

# Reflections



## Reflections On Various Themes

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**To God Be The Glory!**

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# Reflections

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# Reflections On The Bible

## INTRODUCTION

1. With this lesson we begin...
  - a. A series entitled “**Reflections**”...
  - b. Devoted to simple meditations on various themes
2. The definition of “reflection” used in this series means...
  - a. “consideration of some subject matter, idea, or purpose”
  - b. “a thought, idea, or opinion formed or a remark made as a result of meditation”
3. The scriptural justification for taking time to reflect comes from **Php 4:8**...
  - a. In which Paul concludes by saying “...meditate on these things” (NKJV)
  - b. Other translations say “...think about these things” (ESV) or “...dwell on these things” (NASB)

[Thus we should “Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise” (NLT), to reflect on them. We begin with “**Reflections On The Bible**, which will be the main source of our other reflections...]

## I. REFLECTIONS ON THE BIBLE

### **A. THE WAY TO TRUE HAPPINESS... - Psa 1:1-3**

1. The truly blessed person is one whose delight is in the Law of the Lord
2. Who meditates on it day and night
3. Who thus flourishes like a fruitful tree

### **B. HAS MANY VIRTUES... - Psa 19:7-11**

1. Perfect, converting the soul
2. Sure, making wise the simple
3. Right, rejoicing the heart
4. Pure, enlightening the eyes
5. Clean, enduring forever
6. True and righteous altogether
7. More desirable than fine gold, sweeter than honey and the honeycomb
8. Warning the servant of God, leading to great reward

### **C. HELPS THE YOUNG... - Psa 119:9**

1. Capable of cleansing the young
2. When they take heed according to it

### **D. GUARDS AGAINST SIN... - Psa 119:11**

1. Can help one avoid sin
2. If they are willing to hide the Word in their heart

### **E. MAKES ONE WISE... - Psa 119:97-100**

1. If one is willing to meditate on its commandments

2. Making them wiser than enemies, teachers, the ancients
3. If one is willing to keep its precepts

**F. A LAMP TO SHOW THE WAY... - Psa 119:105**

1. A lamp to one's feet
2. A light for one's path

**G. A SOURCE OF GREAT PEACE... - Psa 119:165**

1. For those who love the law of God
2. Nothing causes them to stumble

**H. A SOURCE OF COMFORT, HOPE... - Ro 15:4**

1. Written for one's learning
2. Giving one comfort and hope

**I. LIVING AND POWERFUL... - He 4:12**

1. Sharper than any two-edged sword
2. Discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart

**J. A LIFE-GIVING WORD... - Jm 1:21; 1Pe 1:23-2:2**

1. Able to save one's soul when received with meekness
2. An incorruptible seed, capable of causing one to be born again
3. Especially because of the gospel contained therein
4. Producing a new birth and spiritual growth

**K. A LIFE-GUIDING WORD... - 2Ti 3:16-17**

1. Inspired by God
2. Profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness
3. So the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work

[The Bible is truly a wonderful source of great blessings for those willing to read, meditate, and obey its teachings! Before we conclude our reflections on the Bible, consider...]

**II. WHAT OTHERS HAVE SAID ABOUT THE BIBLE**

**A. PATRICK HENRY...**

1. The American patriot, known for declaring: "Give me liberty, or give me death"
2. "The Bible is worth more than all other books which have ever been printed."

**B. CHARLES DICKENS...**

1. One of the world's greatest literary writers
2. "The New Testament is the very best book that ever was or will be known in the world."

**C. ABRAHAM LINCOLN...**

1. One of America's greatest presidents
2. "I believe the Bible is the best gift God has ever given to man. All the good from the Savior of the world is communicated to us through this book."

**D. RONALD REAGAN...**

1. Another great American president
2. “Within the covers of this one single book, the Bible, are all the answers to all the problems we face today. If only we would read it and believe.”

## **CONCLUSION**

1. We have seen that the Bible is...
  - a. The way to true happiness
  - b. A book of many virtues
  - c. A helper of the young
  - d. A guard against sin
  - e. Able to make one wise
  - f. A lamp to show the way
  - g. A source of peace, comfort, hope
  - h. Living and powerful, life-giving and life-guiding
  - i. Highly esteemed by the great and powerful
2. Does the Bible mean that you...?
  - a. The Psalmist said “I rejoice at Your word As one who finds great treasure.” - **Psa 119:162**
  - b. Can you say that?

May these simple reflections on the Bible encourage you to read the Bible daily...!

# Reflections

## On God

### INTRODUCTION

1. With this lesson we continue...
  - a. Our series entitled “**Reflections**”...
  - b. Devoted to simple meditations on various themes
2. Again, the scriptural justification for taking time to reflect comes from **Php 4:8**...
  - a. In which Paul concludes by saying “...meditate on these things” (NKJV)
  - b. Other translations say “...think about these things” (ESV) or “...dwell on these things” (NASB)

[The NLT says “Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise”. Thus we began with “**Reflections On The Bible**”. Now we return our attention to the Author of the Bible...]

### I. REFLECTIONS ON GOD

#### **A. THE LORD OF HEAVEN AND EARTH... - Ac 17:24**

1. So Paul introduced “the unknown God” to the Greeks in Athens
2. So He is proclaimed throughout the Bible to all who read it

#### **B. THE CREATOR OF ALL THINGS... - Gen 1:1**

1. In the beginning
2. Both the heavens and the earth

#### **C. THE CREATOR OF ALL LIFE... - Gen 1:24-27**

1. All living creatures, including mankind
2. Especially mankind, created in the image of God Himself

#### **D. HIS OMNIPOTENCE... - Am 5:8; 4:13**

1. He is all powerful
2. Who made the constellations, the earth’s revolution and water cycle
3. Who created the mountains, the winds, and knows the mind of man

#### **E. HIS OMNISCIENCE... - Ps 139:1-6; He 4:12-13**

1. He is all knowing
2. Who knows our every thought, our every movement
3. All things are open to Him, to Whom we must give an account

#### **F. HIS OMNIPRESENCE... - Ps 139:7-16; Jer 23:23-24**

1. He is everywhere
2. We cannot flee from His presence; from the womb and throughout life He is there
3. We cannot hide from Him; He fills the heaven and earth

#### **G. HIS GLORY REVEALED IN CREATION... - Ps 19:1-3; Ro 1:20**

1. The heavens (firmament) declare His handiwork

2. The creation makes known His eternal power and Godhead
3. No one has an excuse not to believe in a Supreme Being

**H. HIS WILL REVEALED IN HIS WORD... - Ps 19:7-11; 2Ti 3:16-17**

1. His word is perfect, sure, right, pure, clean, true and righteous
2. His inspired Scriptures are all-sufficient to make the man of God complete

**I. HIS LOVE REVEALED IN JESUS... - Ro 5:8-11; 1Jn 4:9-10**

1. He loved us even though we were sinners and enemies
2. He sent Jesus to die and reconcile us back to Him
3. Jesus is the propitiation (appeasing sacrifice) for our sins

**J. HIS JUDGMENT PROMISED TO COME... - Ac 17:24-31**

1. We return to Paul's sermon to the Greeks in Athens (Acts 17)
2. God made us to seek for Him, for He is not far from anyone of us
3. God commands all men everywhere to repent, for the Judgment Day is coming
4. In which the world will be judged by Jesus
5. God has offered assurance of the Judgment by raising Jesus from the dead

[God is truly an Awesome Being, transcendent yet personal, worthy of belief, praise, and obedience!  
Before we conclude our reflections God, consider...]

**II. WHAT OTHERS HAVE SAID ABOUT GOD**

**A. ABRAHAM LINCOLN...**

1. Whom we quoted in our previous "reflections" on the Bible
2. "I can see how it might be possible for someone to look around on earth and not believe in God, but I cannot conceive how anyone could look up into the heavens and say there is no God."

**B. C.S. LEWIS...**

1. Author of "The Chronicles Of Narnia", and former atheist (1898-1963)
2. "We may ignore, but we can nowhere evade, the presence of God."

**C. A.W. TOZER...**

1. American preacher, writer, magazine editor (1897-1963)
2. "You can see God from anywhere if your mind is set to love and obey Him."

**D. MIGUEL DE UNAMUNO...**

1. Spanish essayist, novelist, poet, playwright and philosopher (1864-1936)
2. "We need God, not in order to understand the why, but in order to feel and sustain the ultimate wherefore, to give a meaning to the universe."

**CONCLUSION**

1. We have reflected on...
  - a. God's creativity
  - b. God's omnipotence
  - c. God's omniscience

- d. God's omnipresence
  - e. His glory revealed in creation
  - f. His will revealed in His Word
  - g. His love revealed in Jesus
  - h. His judgment promised to come
2. Don't you want to know God...?
- a. "Thus says the LORD: 'Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, nor let the rich man glory in his riches; But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight,' says the LORD." - **Jer 9:23-24**
  - b. The most important thing in life is to know God and serve Him!

May these simple reflections on God encourage you to seek God and learn His will for you...!



# Reflections

## On Jesus

### INTRODUCTION

1. We continue...
  - a. Our series entitled “**Reflections**”...
  - b. Devoted to simple meditations on various themes
2. Again, the scriptural justification for such reflections is **Php 4:8**...
  - a. In which Paul concludes by saying “...meditate on these things” (NKJV)
  - b. The NLT says “Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise”

[We began with reflections on the **Bible** and its Author, **God**. Now we turn our attention to the main Subject of the Bible, **Jesus**...]

