unnatural to a human being and is often subject to being in an uncomfortable position, kneeling, which often ends up with painful cramp and “pins and needles” in our legs.

**Prayer is unnatural to us because we are speaking to a being we cannot see with our eyes and cannot hear with our ears.**

Human nature is naturally lazy.

We are going to have to push ourselves into certain essential actions, such as reading and studying God’s Word, the Christian Bible.

**Proverbs 10:4** [NIV] *“Lazy hands make a man poor, but diligent hands bring wealth.”*

“Poor” – can apply to spiritual as well as physical wealth.

“Wealth” – can apply to our relationship towards God as well as our physical riches.

**Proverbs 10:26** [NIV] *“As vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes, so is a sluggard to those who send him.”*

All Christians have been given a personal job of work to do for our Creator and Saviour [read **Matthew 28:19-20**].

How much “smoke” have we blown into God’s eyes or offered Him only vinegar to drink, due to our lazy attitude towards this work we have all been given to do?

**Proverbs 12:24** [NIV] *“Diligent hands will rule, but laziness ends in slave labour.”*

If we are to fulfil our role as leaders and teachers in the Kingdom of God [read **Revelation 12:9-10** and **Revelation 1:5-6**] we need to be preparing to fulfil this role now through study, meditation and prayer.

**Proverbs 20:13** [NIV] *“Do not love sleep or you will grow poor; stay awake and you will have food to spare.”*

It can be hard work to rise early in the mornings to ensure we have time for study and prayer to start the day “on the right track.”

**Proverbs 22:29** [NIV] *“Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will serve before kings; he will not serve before obscure men.”*

This is what God is looking for in every one claiming to be a Christian.

### **3. Humble ourselves before God and He will exalt us in due time**

Human nature likes to be seen and appreciated.

But until we see ourselves as God sees us we will never be truly humble.

How does God see us?

**1 Samuel 16:7** [NIV] *“But the LORD said to Samuel, ‘Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.’”*

God sees beyond the façade we put up for other humans to see and appreciate.

He sees the motivation that drives our actions, and words.

### **How can we see ourselves as God sees us?**

**Hebrews 4:12-13** [Amplified Bible] *“For the **Word that God speaks** [the Christian Bible] is alive and full of power, making it active, operative, energizing and effective. It is sharper than any two edged sword. **Penetrating to the deepest parts of our nature, exposing, sifting, analyzing and judging the very thoughts of the heart.** And not a creature exists that is concealed from His sight, but all things are open and exposed, naked and defenceless to the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do.”*

**Psalms 75:6-7** [NIV] *“No-one from the east or the west or from the desert can exalt a man. But it is God who judges: He brings one down, he exalts another.”*

This is why God alone can choose the right person for whatever job He wants to accomplish through a human being.

**Hebrews 11:6** [NIV] *“And **without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.**”*

Seeking to please God is **not** just one day a week occupation, it is total submission to Him, every hour of our existence.

## **4. Never let bitterness, resentment or envy enter into our minds**

**Luke 14:25-27** [Living Bible] *“Great crowds were following Him. He [Jesus Christ] turned round and addressed them as follows. **Anyone who wants to be my follower must love me far more than he does his own father, mother, wife, children, brothers or sisters, yes, more than his own life, otherwise he cannot be my disciple.** And no-one can be my disciple who does not carry his own cross and follow me.”*

We have to follow Jesus Christ's example and lay down our life, that is our time and substance, and follow Him.

We may be forced to give up our job, family, friends or sweetheart, we may **not** be as prosperous as we were before becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ.

We may even find that we are facing more trials in our life, than we did before we surrendered our life to Jesus Christ.

**But what value can we put on our being called to be among the “firstfruits” of God's created family, the Kingdom of God?**

Looking back 100 years from now, what will matter most?

The things we lost, or didn't have or the eternal personality and character of our Creator God that our trials helped us to build?

We are blessed by knowing the purpose of the physical life we have been given.

We have access to the unlimited power of the Holy Spirit.

We have peace of mind through the forgiveness of our sins and the avoidance of the death penalty they deserve.