### I. REFLECTIONS ON JESUS

#### **A. “THE BREAD OF LIFE”... - Jn 6:35**

1. The first of seven “I am” statements in John’s gospel
2. As the bread of life He gives us what we need to sustain spiritual life

#### **B. “THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD”... - Jn 8:12**

1. In a world of moral darkness, He illuminates our lives
2. So none need stumble through the darkness

#### **C. “THE DOOR OF THE SHEEP”... - Jn 10:7,9**

1. He is the way to salvation
2. He is the way to “pasture”, i.e., abundant life - cf. **Jn 10:10**

#### **D. “THE GOOD SHEPHERD”... - Jn 10:11,14**

1. He is willing to give His life for his sheep
2. He is willing to know them intimately

#### **E. “THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE”... - Jn 11:25**

1. He is the one who makes resurrection from the dead possible
2. He is the one makes eternal life possible

#### **F. “THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE”... - Jn 14:6**

1. He is the true and living way to the Father
2. Indeed, none can come to the Father except through Him

#### **G. “THE TRUE VINE”... - Jn 15:1,5**

1. The source of true spiritual life
2. But only for those connected to Him and who produce fruit

[Perhaps the most shocking statement by Jesus was when He said “...before Abraham was, I AM.” (Jn 8:58), thereby declaring His Deity (cf. Exo 3:14). Now let us consider...]

## **II. WHAT OTHERS HAVE SAID ABOUT JESUS**

### **A. NAPOLEON BONAPARTE...**

1. French general (1769-1821)
2. “Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and myself founded empires; but what foundation did we rest the creations of our genius? Upon force. Jesus Christ founded an empire upon love; and at this hour millions of men would die for Him.”

### **B. H.G. WELLS...**

1. Historian, well-known science fiction writer (1866-1946)
2. “I am an historian, I am not a believer, but I must confess as a historian that this penniless preacher from Nazareth is irrevocably the very center of history. Jesus Christ is easily the most dominant figure in all history.”

### **C. C.S. LEWIS...**

1. Author of “The Chronicles Of Narnia”, and former atheist (1898-1963)
2. “A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic – on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg – or else he would be the Devil of Hell.”
3. “You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God; or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God.”
4. “But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.”

## **CONCLUSION**

1. Finally, consider this reflection by James A. Francis, entitled “**One Solitary Life**”...

“He was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant. He grew up in another village, where he worked in a carpenter shop until he was 30. Then, for three years, he was an itinerant preacher.

He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never had a family or owned a home. He didn't go to college. He never lived in a big city. He never traveled 200 miles from the place where he was born. He did none of the things that usually accompany greatness. He had no credentials but himself.

He was only 33 when the tide of public opinion turned against him. His friends ran away. One of them denied him. He was turned over to his enemies and went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed to a cross between two thieves. While he was dying, his executioners gambled for his garments, the only property he had on earth. When he was dead, he was laid in a borrowed grave, through the pity of a friend.

Twenty centuries have come and gone, and today he is the central figure of the human race. I am well within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, all the navies that ever sailed, all the parliaments that ever sat, all the kings that ever reigned--put together--have not affected the life of man on this earth as much as that **one, solitary life.**”

2. How could One Man have such an impact on the world, unless He truly is...
  - a. The bread of life
  - b. The light of the world
  - c. The door of the sheep
  - d. The good shepherd
  - e. The resurrection and the life
  - f. The way, the truth, and the life
  - g. The true vine
  - h. The great "I AM"!

May these simple reflections on Jesus encourage you to seek Him and learn His will for you...!

***“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” - Mt 11:28-30***

# Reflections

## On The Holy Spirit

### INTRODUCTION

1. This is our fourth lesson in a series...
  - a. Entitled “**Reflections**”...
  - b. Devoted to simple meditations on various themes
2. The scriptural justification for such reflections is **Php 4:8**...
  - a. In which Paul concludes by saying “...meditate on these things” (NKJV)
  - b. The NLT says “Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise”

[We began with reflections on the **Bible**. We then reflected on **God** and **Jesus**. It naturally follows that we should reflect on the Third Person of the Godhead, **the Holy Spirit**...]

### I. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

#### **A. IN READING THE BIBLE... - Gen 1:2**

1. Mentioned 88 times in the OT, 60 times in the Gospels
2. Mentioned 57 times in the Acts, 132 times in the Epistles

#### **B. IN UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE...**

1. “There is no subject more important in religion than that of the Holy Spirit. Unless this be properly understood, a large portion of the Bible, and especially the NT, must remain unintelligible.” - **The Office Of The Holy Spirit, Richardson**
2. “On the other hand, a just view of it will do more than a knowledge of any other particular topic to give harmony, clearness, and consistency to what may be learned to all other matters presented in the Word of God.” - **ibid.**

[Mentioned so frequently in Scripture, one would expect the Holy Spirit to be an important figure. Indeed the Spirit is, especially once we understand...]

### II. THE CHARACTER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

#### **A. POSSESSING PERSONALITY...**

1. Jesus called the Spirit “He” - **Jn 14:16-17,26; 15:26-27**
2. The Spirit guides, hears, warns, speaks, tells - **Jn 16:12-13**
3. He spoke to Philip, Peter, and the brethren at Antioch - **Ac 8:29; 10:19-20; 13:1-4**
4. He “expressly says”, and “Himself makes intercession” - **1Ti 4:1; Ro 8:26**
5. He possess affection and can be grieved - **Ro 15:30; Ep 4:30**

#### **B. POSSESSING DEITY...**

1. He is omniscient, knowing the mind of God - **1Co 2:10-11**
2. His is omnipresent, we can never flee His presence - **Psa 139:7-10**
3. He is eternal - **He 9:14**
4. He is thus part of the Divine Godhead - cf. **Mt 28:19; 2Co 13:14**

[The Holy Spirit is not some impersonal force, but the third person of the Godhead. Just as the Father and the Son are sources of great blessings, so also is the Holy Spirit as we reflect on...]

### **III. THE BLESSINGS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

#### **A. PROMISED TO THOSE WHO BELIEVE AND OBEY...**

1. By Jesus to those who believe - **Jn 7:37-39**
2. By Peter to those who repent and are baptized - **Ac 2:38-39; 5:32**

#### **B. REGENERATES THOSE BORN AGAIN...**

1. Of water and the Spirit - **Jn 3:5-8**
2. Who experience the washing of regeneration - **Ti 3:4-6**
3. Having obeyed the truth, the Word of God - **1Pe 1:22-23**

#### **C. INDWELLS THE PEOPLE OF GOD...**

1. Indwells the church as a whole - **1Co 3:16; 2Co 6:16; Ep 2:22**
2. Indwells the body of the Christian - **1Co 6:19; Ro 8:9**

#### **D. SERVES AS A SEAL AND GUARANTEE...**

1. A seal indicating authenticity, ownership, and security – **Ep 1:13; cf. Ep 4:30; 2Co 1:22**
2. A guarantee or down payment of our inheritance – **Ep 1:14; cf. 2Co 1:22; Ro 8:15-17**

#### **E. LEADS THE PEOPLE OF GOD...**

1. Through the Word of Truth, the sword of the Spirit - **Jn 17:17; cf. Ep 6:17**
2. That they may walk by the Spirit and produce His fruit - **Ga 5:16-18,22-23**

#### **F. EMPOWERS THE PEOPLE OF GOD...**

1. Who set their minds on the things of the Spirit - **Ro 8:5-8**
2. As they put to death the deeds of the body - **Ro 8:11-13**
3. For the Spirit is God's agent to empower the Christian - **Ep 3:16,20**

#### **G. FILLS US WITH JOY, PEACE, HOPE, AND LOVE...**

1. By the power of the Holy Spirit - **Ro 15:13**
2. Because we are children of God - **Ga 4:6**

### **CONCLUSION**

1. Many and significant are the blessings of the Holy Spirit, who...
  - a. Is promised to those who believe and obey
  - b. Regenerates those who are born again
  - c. Indwells the people of God
  - d. Serves as a seal and a guarantee
  - e. Leads the people of God
  - f. Empowers the people of God
  - g. Fills us with joy, peace, hope, and love
2. Indeed, the Holy Spirit is the Father and Son's gift...
  - a. To those who believe, repent, and are baptized - **Jn 7:37-39; Ac 2:38-39**
  - b. A foretaste of the glorious inheritance they will one day receive - **Ep 1:14**

Don't you want the blessings of the Holy Spirit in your life...?

# Reflections

## On Sin

### INTRODUCTION

1. This is our fifth lesson in a series...
  - a. Entitled “**Reflections**”...
  - b. Devoted to simple meditations on various themes
2. The scriptural justification for such reflections is **Php 4:8**...
  - a. In which Paul concludes by saying “...meditate on these things” (NKJV)
  - b. The NLT says “Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise”

[We have reflected on the **Bible, God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit**. The blessings that emanate from each of these is in response to most serious problem faced by mankind, the problem of **sin**...]

### I. THE DEFINITION OF SIN

#### **A. TO MISS THE MARK... - Ro 3:23**

1. The Greek word for sin literally means “**to miss the mark**”
2. As when an archer fails to hit the center of the target
3. Sin is action (or inaction) in which one falls short of the goal intended by God

#### **B. TO TRANSGRESS THE LAW... - 1Jn 3:4**

1. For example, “Sin is the transgression (**anomia**) of the law” (KJV)
2. When God's law tells us not to steal, we sin when we steal something
3. This is the **Sin Of Commission**
4. In which we commit that which displeases God

#### **C. TO FAIL TO DO GOOD... - Jm 4:17**

1. Note also: “to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin”
2. When Jesus says to love your enemies, we sin if we do not
3. This is the **Sin of Omission**
4. In which we fail (omit) to do that which we know to do

#### **D. TO VIOLATE YOUR CONSCIENCE... - Ro 14:23**

1. Also: “he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not eat from faith; for whatever is not from faith is sin”
2. **To act without faith** (without conviction that what you do is right)
3. The thing may be right within itself, but if done without a clear conscience, it is also sin!

[Sin is more than a simple violation of human relationships. It affects one's relationship with God, with their fellowman, even with one's own self! To appreciate the seriousness of sin, let's reflect on...]

### II. THE PROBLEM OF SIN

#### **A. THE GUILT OF SIN...**

1. Everyone has sinned - **Ro 3:23**
2. Even one sin makes one guilty - **Jm 2:10**

**B. THE BONDAGE OF SIN...**

1. Those who commit sin become enslaved - **Jn 8:34**
2. They are brought into captivity to the law of sin - **Ro 7:14-24**

**C. THE STATE OF SIN...**

1. The sinner is dead in sin - **Ep 2:1**
2. Alienated from the life of God - **Ep 4:18**

**D. THE RESULT OF SIN...**

1. Separation from God - **Isa 59:1-2**
2. Spiritual death; ultimately, eternal separation from God - **Ro 6:23; Re 21:8**

[In view of both time and eternity, sin is the most serious problem one faces. Praise be to God for...]

**III. THE SOLUTION FOR SIN**

**A. FOR THE GUILT OF SIN: FORGIVENESS...**

1. God's love offers Jesus' death as a propitiation for sin - **1Jn 4:10**
2. God's grace offers redemption through the blood of Jesus - **Ep 1:7**

**B. FOR THE BONDAGE OF SIN: FREEDOM...**

1. We are freed from the law of sin and death by the law of the Spirit - **Ro 8:2**
2. Strengthened by the Spirit to put to death the deeds of the body - **Ro 8:12-13; Ep 3:16,20**

**C. FOR THE STATE OF SIN: DEAD TO SIN...**

1. Before baptism, we were "dead **in** sin" - **Ep 2:1**
2. In baptism, we are crucified with Christ - **Ro 6:1-4,6**
3. After baptism, we are now "dead **to** sin" - **Ro 6:7,11-13**
4. Raised with Christ to a new life - **Ro 6:4; cf. Co 2:12-13**

**D. FOR THE RESULT OF SIN: ETERNAL LIFE...**

1. As a present possession (quality of life in Christ now) - **1Jn 5:11-13; Jn 17:3**
2. As a future hope (blessing to be received at the end) - **Ro 6:22-23; Mt 25:46**

**CONCLUSION**

1. In this brief reflection, we have considered...
  - a. The **definition** of sin
  - b. The **problem** of sin
  - c. The **solution** for sin
2. For every **problem** related to sin, God provides the **solution**...
  - a. Through the gifts of **His Son** and of **His Spirit**
  - b. The One providing **justification**, and the Other aiding in **sanctification**

The **gospel** is the good news that tells how to receive God's grace, upon which we shall reflect next...

# Reflections

## On The Gospel

### INTRODUCTION

1. Our **sixth** lesson in this series entitled “**Reflections**”...
  - a. Devoted to simple meditations on various themes
  - b. So far we have covered the Bible, God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and Sin
2. The scriptural justification for such reflections is **Php 4:8**...
  - a. In which Paul concludes by saying “...meditate on these things” (NKJV)
  - b. The NLT says “Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise”

[In our previous lesson, we reflected on **Sin**, its definition, problem, and solution. Now let’s reflect more closely on the **Gospel** that deals with the very serious problem of sin...]

### I. PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

#### **A. GOSPEL MEANS “GOOD NEWS”... - Lk 2:10**

1. “behold, I bring you **good tidings** of great joy which will be to all people”
2. The Greek word is **euangelion**
3. In the NT, spoken only of the glad tidings of Christ and His salvation, the gospel - **The Complete WordStudy Dictionary**

#### **B. JESUS WANTS EVERYONE TO HEAR IT... - Mk 16:15**

1. “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature”
2. There is good news that Jesus wants **you** to hear!
- **Have you heard the good news?**

#### **C. THE GOSPEL IS GOD’S POWER TO SAVE... - Ro 1:16**

1. Paul wrote “it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes”
2. For it tells **how to be saved** from our sins
- **Do you know how to be saved?**

#### **D. BEWARE OF OTHER GOSPELS... - Ga 1:6-9**

1. There are “different” gospels, perversions of the true gospel
2. Those who teach a gospel different than the apostles taught are accursed!
- **Is the gospel you heard the true gospel of Christ?**

#### **E. THE GOSPEL MUST BE OBEYED...**

1. “what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?” - **1Pe 4:17**
2. Those who do not obey the gospel will receive everlasting destruction - **2Th 1:7-9**
- **Have you obeyed the gospel of Christ?**

[It is imperative that we hear the gospel and obey it, making sure the gospel we obey is the same proclaimed by Jesus and His apostles! With these preliminaries in mind, let’s reflect on...]



## **II. THE GOSPEL IN BRIEF**

### **A. THERE ARE FACTS TO BELIEVE...**

1. Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures - **1Co 15:1-3; Isa 53:4-6**
  2. Christ was buried and rose again the third day, and seen by many witnesses - **1Co 15:4-8**
  3. Jesus is exalted as Lord and Savior - **Ac 2:33-36**
  4. He is coming again, as promised, to judge the world - **Ac 1:9-11; 17:30-31**
- **Do you believe in the facts of the of gospel?**

### **B. THERE ARE COMMANDS TO OBEY...**

1. We must believe the gospel or be lost! - **Mk 16:16; cf. Ro 1:16**
  2. We must confess our faith in Jesus - **Ro 10:9-10; Mt 10:32-33**
  3. We must repent of our sins - **Lk 24:46-47; Ac 2:36-38; 3:19; 17:30**
  4. We must be baptized for the remission of sins - **Mk 16:16; Ac 2:38; 22:16**
- **Have you obeyed the commands of the gospel?**

### **C. THERE ARE PROMISES TO RECEIVE...**

1. The remission of sins, which are blotted out, washed away - **Ac 2:38; 3:19; 22:16; Ep 1:7**
  2. The gift of the Holy Spirit - **Ac 2:38-39; 5:32; cf. Jn 7:37-39; 1Co 6:19**
  3. The gift of eternal life, both as a future hope and present reality - **Ro 6:22-23; 1Jn 5:11-13**
  4. Many more blessings, for both now and the hereafter, too numerous to list!
- **Have you received the promises of the gospel?**

## **CONCLUSION**

1. Can we understand why the gospel of Christ is indeed “good news”...?
  - a. The **facts to believe** contain the message of God’s love and grace
  - b. The **commands to obey** are acts of faith whereby we receive God’s grace
  - c. The **promises to receive** address the problem of sin, and prepare us for the life to come!
2. What have you done with the gospel of Christ...?
  - a. You have heard it now, if not before
  - b. You know as much as those who heard it on the day of Pentecost, if not even more

If you have not **obeyed** the gospel (cf. **2Th 1:8; 1Pe 4:17**), then why not today...?

*“He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.” - Mk 16:16*

*Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."  
- Ac 2:38*

*Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. - Ac 2:41*

*“And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” - Ac 22:16*

# Reflections On Repentance

## INTRODUCTION

1. Our **seventh** lesson in this series entitled “**Reflections**”...
  - a. Devoted to simple meditations on various themes
  - b. So far we have covered the Bible, God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, Sin, and the Gospel
2. The scriptural justification for such reflections is **Php 4:8**...
  - a. In which Paul concludes by saying “...meditate on these things” (NKJV)
  - b. The NLT says “Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise”
3. In our previous reflections on the **Gospel**, we observed that it contains...
  - a. **Facts** to believe
  - b. **Commands** to obey
  - c. **Promises** to receive

[One of the commands is the need to repent. **Repentance** is not often stressed today, but is certainly worthy of our reflection. Let’s begin with some...]

## I. PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

### **A. JESUS WANTS PEOPLE TO REPENT...**

1. During His earthly ministry - **Mt 4:17**
2. To be preached in His name to all nations - **Lk 24:46-47**
3. When His disciples lose their love and zeal - **Re 2:4-5; 3:15-19**
- **Whether alien sinner or erring Christian, Jesus wants us to repent!**

### **B. PETER COMMANDED PEOPLE TO REPENT...**

1. In preaching to the lost - **Ac 2:38; 3:19**
2. In exhorting the erring Christian - **Ac 8:22**
- **Whether alien sinner or erring Christian, repentance is called for!**

### **C. PAUL COMMANDED PEOPLE TO REPENT...**

1. For God commands all men everywhere to repent - **Ac 17:30**
2. For the goodness of God ought to lead one to repent - **Ro 2:4**
- **In view of God’s coming judgment and His present goodness, we should repent!**

[Both Jesus and His apostles call upon all people to repent. What, exactly, are they commanding us to do? Let’s continue with some...]

## II. REFLECTIONS ON REPENTANCE

### **A. REPENTANCE PROPERLY DEFINED...**

1. Some misconceptions of repentance
  - a. That repentance is simply being sorry

- b. That repentance is a changed life - cf. **Ac 3:19** (“repent **and** be converted”)
  - 2. A proper concept of repentance
    - a. “change of mind; involves both a turning from sin and a turning to God” - **Vine**
    - b. I.e., a change of mind in which we **decide** to turn from sin and turn to God
- **Repentance is a decision, preceded by sorrow and followed by a changed life**

#### **B. REPENTANCE PROPERLY PRODUCED...**

- 1. Repentance is produced by sorrow - **2Co 7:9a**
    - a. Sorrow leads to repentance
    - b. Sorrow itself is not repentance
  - 2. Repentance is produced by godly sorrow - **2Co 7:9b-10**
    - a. Godly sorrow leads one to repentance, not worldly sorrow
    - b. Godly sorrow is that directed toward God, sorrow because one has sinned against a holy, loving God, not because one got ‘caught’ (cf. David’s attitude) - **Ps 51:4**
- **The right kind of sorrow produces the proper change of mind, leading to salvation**

#### **C. REPENTANCE PROPERLY MANIFESTED...**

- 1. True repentance will manifest itself in a changed life - **2Co 7:11**
    - a. Such as diligence, clearing of one’s self, indignation, fear
    - b. Such as vehement desire, zeal, vindication
  - 2. True repentance will produce works befitting repentance - **Ac 26:20**
    - a. Such as confessing Jesus, and being baptized into Christ - **Ac 8:36-38**
    - b. Such as walking in works that God has ordained for those in Christ - **Ep 2:10**
- **Apathy, halfhearted service, is not indicative of true repentance!**

### **CONCLUSION**

- 1. Thus we see that repentance is a decision of the mind...
  - a. In which we decided to turn from our sins and live for God
  - b. Preceded by godly sorrow for our sins and followed by a changed life
- 2. For the person who is not yet a Christian...
  - a. It is prompted by faith in Jesus Christ - cf. **Ac 2:36-37**
  - b. It is joined together with baptism for the remission of sins - cf. **Ac 2:38**
- 3. For the person who is an erring Christian...
  - a. It is needed whenever we become slack in our service - cf. **Re 3:15-19**
  - b. It is joined together with prayer and confession of sin - cf. **Ac 8:22; 1Jn 1:9**
- 4. Are you willing to do “works befitting repentance”...?
  - a. Not works done to earn or merit remission of sins
  - b. But acts of faith done to receive God’s grace and mercy through the blood of Christ

Has the goodness of God led you to repent...?

*Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? - Ro 2:4*

# Reflections On Baptism

## INTRODUCTION

1. This is our **eighth** lesson in this series entitled “**Reflections**”...
  - a. Devoted to simple meditations on various themes of the Bible
  - b. The scriptural justification for such reflections is **Php 4:8**
  - c. In which Paul concludes by saying “...meditate on these things” (NKJV)
2. In previous reflections on the **Gospel** of Christ, we observed that it contains...
  - a. **Commands** to obey
  - b. One of the commands of the gospel involves baptism

[**Baptism** is often neglected in much gospel preaching today, thus it is certainly worthy of careful reflection. Let’s begin with a review of...]

## I. THE COMMAND OF BAPTISM

### **A. COMMANDED BY JESUS...**

1. In His command to make disciples in all nations - **Mt 28:19-20**
2. In His command to preach the gospel to every person - **Mk 16:15-16**

### **B. COMMANDED BY HIS APOSTLES...**

1. When preaching the gospel to Jews - **Ac 2:38**
2. When preaching the gospel to Gentiles - **Ac 10:48**

[Since commanded by Jesus and His apostles, baptism must be very important! Looking at baptism more closely, let’s consider the proper **mode** or **manner** in which it is to be done...]

## II. THE MODE OF BAPTISM

### **A. INVOLVES WATER...**

1. Implied in teachings of Jesus and Paul - **Jn 3:5; Tit 3:5**
2. Explicit in conversions of the Ethiopian and Cornelius - **Ac 8:35-38; 10:47-48**

### **B. INVOLVES IMMERSION...**

1. The Greek word **baptizo** means “to immerse”
2. Baptism is depicted as a **burial**, which suggests immersion - **Ro 6:4; Col 2:12**

[Pouring and sprinkling as modes of baptism are traditions of men adopted years later that displace the command of God to immerse (cf. **Mk 7:13**). Now let’s consider **who** should be baptized...]

## III. THE SUBJECTS OF BAPTISM

### **A. MUST HAVE FAITH IN CHRIST...**

1. Faith in Christ is necessary to salvation by the gospel - **Mk 16:16; Ro 1:16**

2. Faith is therefore requisite to baptism - **Ac 8:36-37**

**B. MUST HAVE REPENTED OF SINS...**

1. Jesus wanted repentance to be preached in His name - **Lk 24:47**
2. Thus the command to repent was joined with baptism - **Ac 2:38**

[In the NT, only those old enough to realize they were sinners, who confessed faith in Christ and repented of sins, were baptized. But **why** were they baptized? What is its purpose or design...?]

**IV. THE PURPOSE OF BAPTISM**

**A. REMISSION OF SINS...**

1. For (Grk., **eis**, unto) the remission or forgiveness of sins - **Ac 2:38**
2. To have sins washed away (by the blood of Christ) - **Ac 22:16; Ep 1:7**

**B. UNION WITH CHRIST...**

1. To be united with Christ in His death and resurrection - **Ro 6:3-4**
2. To be clothed with Christ - **Ga 3:27**

**C. NEWNESS OF LIFE...**

1. To be raised with Christ to walk in newness of life - **Ro 6:5-6**
2. To be made alive together with Christ - **Col 2:12-13; Tit 3:5**

**D. FREEDOM FROM THE POWER OF SIN...**

1. To be freed from sin's power by dying with Christ - **Ro 6:7,11-14**
2. To be free to become servants of righteousness - **Ro 6:16-18**

**E. TO BE SAVED...**

1. In conjunction with faith as we respond to the gospel - **Mk 16:16**
2. As an appeal for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Christ - **1Pe 3:21**

**CONCLUSION**

1. People often ask: **Is baptism necessary for salvation...?**
  - a. It is certainly commanded by Jesus and His apostles
  - b. When we reflect on the purpose of baptism, we realize its necessity
2. For **if when you are baptized** into Christ...
  - a. You receive remission of sins - **Ac 2:38**
  - b. Your sins are washed away by the blood of Christ - **Ac 22:16; Ep 1:7**
  - c. You are united with Christ in His death and resurrection - **Ro 6:3-6**
  - d. You put on Christ - **Ga 3:27**
  - e. You are made alive together with Christ - **Col 2:12-13**
  - f. You experience the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit - **Tit 3:5; Jn 3:5**
  - g. You are made free from the bondage of sin - **Ro 6:7,11-14**
  - h. You make an appeal for a good conscience - **1Pe 3:21**
  - **Then what is your condition without baptism?**

Have you, as a penitent believer in Jesus Christ, been baptized for the remission of your sins...?

# Reflections

## On The Church

### INTRODUCTION

1. Now for our **ninth** lesson in this series entitled “**Reflections**”...
  - a. Devoted to simple meditations on various themes of the Bible
  - b. The scriptural justification for which is **Php 4:8** (“...meditate on these things”)
2. Our previous reflection was on **baptism**, of which is written in the Bible...
  - a. That those who were baptized were “added” - **Ac 2:41**
  - b. Added to **what** and by **whom**? To the **church**, by the **Lord** Himself! - **Ac 2:47**

[So began the church of the New Testament. Do we appreciate how important the church must be to Christ? Many do not. Let’s reflect on the church in this study, beginning with...]

### I. THE CHURCH DEFINED

#### **A. THE GREEK WORD IS EKKLESIA...**

1. “...synonymous with the Hebrew ‘kahal’ of the OT, both words meaning simply an assembly.” - **Easton’s Bible Dictionary**
2. “a gathering of citizens called out from their homes into some public place, an assembly” - **Thayer’s Analytical Greek Lexicon**
3. Thus it means any assembly, lawful or otherwise - e.g., **Ac 19:39,41**

#### **B. AS USED IN THE CHRISTIAN SENSE...**

1. Church universal - the whole assembly of people who are saved - **Ep 1:22-23; He 12:22-23**
2. Church local - a company of Christians in one area working together - **1Co 1:2; Ro 16:16**
3. Church meeting - an assembly of Christians gathered for worship - **1Co 14:19,28,35**

[For the purpose of our reflection, our focus is mostly on the church **universal**, that company of people throughout the world saved by Christ. Consider its importance as we look at...]

### II. THE CHURCH DESCRIBED

#### **A. THE BODY OF CHRIST...**

1. Of which Christ is the Head, and the Savior! - **Ep 1:22-23; 5:23**
2. A metaphor depicting our relationship with Christ and one another - **Col 2:19; Ro 12:5**

#### **B. THE HOUSE OF GOD...**

1. In other words, the family of God - **1Ti 3:15**
2. Emphasizing our familial relationships in Christ - **Mt 12:48-50; Mk 10:28-30**

#### **C. THE TEMPLE OF GOD...**

1. I.e., a holy habitation or dwelling of God - **Ep 2:19-22**
2. As such we have a duty to maintain its purity - **1Co 3:16-17; 2Co 6:16-7:1**

#### **D. THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST...**

1. For into the saved have been conveyed by the Father - **Col 1:13**; cf. **Re 1:9**
2. Stressing the authority in our lives: Christ has all authority! - **Mt 28:18,20**

#### **E. THE BRIDE OF CHRIST...**

1. The saved are betrothed to Christ - **2Co 11:2**
2. Implying a greater relationship with Christ in the future - **Re 19:6-9; 21:2**

[Such descriptions of the church reveal how precious the church is to Christ, and why the warning not to defile the church (**1Co 3:16-17**). Yet as we look around us today, we clearly see...]

### **III. THE CHURCH DEFILED**

#### **A. BY DENOMINATIONALISM...**

1. Dividing local churches into various groups with different names and doctrines
2. Each group of churches subject to some legal or organizational body above them
3. Over 12,000 denominations, presenting an image of religious division to the world
4. Contrary to Christ's prayer for unity, Paul's rebuke of division - **Jn 17:20-21; 1Co 1:10-13**

#### **B. BY SECTARIANISM...**

1. Viewing a select group of churches as constituting the church universal
2. Loosely joined and recognized by those affiliated via schools, publications, etc.
3. Usually emphasizing one "name" for the church, or certain doctrines over others
4. Often expressing carnality, with its envy, strife, and division - cf. **1Co 3:1-4**

### **CONCLUSION**

1. The **denominational** view of the church is too broad, the **sectarian** view too narrow...
  - a. The **former** wants to **include** everyone as part of the body of Christ
  - b. The **latter** seeks to **exclude** some who may be truly part of the body of Christ
2. The church that Christ loves is too precious to be so defiled...
  - a. We must endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit - **Ep 4:3-6**
  - b. But to do so in the bond of peace, with a Christ-like mind - **Ep 4:1-3; Php 2:1-5**
3. What is our view of the church...?
  - a. Jesus purchased the church with His own blood - **Ac 20:28**
  - b. He wants it to be a glorious church, holy, without blemish - **Ep 5:25-27**
4. Are we defiling the Lord's church by participating in denominationalism or sectarianism...?
  - a. Serve the Lord Jesus without denominationalism by simply being a Christian
  - b. Serve the Lord Jesus in a local church that is true to His prayer and teachings
  - c. Serve the Lord Jesus by recognizing no authority higher than the local church except Jesus who guides us through His apostles' doctrine - cf. **Ac 2:42; 1Th 2:13; 1Co 14:37; Ga 1:8-9**

Please reflect on these things...