Where can there be bitterness or envy in such blessings?

**Psalms 73:1-5** [NIV] *“Surely God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart. **But as for me, my feet had almost slipped; I had nearly lost my foothold. For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. They have no struggles; their bodies are healthy and strong. They are free from the burdens common to man; they are not plagued by human ills.**”*

King David met with this problem of envying others and he was king!

Most of my relatives and even those whom I employ, enjoy a more prosperous lifestyle to my wife and I, we are looked on as the poor relatives.

How did King David deal with his envy?

**Psalms 73:16-17** [NIV] *“When I tried to understand all this, **it was oppressive to me till I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny.**”*

David through being in God’s presence was shown the end outcome of their lives without God’s guidance.

**David then was released of envy and bitterness by seeing their lives from God’s viewpoint.**

**Hebrews 12:14-15** [NIV] *“Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no-one will see the Lord. See to it that no-one misses the grace of God and that **no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.**”*

A deep rooted bitterness or envy can destroy any good character we may have developed.

**Ephesians 4:30-32** [NIV] *“**And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.**”*

A bitter or envious attitude of mind can block the work of the Holy Spirit who is producing within us the fruits of the Holy Spirit which are essential characteristics we need to enter into God’s created family through the redemption of our lives.

**Ephesians 4:17-19** [NIV] *“So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that **you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.**”*

The lifestyle of all who are devoid of the influence of God in their lives, is futility, lives that are driven by lust instead of love.

Lives wasted **not** producing anything that is eternal in value, that is godly character.

## **5. Don’t get discouraged or think negatively**

All negative thoughts are the product of Satan’s broadcasting to all humanity.

Satan knows what his end is going to be so has plenty to be negative about and wants all humanity to have the same thoughts about life.

**Revelation 20:7-10** [NIV] *“When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore. They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God’s people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven*

and devoured them. **And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulphur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.**”

Satan will be in the midst of the final destruction of the world he implemented.

**2 Peter 3:10-11** [NIV] “*But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives*”

**Revelation 21:27** [NIV] “*Nothing impure will ever enter it, [the new Jerusalem from which Jesus Christ will rule the earth] nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.*”

Satan denied entry into God’s new world creation.

**Jude 13** [NIV] “*They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved for ever.*”

“Stars” refer to angels good or bad.

Put all these scriptures together to get a picture of Satan and his demons’ fate.

Nothing positive, all negative.

**1 Corinthians 13:7** [NIV] “*It [“agapé” – godly love] always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.*”

When we are developing the love, that is one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit in us, we are blessed with continual hope **not** discouragement.

**Ephesians 6:10-12** [NIV] “*Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. **For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.***”

It is easy for a Christian to be discouraged for we are battling against evil powers that are far greater than ourselves alone.

We need this full spiritual armour that God has provided.

**Ephesians 6:17** [NIV] “*Take the **helmet of salvation** and the sword of the Spirit, which is **the word of God.***”

Two parts that help in this battle are the helmet of salvation, that protects our mind from negative thoughts, and the sword, promises in God’s Word, the Christian Bible.

**1 Thessalonians 5:8-9** [NIV] “*But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, **putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.** For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.*”

This helmet is the hope of salvation from death that we have through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Always remember that this life is a training situation for an instant transformation of our physical bodies to eternal spiritual bodies. [Read **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18** and **1 Corinthians 15:42-44**]



**Hebrews 12:10-11** [NIV] *“Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.”*

**The trials we experience in this life are to help us to qualify to share in an eternal life with a holy God.**

**Romans 8:18-21** [NIV] *“I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. **The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed.** For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.”*

All of creation, includes all humanity who have ever existed, the vast majority never even hearing of Jesus Christ as their Saviour.

**Romans 8:22-25** [NIV] *“We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? **But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.**”*

Even we who are blessed with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit are groaning with this world that is in its death throes.

This hope is what will help us face every situation in life with a positive attitude.

## **6. Never give up the fight against sin and evil**

**1 Timothy 6:11-12** [NIV] *“But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. **Fight the good fight of the faith.** Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.”*

Life will be a continual fight against sin and evil and it is through our “confession”, that is our good example that we win the battle against evil, that is Satan.