# Reflections

## On Prayer

### INTRODUCTION

1. In our previous reflection, we saw that the **church** is...
  - a. The assembly or congregation of God's people
  - b. The body of Christ, consisting of all the saved
2. One of our greatest blessings as members of Christ's body is **prayer**...
  - a. Yet Jesus anticipated people would become slack in their prayers - **Lk 18:1-8**
  - b. Thus Paul frequently exhorted diligence in our prayers - **Ep 6:18; Col 4:2; 1Th 5:17**

[In view of Jesus' concern and Paul's exhortation, let's reflect on **prayer**, beginning with...]

### I. THE PRIVILEGE OF PRAYER

#### **A. PRAYER IS NOT A PRIVILEGE...**

1. For those who do not heed the Word of God - **Pr 28:9**
2. Whose sins separate them from God - **Isa 59:1-2**
- **If we will not listen to God, why should He listen to us?**

#### **B. PRAYER IS A PRIVILEGE...**

1. For those who have Jesus as their High Priest - **He 2:17-18; 4:14-16; 7:25-26**
2. Who acts as their Advocate and Mediator with God - **1Jn 2:1; 1Ti 2:5; Ro 8:34**
- **Such is the privilege of those who are children of God by faith in Christ**

[The greatness of the **privilege** of prayer will be appreciated as one reflects on...]

### II. THE POWER OF PRAYER

#### **A. FORGIVENESS OF SINS...**

1. The Christian can find forgiveness through the blood of Christ - **1Jn 1:7-10**
2. Thus the erring Christian is told to repent and pray - **Ac 8:22**
- **Don't you want the assurance of knowing that your sins are forgiven?**

#### **B. PEACE OF MIND...**

1. The antidote to anxiety is prayer - **Php 4:6**
2. Christians will find their hearts and minds guarded by the peace of God - **Php 4:7**
- **Don't you want the peace of mind and heart that surpasses understanding?**

#### **C. STRENGTH TO LIVE...**

1. Paul prayed that the Ephesians might be strengthened in the inner man - **Ep 3:14-16,20**
2. When we need to be strong, Christians can likewise pray for themselves!
- **Don't you want the power that is beyond our comprehension?**

#### **D. OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE...**



1. Paul realized God provided him opportunity to teach others - **1Co 3:5** (NASB)
  2. He therefore requested prayer that such opportunities would continue - **Col 4:3**
- **Don't you want the Lord to give you opportunity to lead others to Christ?**

**E. BOLDNESS TO SPEAK...**

1. When the apostles needed boldness, they prayed and God delivered - **Ac 4:23-31**
  2. When Paul needed boldness, he asked for prayers in his behalf - **Ep 6:19-20**
- **Don't you want boldness when you speak to others about Christ?**

**F. WISDOM TO GUIDE...**

1. Wisdom is not knowledge, but insight that makes the best use of the knowledge one has
  2. The Christian is promised wisdom through prayer without doubt - **Jm 1:5-8**
- **Don't you want the wisdom that comes from above?**

**G. HEALING FROM SICKNESS...**

1. Those who are sick should ask elders to pray for them - **Jm 5:14-15**
  2. Those who have sinned should confess, and we should pray for one another - **Jm 5:16**
- **Don't you want the aid of God when in need of physical or spiritual healing?**

**H. TRANQUILITY AND PEACE...**

1. The Scriptures proclaim God has ultimate control over the nations - **Dan 4:17; Ro 13:1-7**
  2. Thus we are to pray, that we may lead quiet (tranquil, ASV) and peaceable lives - **1Ti 2:1-4**
- **Don't you want to live in peace and tranquility, and for others to as well?**

[With prayer such a **powerful privilege**, shouldn't we do it more often? Let us reflect, then, on...]

**III. THE PRACTICE OF PRAYER**

**A. SCHEDULED PRAYERS...**

1. Having set times to pray can help develop a **habit** of prayer
  2. Consider the practice of two great men of God
    - a. **David**, whom God described as "a man after My own heart" - **Ps 55:17**
    - b. **Daniel**, whom the angel of God described as "O man greatly beloved" - **Dan 6:10**
  3. They made it a habit to pray at set times during the day
    - a. It would not hurt to imitate them
    - b. For example: three times daily - morning, noon, and evening
  4. I have found it helpful to pray 5 times a day
    - a. 9am - 12noon - 3pm - 6pm - 9pm
    - b. Even if they are short prayers (see below)
- **At the very least, make time each day to spend in prayer**

**B. SPONTANEOUS PRAYERS...**

1. Prayers should not be limited to set times
  2. Jesus spent all night in prayer before selecting His apostles - **Lk 6:12-13**
  3. Paul and Silas prayed when faced with trying circumstances - **Ac 16:25**
  4. Nehemiah prayed silently on the spur of the moment - **Neh 2:4-5**
  5. The Israelites prayed to God in the heat of battle - **1Ch 5:20**
- **We should pray whenever and however the occasion calls for it**

### C. POSTURE IN PRAYER...

1. The Bible describes **various praying postures**
    - a. Standing - **Mk 11:25; Lk 18:13**
    - b. Hands spread out and/or lifted heavenward - **1Ki 8:22; Neh 8:6; 1Ti 2:8**
    - c. Bowing the head - **Neh 8:6**
    - d. Lifting heavenward of the eyes - **Jn 17:1**
    - e. Kneeling - **Ac 20:36**
    - f. Falling down with the face upon the ground - **Mt 26:39**
    - g. Bowing the head, with face between the knees - **1Ki 18:42**
    - h. Bowing the head, while striking the breast - **Lk 18:13**
  2. While there is **no official posture for prayer...**
    - a. Posture reflects the attitude of the person praying
    - b. Posture reflects humility and reverence toward God
    - c. Select a posture you are comfortable with, that reflects your true state of mind
- **Prayer is a state of mind, which can be enhanced by bodily position**

### CONCLUSION

1. Prayer is a wonderful **privilege...**
  - a. By which we can boldly approach the throne of God
  - b. Where Jesus stands ready to intercede in our behalf
2. Prayer is a **powerful** privilege...
  - a. By which we can obtain mercy at any time
  - b. By which we can find grace to help in time of need
3. Prayer therefore ought to be **practiced...**
  - a. “always with all prayer and supplication...” - **Ep 6:18**
  - b. “earnestly...being vigilant in it with thanksgiving” - **Col 4:2**

May these “reflections” encourage us to be more diligent to “pray without ceasing”...! - **1Th 5:17**

*Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. - Heb 4:16*

# Reflections

## On Good Works

### INTRODUCTION

1. In a previous reflection, we saw that the **church** in the local sense of the word...
  - a. Are Christians in one geographical area - cf. **1Co 1:2; Ro 16:16**
  - b. Who assemble in order to exhort one another to **good works** - cf. **He 10:24-25**
2. **Good works** are certainly worthy of reflection...
  - a. They are noble, just, lovely, and of good report
  - b. They are of virtue and praiseworthy

[And so, according to our overall text (**Php 4:8**), let's use this opportunity to reflect on the subject of good works. Perhaps we should begin by emphasizing...]

### I. THE PURPOSE OF GOOD WORKS

#### **A. WE ARE NOT SAVED BY GOOD WORKS...**

1. Good works cannot be done to buy or earn our way into heaven
  2. God saves us by His grace and mercy, not our works - **Ep 2:8-9; Tit 3:4-7**
- **We should be clear on this point!**

#### **B. WE ARE SAVED TO DO GOOD WORKS...**

1. We have been created in Christ Jesus to do good works! - **Ep 2:10**
  2. We have been redeemed and purified to be zealous for good works! - **Tit 2:11-14**
  3. Thus we are to:
    - a. Be ready for every good work - **Tit 3:1**
    - b. Be careful to maintain good works - **Tit 3:8**
    - c. Learn to maintain good works - **Tit 3:14**
- **We need to understand the role of good works!**

#### **C. WE ARE TO DO GOOD WORKS...**

1. Because they bring glory to God - **Mt 5:14-16; 1Pe 2:12**
  2. Because they are necessary to be like Jesus - **Lk 6:40; cf. Ac 10:38**
  3. Because they demonstrate the living nature of our faith - **Jm 2:14-17,20,26**
  4. Because they prepare unbelievers to be more receptive to the gospel - **1Pe 2:12; 3:1-2**
  5. Because they meet urgent needs - **Tit 3:14**
- **We must appreciate the importance of good works!**

[With a clear understanding and appreciation of the role of good works in the life of the Christian, let's now reflect on...]

### II. GOOD WORKS WE SHOULD DO

#### **A. CARE FOR WIDOWS AND ORPHANS...**

1. An indicator of pure and undefiled religion before God - **Jm 1:27; cf. Psa 68:5**

2. Two good role models are Job and Tabitha (Dorcas) - **Job 29:12-13; Ac 9:36-39**  
-- **Are we practicing pure and undefiled religion before God?**

**B. SUPPORT THE WEAK...**

1. As exemplified by Paul, in keeping with Jesus' dictum - **Ac 20:35**
2. As commanded by Paul, to support and bear their burdens - **1Th 5:14; Ga 6:1-2**  
-- **Are we fulfilling the law of Christ?**

**C. VISIT THE SICK...**

1. Jesus and His apostles cared for the sick during their ministry - **Lk 4:40; 9:2; 10:9**
2. Elders are to pray for the sick - **Jm 5:14-15**  
-- **Do we care for the sick?**

**D. ENTERTAIN STRANGERS...**

1. To show hospitality, which literally means "love of strangers" - **He 13:2; Ro 12:13**
2. Required of elders, and widows taken into the number - **1Ti 3:2; 5:9-10**  
-- **Do we show kindness to strangers?**

**E. REMEMBER THE PRISONERS...**

1. Especially those who are brethren - **He 13:3; 10:34**
2. Like those who visited Paul in prison, or sent him supplies - **Ac 24:23; Php 4:14,18**  
-- **Do we remember our brethren who are in prison?**

**F. SHARE OUR WEALTH...**

1. Affluent brethren are to be ready to give, willing to share - **1Ti 6:17-19**
2. Sharing with others is a form of spiritual sacrifice that pleases God - **He 13:16**  
-- **Do we stand ready to offer such spiritual sacrifices?**

**CONCLUSION**

1. As we have **ability** and **opportunity**...
  - a. We are to do good to all men, especially our brethren - **Ga 6:10**
  - b. We are not to grow weary in doing good - **Ga 6:9; 2Th 3:13**
2. Remember how Jesus impressed on us the importance of doing good...? - **Mt 25:34-40**
  - a. When we feed **the hungry**, we feed Christ!
  - b. When we give drink to **the thirsty**, we give drink to Christ!
  - c. When we take in **the stranger**, we take in Christ!
  - d. When we clothe **the naked**, we clothe Christ!
  - e. When we visit **the sick** and **the imprisoned**, we visit Christ!