**Revelation 12:9-11** [NIV] *“The great dragon was hurled down, that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him. Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: “Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. **They** [true spirit-filled Christians] **overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.**”*

**This overcoming of Satan is the condition attached to the promises made to each of the seven churches in Revelation chapters two and three.**

**Philippians 4:11-13** [NIV] *“I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. **I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.** I can do everything through him who gives me strength.”*

God will provide us with everything that we need to endure the trials we face that will produce in us the holiness we need, to be given the gift of eternal life.

**2 Corinthians 12:7-10** [NIV] *“To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”*

Paul eventually realised that the physical trials he faced were good for him in the end.

We are the only ones who can prevent us from receiving the gift of eternal life, by giving up the fight when we could be so near to the end of the life of training for eternal life.

## 7. Pray and study every day

**2 Thessalonians 3:10** [NIV] *“For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: ‘If a man will not work, he shall not eat.’”*

This powerful motivation can be applied to our spiritual life – no prayer and study – no breakfast.

**James 2:23** [NIV] *“And the scripture was fulfilled that says, ‘Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,’ and he was called God’s friend.”*

Abraham, who was very submissive to God’s will, was called a friend of God.

**John 15:13-16** [NIV] *“Greater love has no-one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.”*

Jesus Christ calls us His friends.

Any friendship lapses without verbal contact.

Our contact with Jesus Christ is reading or listening to His words recorded in the Christian Bible, then our side of the conversation is our prayers.

**Matthew 7:21-23** [NIV] *“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’”*

In spite of a lot of religious activities these people never used prayer and study of Christ’s words [Old as well as New Testament].

Jesus Christ’s judgement was that they were “evildoers.”

Note the context of these verses.

**Matthew 7:24-27** [NIV] *“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”*

The parable about building our life on the Words of Jesus Christ.

## 8. Love one another fervently

**Philippians 2:1-8** [NIV] *“If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. **Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross!**”*

This is the perfect example of godly love.

Jesus Christ the Son of God became a human being so He could experience what it is like to live as a human being and thus become our perfect high priest.

Only Jesus Christ can be our perfect “*comforter*.”

**John 14:16-18** [NIV] *“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you **another Counsellor** to be with you for ever, the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.”*

The Greek word translated “*counsellor*” is “*paraklētos*” meaning one who walks beside us and gives us encouragement or our counsellor or advocate in a legal situation.

**We need to follow Jesus Christ’s example and seek to understand what it is like to be in the skin of another person.**

**John 15:13** [NIV] *“Greater love has no-one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.”*

To lay down our life is to be willing to give our time and substance for the benefit of others less blessed by God at this time.

**Romans 5:5** [NIV] *“And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into [through] our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.”*

A truer translation of the Greek preposition “*en*” is “*through*” when we consider how the Holy Spirit works.

**John 7:38-39** [NIV] *“Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.” By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.”*

The love that the fruit of the Holy Spirit brings to our lives flows through us out to others, in acts of sacrificial love.

**John 14:23** [NIV] *“Jesus replied, “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. **My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.**”*

Jesus Christ desires to continue His work of sacrificial love through us by living His earthly life again in us.

We can call this love the three “*L’s*” of love.

**Look** – for needs in other people that we can supply.

**Listen** – one of the greatest gifts we can give to another person is listen to them, so many people now live alone with no-one to talk to most of the time.

**Live** – a life that is willing to sacrifice our personal desires and time to bring joy and love into the lives of others.

## 9. Be thankful and be happy

**Colossians 2:6-7** [NIV] *“So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and **overflowing with thankfulness.**”*

Our lives and prayers should be overflowing with thankfulness for all the blessings we have from our Creator God.

All too often we take our bodies for granted, not being thankful for eyesight, hearing and mobility.

Also I try to never be caught without a smile on my face, and aim to generate at least 20 smiles on the faces of people I meet each day.

**If we do pause to count our blessings we will be amazed at how blessed we are.**

This thankfulness and happiness do **not** come to us naturally. We have to work on it constantly.