Indeed, with the aid of the inspired Word of God, we are well-equipped to do **good works**:

*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. - 2Ti 3:16-17*

Are we diligent in doing **good works**, not to earn salvation, but to the praise and glory of God...?

# Reflections

## On Faith

### INTRODUCTION

1. We continue our “Reflections” on things that are...
  - a. True, noble, just, pure, lovely, and of good report - **Php 4:8**
  - b. Virtuous and worthy of praise - **ibid.**
2. Three such things are faith, hope, and love...
  - a. Virtues joined together in several passages - **1Co 13:13; 1Th 1:3**
  - b. Virtues worthy of praise and careful reflection

[In this study, let us reflect on the first of these three: **faith**. Beginning with...]

### I. FAITH DEFINED

#### **A. FAITH IN GENERAL...**

1. According to **Easton’s Bible Dictionary**
    - a. “Faith is in general the persuasion of the mind that a certain statement is true”
    - b. “Its primary idea is trust”
  2. According to **He 11:1**
    - a. “...the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” (ESV)
    - b. “...being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.” (NIV)
- **Faith is therefore conviction and trust in someone or some thing**

#### **B. FAITH IN GOD...**

1. Involves conviction and trust that He exists - **He 11:6**
  2. Requires that we believe He rewards those who diligently seek Him - **ibid.**
- **Without such faith in God, we cannot please Him!**

#### **C. FAITH IN JESUS...**

1. Involves conviction and trust in who Jesus is - **Jn 8:24; 11:27**
  2. Involves conviction and trust in what Jesus did - **Jn 10:10,11; cf. 1:29**
  3. Involves conviction and trust in what Jesus said - e.g., **Jn 8:12; 14:6**
- **Without such faith in Jesus, we will die in our sins!**

[Faith in God and Jesus is therefore essential. But how is such faith developed...?]

### II. FAITH DEVELOPED

#### **A. THROUGH THE WORD...**

1. The Word of God is designed to create faith - **Ro 10:17**
  2. It was written to produce faith, such as faith in Jesus - **Jn 20:30-31; 1Jn 5:13**
- **The Word of God is filled with evidences intended to produce faith**

#### **B. THROUGH OBEDIENCE...**

1. Jesus said of those who do God's will, they will know its truth - **Jn 7:17**
2. To use a phrase, "the proof of the pudding is in the eating"
- **As one obeys God and Jesus, the stronger their conviction and trust grows**

### **C. THROUGH FELLOWSHIP...**

1. Faith is strengthened by exhorting one another - **He 3:12-14**
2. Which we do by frequent assembling - **He 10:24-25**
- **The more we have fellowship with one another, the stronger our faith grows!**

[We have **defined** faith and considered how it **develops**. What is the evidence of faith...?]

## **III. FAITH DEMONSTRATED**

### **A. BY OBEDIENCE...**

1. Paul writes of the "obedience of faith" - **Ro 1:5; 16:26**
2. He also refers to "obeying from the heart" - **Ro 6:17**
3. For example, baptism is an act of obedient faith - **Col 2:12**
- **Thus obedience from the heart demonstrates the nature of our faith!**

### **B. BY GOOD WORKS...**

1. James writes about a dead faith - **Jm 2:17,20,26**
2. He offers to show his faith by his works - **Jm 2:18**
- **Thus a living, vibrant faith will manifest itself by good works!**

[Sadly, some once strong in faith become weak, even to the point of no faith. How does that happen...?]

## **IV. FAITH DESTROYED**

### **A. BY LACK OF KNOWLEDGE...**

1. Remember that faith comes through the Word of God - **Ro 10:17**
2. But like Israel, lack of knowledge of God's word leads to their destruction - **Hos 4:6**
- **As people stop growing in the Word of God, their faith falters**

### **B. BY LACK OF WORKS...**

1. Remember that faith without works is dead - **Jm 2:17,26**
2. As with demons, faith without works results only in a trembling faith - **Jm 2:19**
- **When people stop doing the works of God, their faith wanes**

### **C. BY LACK OF FELLOWSHIP...**

1. Remember that mutual edification prevents an evil heart of unbelief - **He 3:12-14**
2. But like glowing coals in a fire, an ember soon dies when separated from the rest
- **When people stop assembling with other Christians, their faith soon dies**

## **CONCLUSION**

1. **Faith** is a crucial element in our relationship with God and Jesus, in regards to eternal life
2. But with the aid of God's Word, our own obedience, and the encouragement of others, there is no reason we cannot have the **faith** that leads to eternal life! - cf. **1Ti 6:12**

# Reflections

## On Hope

### INTRODUCTION

1. We continue our “**Reflections**” on things that are...
  - a. True, noble, just, pure, lovely, and of good report - **Php 4:8**
  - b. Virtuous and worthy of praise - **ibid.**
2. Three such things are faith, hope, and love...
  - a. Virtues joined together in several passages - **1Co 13:13; 1Th 1:3**
  - b. Virtues worthy of praise and careful reflection

[In our previous study, we reflected on **faith**. Now let us turn our reflection toward **hope**...]

### I. HOPE DEFINED

#### **A. THE GREEK WORD...**

1. **elpis** - “favorable and confident expectation” - **Vines**
2. “desire of some good with some expectation of obtaining it” - **WordStudy Dictionary**
3. It has to do with the unseen and the future - **Ro 8:24-25**
- **A simple definition: desire plus expectation of the unseen**

#### **B. CORRECTLY UNDERSTOOD...**

1. It is not a mere wish for something
2. But a strong confidence that is placed in God - **Bridgeway Bible Dictionary**
3. According to its Christian meaning, it is inseparable from faith (**1Pe 1:21**) - **ibid.**
- **Not a “hope to” receive something, but an “expect to” receive it**

[For what, then, does the Christian hope? There are several things we can list...]

### II. HOPE DESCRIBED

#### **A. THE HOPE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS...**

1. Paul writes of waiting for the hope of righteousness - **Ga 5:5**
2. The context of which involves justification - **Ga 5:4**
3. Justification and righteousness come from the same Greek word (**dikaiosune**)
4. Paul is talking about the hope of being made right (not guilty of sin)
5. A hope based in Christ, that sustained Paul in his last days - **Php 3:9; 2Ti 4:8**
- **A strong desire plus expectation of being declared guiltless before God**

#### **B. THE HOPE OF REVELATION...**

1. The revelation (appearing) of Jesus when He returns - **1Co 1:7; Ti 2:13**
2. In which we shall receive praise, honor, glory, grace and joy - **1Pe 1:7,13; 4:13**
3. Whereby we too shall be revealed as the sons of God - **Ro 8:19; Col 3:4**
- **A strong desire plus expectation of Jesus’ revealing, and ours as well!**

### **C. THE HOPE OF RESURRECTION...**

1. Paul also wrote of eagerly awaiting the redemption of our bodies - **Ro 8:23-24**
  2. This pertains to the hope of the resurrection - **Ac 23:6; 24:15**
  3. In which our mortal bodies will be raised and put on immortality - **1Co 15:42-44,50-54**
  4. Made possible by the coming and power of our Lord Jesus Christ! - **Php 3:20-21**
- **A strong desire plus expectation of being raised from the dead to eternal life!**

### **D. THE HOPE OF A NEW CREATION...**

1. The faithful hope for a heavenly city whose builder is God - **He 11:10,16; 13:14**
  2. They look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells - **2Pe 3:13-14**
  3. As shown to John by Jesus Himself - **Re 21:1-7,10-11**
- **A strong desire plus expectation of spending eternity with God in His new creation!**

[How wonderful to live with such a multifaceted hope! But how is such hope developed...?]

## **III. HOPE DEVELOPED**

### **A. THROUGH GRACE...**

1. It is God who loved us that gives us good hope by His grace - **2Th 2:16**
  2. Justified by faith in Christ, we have access into His grace - **Ro 5:1-2**
  3. Such grace makes us heirs according to the hope of eternal life - **Tit 3:7**
- **Hope, like all of God's gifts, begins with His grace!**

### **B. THROUGH THE WORD...**

1. The Old Testament provides hope - **Ro 15:4**
  2. The Gospel of Christ provides hope - **Col 1:5,23**
  3. The apostles wrote that we might know the hope of God's calling - **Ep 1:18**
- **Hope, like faith, comes through the Word of God!**

### **C. THROUGH EXPERIENCE...**

1. Experience that involves even tribulations - **Ro 5:3-4**
  2. For it produces perseverance, which leads to confidence - **Jm 1:2-4**
  3. And it shows the genuineness of our faith - **1Pe 1:6-7**
- **Hope strengthens the longer we live for Christ!**

### **D. THROUGH THE SPIRIT...**

1. We through the Spirit eagerly wait for our hope - **Ga 5:5**
  2. Hope does not disappoint, for it is the consequence of God's love poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit - **Ro 5:5**
  3. Thus we can abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit - **Ro 15:13**
- **Hope is strengthened by the power of the indwelling Spirit!**

[Finally, a few thoughts on how a vibrant hope is demonstrated in the life of a Christian...]