**Proverbs 15:13** [Amplified Bible] *“A glad heart makes a cheerful countenance, but by sorrow of heart the spirit is broken.”*

**Proverbs 15:14** [Amplified Bible] *“All the days of desponding afflicted are made evil by anxious thoughts and foreboding, but he who has a glad heart has a continual feast regardless of circumstances.”*

These are living laws that we can apply.

**1 Peter 1:6-9** [NIV] *“In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith, of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire, may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed. **Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.**”*

What is happening in our lives as God brings us salvation from our deserved death, is a very good reason to live a life that is filled with thankfulness and great joy.

**James 1:2-4** [NIV] *“Consider it **pure joy**, my brothers, **whenever you face trials** of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”*

Until we think this through to rejoice when in trials doesn't seem likely. Yet it is through such trials that we mature and God accomplishes His great work, that is why we rejoice.

**1 Peter 4:12-13** [NIV] *“Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. **But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.**”*

To share in Jesus Christ's suffering because of our witness to the message He brought for all humanity will bring us great joy on the return of our Saviour and Lord Jesus Christ.

Anticipate such joy even now in the midst of our day-to-day trials and pains.

## **10. Put your whole heart into the work that God has given you to do**

**John 6:66-69** [NIV] *“From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him. “You do not want to leave too, do you?” Jesus asked the Twelve. Simon Peter answered him, “**Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.**”*”

Peter reflects the attitude of all true Christians.

**Once the veil of Satan's deception has been lifted, and the very reason for our existence has been shown to us, where else is there to go for in Jesus Christ we have all we need and more.**

**1 Corinthians 16:15-16** [NIV] *“You know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and **they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints.** I urge you, brothers, to submit to such as these and to everyone who joins in the work, and labours at it.”*

The Greek word translated “devoted” is “*tassō*” can be translated “addicted.”

God's work is like a drug, it is so stimulating you cannot give it up, it dominates your life.

Many Christians work at getting the gospel message out to this world, but few toil at it.

## **11. Trust in God and obey Him with our whole being**

**Proverbs 3:6-7** [Living Bible] *“**In everything you do, put God first, and He will direct you and crown your efforts with success.** Don't be conceited, sure of your own wisdom. Instead, trust and reverence the Lord, and turn your back on evil.”*

Don't look at events through our own eyes, seek to see everything from God's viewpoint, the eternal viewpoint.

Study God's Word, the Christian Bible, to know how God would react to any situation.

**Deuteronomy 10:12-13** [Living Bible] *“**And now Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you except to listen carefully to all He says to you, and to obey for your own good the commandments I am giving you today, and to love Him, and to worship Him with all your hearts and souls.**”*

Very simple and easy to remember instructions from a Creator God who loves us and only wishes what is best for us.

### **Let us recap on what we have studied.**

Jesus Christ rules ... ok!

Hard physical work leads to spiritual growth.

Humble ourselves before God and He will exalt us.

Never let bitterness, resentment or envy enter into our minds.

Don't get discouraged or think negatively.

Never give up the fight against sin and evil.

Pray and study the Christian Bible every day.

Love one another fervently and in a practical way.

Be thankful and stay in a happy attitude.

Put your whole heart into the work God has given you to accomplish.

Trust and obey God with your whole heart.

To be complete there must be point number 12.

## **12. A scripture that is the basis of what I do and what I seek to accomplish, with God's help, in others**

**Romans 12:1-3** [Message Bible] *“So here is what I want you to do, God helping you. Take your everyday, ordinary life, your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for Him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognizing what He wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you. I'm speaking to you out of deep gratitude for all that God has given me, and especially as I have responsibilities in relation to you. Living then as every one of you does, in pure grace, it's important that you not misinterpret yourselves as people who are bringing this goodness to God. No, God brings it all to you. The only accurate way to understand ourselves is by what God is and by what He does for us, **not** by what we are and what we do for Him.”*

**Romans 12:1-3** [NIV] *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship. **Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.** Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is, his good, pleasing and perfect will. For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.”*

I have given you two translations of these verses because they are so important.

I suggest you read it in other translations as well, and apply them to your life.