## **IV. HOPE DEMONSTRATED**

### **A. EAGERLY WAITING...**

1. The Corinthians were eagerly waiting for the revelation of Jesus - **1Co 1:7**
2. Paul also was eagerly waiting for Jesus from heaven - **Php 3:20**



3. For those who so eagerly await Him, Jesus will bring salvation - **He 9:28**  
-- **A vibrant hope is one with a strong desire for what is to come!**

#### **B. PATIENTLY WORKING...**

1. True hope joins perseverance and patience with eagerly waiting - **Ro 8:25; 1Th 1:3**
2. Especially in regards to growing in holiness - **1Jn 3:3; 1Co 15:58**  
-- **A vibrant hope is one in which work is being done!**

#### **C. REJOICING IN HOPE...**

1. As Paul commanded - **Ro 5:2; 12:12**
2. Even when persecuted, as Peter commanded - **1Pe 4:13**  
-- **A vibrant hope is one filled with joy!**

### **CONCLUSION**

1. What is the hope of the Christian? **Desire plus expectation** of...
  - a. The righteousness found only in Christ
  - b. The revelation of Jesus and our glory with Him when He comes
  - c. The resurrection of the body from the dead to eternal life
  - d. The heavenly city in the new heavens and new earth
2. What is the hope of the Christian? **Desire plus expectation** made possible by...
  - a. The grace of God
  - b. The Word of God
  - c. The experience of Christian service
  - d. The empowerment of the Holy Spirit
3. What is the hope of the Christian? **Desire plus expectation** manifested by...
  - a. Eagerly waiting
  - b. Patiently working
  - c. Rejoicing all the while

What then is the hope of the Christian? It is truly **the helmet of our salvation (1Th 5:8; Ep 6:17)** and **the anchor of the soul (He 6:19)**, for which we should certainly praise God:

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, - 1Pe 1:3*

Have you been born again to “a living hope”...? - cf. **1Pe 1:22-23; Jn 3:5; Tit 3:5**

# Reflections

## On Love

### INTRODUCTION

1. We continue our “**Reflections**” on things that are...
  - a. True, noble, just, pure, lovely, and of good report - **Php 4:8**
  - b. Virtuous and worthy of praise - **ibid.**
2. Three things certainly worthy of reflection are **faith, hope, and love**...
  - a. Virtues joined together in several passages - **1Co 13:13; 1Th 1:3**
  - b. Virtues worthy of praise and careful reflection

[Previously, we reflected on **faith** and **hope**. Now let us focus our attention on the greatest: **love**...]

### I. LOVE DEFINED

#### **A. GREEKS HAD FOUR WORDS FOR LOVE...**

1. **eros** - carnal, sexual love, properly reserved for marriage - cf. **He 13:4**
  2. **philia** - the love of close friendship, such as brotherly love - cf. **Jn 11:3**
  3. **storge** - the love of family relationships
  4. **agape** - that love which seeks the highest good of others
- **It is unfortunate that the English word “love” is not as clearly defined**

#### **B. DISTINCTION BETWEEN PHILIA AND AGAPE...**

1. It is common to make the following distinction
    - a. **agape** - active good will, as that which is commanded
    - b. **philia** - fondness, heartfelt affection, as that which cannot be forced
  2. Yet the distinction between the two is not always clear cut
    - a. **agape** - can also be defined as “brotherly love, affection” - **Thayer, Strong**
    - b. **philia** - often commanded in the Scriptures - cf. **Ro 12:10; 1Co 16:22**
- **Perhaps we should not make too much distinction between the two**

[Now let’s reflect on the duties we have in regards to love...]

### II. LOVE DEMANDED

#### **A. TO LOVE GOD AND JESUS...**

1. We are commanded to love (**agape**) God heart, soul, mind, and strength - **Mk 12:30**
  2. We are commanded to love (**philia**) Jesus, more than family - **1Co 16:22; Mt 10:37**
- **The greatest command of the Law, reinforced in the Gospel**

#### **B. TO LOVE OUR BRETHREN...**

1. We are to love (**agape**) one another as Christ loved us - **Jn 13:34-35**
  2. We are to be kindly affectionate (**philostorgos**, love of family) to one another with brotherly love (**philadelphia**, fraternal affection) - **Ro 12:10**
- **With brotherly love that is affectionate and demonstrative to others**

**C. TO LOVE OUR FAMILIES...**

1. Husbands are to love (**agape**) their wives (which includes to cherish) - **Ep 5:25,28-29**
  2. Wives are to love (**philandros**, to love as a friend) their husbands - **Tit 2:4**
  3. Mothers are to love their children (**philoteknos**, to be fond of one's children) - **Tit 2:4**
- **With heartfelt affection that should only be natural in families**

**D. TO LOVE NEIGHBORS AND ENEMIES...**

1. We are commanded to love (**agape**) our neighbor - **Mk 12:31**
  2. We are commanded to love (**agape**) our enemies - **Mt 5:44**
- **With active good will that allows no distinction between friend and foe**

[As the people of God, we are certainly to be a loving people. But where love is weak, how can it be made strong...?]

**III. LOVE DEVELOPED**

**A. TAUGHT BY GOD...**

1. Concerning brotherly love (**philadelphia**) to love one another (**agape**) - **1Th 4:9**
  2. By way of example (how He sent His Son) - **1Jn 4:9-10; Ro 5:8**
- **God teaches us how to love one another**

**B. TAUGHT BY JESUS...**

1. By way of example (how He was willing to die for us) - **1Jn 3:16**
  2. How He loved (**philia** and **agape**) His disciples - **Jn 11:3,5** (Lazarus, Mary, Martha); **Jn 13:1,34** (the disciples); **Jn 13:23; 20:2** (John)
- **Jesus teaches us how to love one another**

**C. TAUGHT BY PAUL...**

1. Who taught Christians how to walk in love - **Ep 5:1-2**
  2. Who taught husbands how to love their wives - **Ep 5:25-33**
  3. Who practiced brotherly love (**agapetos**, beloved, dear) - cf. **Php 4:1**
- **Paul teaches us how to love in word and example**

**D. TAUGHT BY PETER...**

1. Who taught us to love one another (**philia** and **agape**) fervently - **1Pe 1:22; 4:8**
  2. Who taught us to love (**agape**) the brotherhood, as brethren (**philadelphos**) - **1Pe 2:17; 3:8**
  3. Who practiced brotherly love (**agapetos**, beloved, dear) - cf. **2Pe 3:15**
- **Peter teaches us how to love in word and example**

**E. TAUGHT BY OTHER CHRISTIANS...**

1. Older women should be capable of teaching the younger women - **Tit 2:3-4**
  2. Even young Christians can set an example of how to love - **1Ti 4:12; 2Th 1:3**
- **Brethren (young and old) can teach us to love one another**

**F. DEVELOPING HEARTFELT AFFECTION...**

1. We can enhance **philia** love by adding **agape** love to it - cf. **2Pe 1:7**
  2. Display **agape** (active good will), and **philia** (heartfelt affection) will follow - cf. **1Th 4:9**
- **The key to having heartfelt affection towards others is to be kind to them!**

[Finally, a few thoughts on how **true love** manifests itself...]

#### **IV. LOVE DEMONSTRATED**

##### **A. EXEMPLIFIED BY GOD AND JESUS...**

1. God's love was manifested by sending His Son to die for our sins - **Jn 3:16; 1Jn 4:10**
  2. Jesus' love was demonstrated by dying for us - **Jn 15:13; 1Jn 3:16**
- **True love is sacrificial**

##### **B. EXPLAINED BY JOHN...**

1. Demonstrated in deed and in truth - **1Jn 3:17-18**
  2. Demonstrated by obeying the commands of God - **1Jn 5:2-3**
- **True love is demonstrative and exemplary**

##### **C. EXPOUNDED BY PAUL...**

1. Love suffers long and is kind
  2. Love does not envy
  3. Love does not parade itself, is not puffed up
  4. Does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil
  5. Does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth
  6. Bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things
  7. Love never fails - **1Co 13:4-8**
- **True love is everlastingly kind, patient, humble, polite, and assumes the best in others**

#### **CONCLUSION**

1. What is love...?
  - a. It is **heartfelt affection** toward God and man
  - b. It is **active good will** toward everyone
2. **Where we lack** heartfelt affection and active good will...
  - a. We need to acknowledge the deficiency (as an indication of spiritual immaturity)
  - b. We need to be willing to relearn love
3. **When we need to learn** to love others with a heartfelt love...
  - a. Look to the Father, to Jesus, to the apostles, and to other Christians
  - b. Take the initiative to practice active good will, and heartfelt affection will develop naturally

We have been born again, purified to have unfeigned, affectionate love for one another (**philadelphia**); do we love one another (**agape**) fervently as we should? - cf. **1Pe 1:22-23**

Perhaps we now more fully appreciate why Paul wrote in regards to **faith, hope and love...**

*“The greatest of these is love”*

# Reflections

## On Joy

### INTRODUCTION

1. We continue our “**Reflections**” on things that are...
  - a. True, noble, just, pure, lovely, and of good report - **Php 4:8**
  - b. Virtuous and worthy of praise - **ibid.**
2. A virtue worthy of reflection is that of **joy**...
  - a. An element of the kingdom of God - **Ro 14:17**
  - b. A component of the fruit of the Spirit - **Ga 5:22**
3. Many Christians appear to fall short in experiencing such joy...
  - a. It is often apparent as they go about their daily living
  - b. It frequently carries over into our worship (e.g., lack of enthusiasm, boredom)

[What is joy? How can Christians be filled with joy? Let’s begin our reflection by noting ...]

### I. THE DEFINITION OF JOY

#### **A. IN THE GREEK...**

1. The noun is **chara**
    - a. Which Thayer defines as “**joy, gladness**”
    - b. Vine adds “**delight**”
    - c. By one count the word is used **60** times in the NT
  2. The verb is **chairo**
    - a. Which is most often translated “**to rejoice**”
    - b. It is used **72** times in the NT
  3. Closely related is the word **charis**
    - a. Which is the word most often translated as “**grace**”
    - b. Grace in the objective sense is “that which bestows or occasions pleasure, delight, or causes favorable regard” - **Vine**
- **Joy is gladness that comes from grace!**

#### **B. THE RELATION OF JOY TO GRACE...**

1. Joy is directly proportional to grace one has received, or at least to the perception of grace that one has received
    - a. Receive a small gift, and your joy might be minimal
    - b. Receive a large gift, and your joyous reaction is greater
  2. When Christians’ don’t have much joy in their lives, something is wrong: “If you have no joy in your religion, there’s a leak in your Christianity somewhere.” - **Billy Sunday**
  3. Here is one explanation why Christians may be joyless: “The reason why many poor souls have so little heat of joy in their hearts, is that they have so little light of Gospel knowledge in their mind. The further a soul stands from the light of truth, the further he must needs be from the heat of comfort.” - **William Gurnall**
- **The more we understand God’s grace, the more we will experience God’s joy!**

**C. THE JOY OF THE LORD IS ABIDING....**

1. The Lord certainly does not want Christians to be joyless - cf. **Jn 15:11**
  2. The joy He gives is *“inexpressible and full of glory”*, able to sustain us in the worst of circumstances - cf. **1Pe 1:6-8**
    - a. Unlike the “passing pleasures of sin” which are fleeting - **He 11:25**
    - b. Even the good things in life eventually prove to be “vanity” - **Ecc 2:10-11**
- **The Lord has made it possible for the Christian to say: “Rejoice!” - Php 4:4**

[A failure to remember things graciously given which make for joy in our lives can explain why some Christians do not have the degree of **joy (gladness, delight)** they should have. But we have every reason to be joyful. We just need to remember what it is that produces joy. Let’s reflect on just a few...]

**II. SOURCES OF JOY FOR THE CHRISTIAN****A. JOY IS A CONSEQUENCE OF FAITH...**

1. Joy comes from having **a confident trust** (faith) in God - cf. **Php 1:25**
    - a. For faith in God dispels attitudes that prevent joy from occurring
    - b. Such as worry, doubt and fear - cf. **Mt 6:25-30; 14:27-31**
  2. This emphasizes the role of God’s Word in producing joy...
    - a. For faith comes from the Word of God - **Ro 10:17**
    - b. In turn, faith produces joy - cf. **Ro 15:13**
- **Thus the need to read and study the Bible daily!**

**B. JOY IS THE RESULT OF OBEDIENCE...**

1. Obedience to the Word of God fosters joy in the hearts of the obedient
    - a. Notice the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch - **Ac 8:35-38**
    - b. Also the conversion of the Thessalonians - **1Th 1:6**
  2. Conversely, disobedience dispels joy and produces fear! - cf. **He 10:26-27**
- **Could lack of joy be an indication of lack of obedience on your part?**

**C. JOY IS BASED UPON FORGIVENESS...**

1. The guilt of sin is a major reason why many people lack joy
    - a. Awareness of such guilt causes stress, unhappiness, and worry
    - b. As Paul illustrated describing the dilemma of one struggling with sin - cf. **Ro 7:22-24**
  2. But where there is forgiveness, there can be joy!
    - a. Consider David’s psalm of confession - **Psa 32:1-5,10-11**
    - b. The correlation between forgiveness and joy is also seen in **Psa 51:7-12**
  3. Those in Christ can enjoy forgiveness of sins and the joy that follows - **Ro 5:1-2,10-11**
- **If you have not yet received the forgiveness found only in Christ, there is no way to experience the abiding joy that comes only “in the Lord”**

**D. JOY COMES FROM CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP...**

1. It is a joy just to **see** such fellowship
  - a. Paul experienced joy by witnessing love and fellowship in Philemon - **Phm 7**
  - b. He also found great joy in learning of the restoration of brethren - **2Co 7:7**
2. How much more, the joy of **experiencing** such fellowship!
  - a. Paul rejoiced in the fellowship he had with the Philippians - **Php 4:10**
  - b. John spoke of the joy that comes of Christian fellowship reunited - **2Jn 12**

-- Are you developing the kind of Christian fellowship that adds to our joy?

**E. JOY COMES FROM CHRISTIAN SERVICE...**

1. There is the joy of spreading the gospel
    - a. Barnabas rejoiced in the conversions at Antioch - **Ac 11:20-23**
    - b. The Christian Jews delighted to hear of the conversion of the Gentiles - **Ac 15:3**
  2. There is great joy in seeing the spiritual progress of others
    - a. This was a frequent source of joy to Paul - **Ro 16:19; Col 2:5; 1Th 3:6-9**
    - b. John wrote that this was the highest form of joy - **3Jn 4**
  3. Jesus also spoke of the "blessedness" (i.e., joy) of giving to others - **Ac 20:35**
- **Those willing to be involved in serving the Lord, whether it be through teaching or the giving of one's time, energy or money, will experience joy from such service!**

**CONCLUSION**

1. The wonderful joy of the Lord is open to all who would receive it through such things as:
  - a. Faith in Christ
  - b. Obedience to His Will
  - c. Forgiveness through His blood
  - d. Fellowship with His disciples
  - e. Service in His Kingdom-- **And it is the kind of joy that can sustain us through life, as Nehemiah told Israel:**

*The joy of the Lord is your strength - Neh 8:10*

2. Why not begin experiencing this joy today by...
  - a. Obeying the gospel of Christ
  - b. Receiving the forgiveness of sins through the blood of Christ
  - c. Participate in the fellowship of Christian love as you work toward bringing others to salvation in Christ - cf. **Ac 2:38-42**

*Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. - Ro 15:13*

# Reflections

## On Peace

### INTRODUCTION

1. A virtue worthy of reflection is **peace**, which like joy is...
  - a. An element of the kingdom of God - **Ro 14:17**
  - b. A component of the fruit of the Spirit - **Ga 5:22**
2. **Peace** is a word conveying wonderful concepts...
  - a. “a state of harmony, tranquility”
  - b. “the absence of hostility, the absence of mental stress or anxiety”
3. In the Bible, the word peace is used to translate...
  - a. **Shalom** (Hebrew) - completeness, soundness, welfare, peace - **BDB Hebrew Dictionary**
  - b. **Eirene** (Greek) - often refers to the inner tranquility and poise of the Christian whose trust is in God through Christ - **Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible Dictionary**

[Yet **peace** is a quality or virtue that is sorely needed in the world and church today, for...]

### I. NOT EVERYONE ENJOYS PEACE

#### **A. THE WICKED...**

1. “There is no peace, says the Lord, for the wicked” - **Isa 48:22**
  2. The sins of the wicked separates one from God - **Isa 59:2**
  3. Sinful conduct destroys friendships and familial relationships - **Ga 5:19-21**
  4. Sin prevents true peace of mind - cf. **Isa 57:20-21**
- **The wicked are in dire need for peace**

#### **B. THE TROUBLED DISCIPLE...**

1. Even faithful disciples can become troubled - e.g., Martha, **Lk 10:41**
  2. Disciples lose their peace when they:
    - a. Fail to simplify their priorities - **Lk 10:42**
    - b. Become choked by cares, riches, and pleasures - **Lk 8:14**
    - c. Succumb to the desire to be rich - **1Ti 6:10-11**
- **The righteous are often in need of peace**

#### **C. THE CONCERNED SERVANT...**

1. Who worries about their brethren, like Paul - **2Co 2:12-13; 7:5; 11:28-29**
  2. Who becomes distressed with concern, like Epaphroditus - **Php 2:25-26**
  3. Who sorrows when hearing bad news, like elders - **Ac 20:37-38**
- **Even the most dedicated Christians finds themselves in need of peace at times**

[But wherever there is a need for peace, there is...]

### II. PEACE THAT SURPASSES UNDERSTANDING



## A. PEACE WITH GOD...

1. Without God, no true peace is possible
    - a. He is “the God of peace” - **Ro 15:33**
    - b. He offers perfect peace, peace like a river - **Isa 26:3; 48:18**
  2. But unforgiven sin make peace with God impossible
    - a. Sin separates us from God - **Isa 59:1-2**
    - b. Sin makes our lives like the troubled sea - **Isa 57:20-21**
  3. Through Jesus Christ, God offers peace to the sinner!
    - a. We can be justified from our sins, and be at peace with God! - **Ro 5:1-2**
    - b. God’s love makes this peace possible - **Ro 5:6-9**
    - c. In Christ, we can be reconciled with God - **Ro 5:10-11; 2Co 5:18-21**
- **Without the peace God provides, no real peace is possible**

## B. PEACE WITH ONESELF...

1. Jesus offers true peace within
    - a. Peace that the world cannot provide - **Jn 14:27**
    - b. Peace unfazed by the world and its tribulations - **Jn 16:33**
  2. Jesus does this by teaching us:
    - a. To have faith - **Mt 6:25,30; 8:26; Jn 14:1**
    - b. To make God and His kingdom our priority - **Mt 6:31-34**
    - c. To simplify our lives - **Lk 8:14; 10:41-42**
  3. By offering prayer as the antidote to anxiety and worry
    - a. Prayers of supplication and thanksgiving - **Php 4:6**
    - b. Whereby the peace of God guards our hearts and minds in Christ - **Php 4:7**
- **Jesus provides peace that surpasses all understanding!**

## CONCLUSION

1. Wonderful is the peace that God offers in Christ...
  - a. Peace with **God**
  - b. Peace with **oneself**
2. Do you have such peace? Or have...
  - a. **Wicked practices** prevented you from finding peace?
  - b. **Misplaced priorities** robbed you of your peace?
  - c. **Bona fide concerns** filled your heart with anxiety?
3. You can enjoy the peace that God offers...
  - a. By **obeying the gospel** of Christ - **Mk 16:15-16; Ac 2:38**
  - b. By **joining the family** of God - **Ac 2:42**
  - c. By **following Jesus** as The Way to truth, life and peace - **Jn 14:6,27**

Why not allow Jesus, the Prince of Peace, to give you His peace? As Paul prayed:

*“Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way.” - 2Th 3:16*

Dear friends and brethren, “meditate on these things” (**Php 4:8**)...