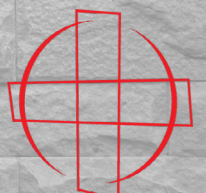


OVERCOME

AUGUST 2021

ADULT
CONNECT CLASS
CURRICULUM



DONALD J. WILLS
SENIOR PASTOR

The purpose of First Baptist Church of Fort Worth is to **introduce** people into a loving relationship with Jesus, **instruct** them in spiritual growth through God's Word, **inspire** them to serve for God's kingdom, and **incorporate** them in authentic worship to glorify God.

A Note From Our Pastor

Dear FBC family and friends,

The Christian community has been known for all the things we shouldn't do. The sad reality, often lost in the list of don'ts, is what we should engage in as an Overcomer because of our relationship with Christ. There are spiritual disciplines that should be evident in our walk as a "city that is set on a hill than can not be hidden" (Matt 5:14). This month's study presents topics that should be a natural reflex of being a follower of Christ.

As a reminder, the layout of this Curriculum begins with a 7-day approach for both the teacher and the members to get the most from each study. We also acknowledge that teachers may have their own methods for preparing the lessons and we encourage them to prepare in the way that makes them most effective in presenting God's Word and the weekly lesson. We also encourage each teacher and member to use the suggested 7-day approach for their own personal study and encouragement.

The substance at the core of each week's study ought to be applied and active in our daily walk. The challenge for us each week is to take the topic for the week and seek opportunities to exercise what you know and learned from the study. Let's see how many lives we can touch and impact for the glory of God.

-Blessings
Pastor Don



Suggested Plan for Using this Bible Study Guide Effectively

Introduce

Day 1: Read and meditate on the Scripture, asking God to guide you throughout the week as you study His Word and allowing Him to speak to you through the Spirit. Read the **INTRODUCE** portion of the lesson commentary.

Instruct

Day 2: Read the Scripture, meditate on it, and read the **INSTRUCT** portion of the lesson commentary. Concentrate on memorizing the focal verse for that particular week.

Day 3: Read the Scripture, meditate on it, and answer the focal questions in the **INSTRUCT** portion of the lesson commentary.

Inspire

Day 4: Read the Scripture, meditate on it, and begin thinking about tangible ways you can incorporate the principles you learned in your daily life. Read the **INSPIRE** portion of the lesson commentary.

Incorporate

Day 5: Read the Scripture, meditate on it, and apply the theological principle that you learned from this week in a tangible way. Use the **INCORPORATE** portion of the lesson commentary to guide you.

Day 6: Read the Scripture, meditate on it, and in the journal section describe how God allowed you to apply this passage in a real and tangible way this week.

Day 7: Review the Scripture and share with others in your Connect Class on Sunday morning at 9:30am. Be ready to share your experience about how God allowed you to apply the lesson for that week.

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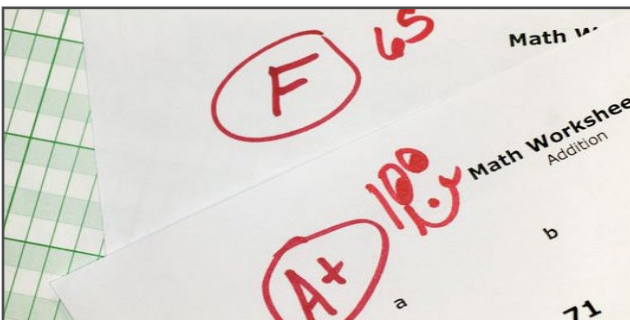


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An Overcomer Compels Others

Luke 14:15-24

Focal Verse:

"Then the master said to the servant, 'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.'"

Luke 14:23

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Introduce

While in college, my roommates along with some of the other guys on our hall began a tradition in which they would trek to a diner late on Thursday nights around 11:30 pm in the small town of Greensburg, Kentucky, about twenty minutes from campus. It was one of those small-town diners, located on the square surrounding the courthouse that stayed open late and catered to college students by offering food at an affordable price. The diner was narrow with a long, continuous bar from one side of the establishment to the other with seating just a few feet from the grill. As a greasy spoon, the diner reeked of the smoke that emanated from the grill and every surface was literally caked with a thick layer of grease. It would never score five-stars for either ambiance or the quality of the food. Nonetheless, these guys went faithfully every week.

For those who have listened to Bluegrass music, unlike me, you may have heard a song about this diner titled “Down at Dumas Walker’s.” In one of the lines of that tune, the Kentucky Headhunters reminisce about how they would go down to Dumas Walker’s

for “a slaw-burger (hamburger with coleslaw), fries, and a bottle of Ski (soda).” My friends didn’t really go for the food or even the atmosphere of the diner made famous by the song; they went to have fellowship one with another. For several months, they invited me to join them on their Thursday evening outings. But going at 11:30 pm did not fit the schedule



I liked to keep. Generally, I attended classes in the mornings, studied throughout the day during my free time, and then went to bed around midnight—early for college—so I could rise and repeat the process at 7:00 am the next morning.

Every week, they faithfully asked if I wanted to go with them. And every week I refused because I had different priorities. My refusals didn’t dissuade them from asking. In fact, it inspired them to ask all the more and begin insisting that I join them at least once to experience the camaraderie. Still, I gave every excuse in the book each time they asked. But they continued to compel me to join in the fun and festivities. They never grew agitated or even frustrated with my response. They didn’t stop only after

Introduce

a few times of asking. They didn't become calloused to my consistent refusals saying, "Okay, it's your loss. See you later." They continued to prod patiently and insist that I go! One Thursday, after a semester of prodding, I went with the group and we had fun fellowship—even getting back at a decent time so I could go to bed!

In Luke 14:15-24, Jesus tells the story of a man who invites guests to a banquet he was hosting. One by one, however, they refused to accept this gracious invitation and made excuses as to why they could not attend. They had different priorities in life and ultimately missed out on the fellowship of this dinner! The man then ordered his servants to go and compel others to attend the banquet in place of those who had rejected it. Doing as he had asked, the servants still found plenty of room at the table for everyone who would accept the invitation to come!

We cannot afford to be so busy in life that we don't have the right priority which causes us to miss intimate fellowship with the Lord around His table! Nothing in life should ever be given so much importance that it overshadows our relationship with Him, but people often misplace their priorities! In contrast, we should be like those who joyfully accepted the invitation as well as the servants who went into the streets to compel people to attend their master's banquet. Therefore, let us have the right priority, having accepted the Master's invitation ourselves, and go into all the world to compel people to join us at His table by introducing them into a relationship with His Son!

Key
Question

How important to you is compelling others to have a relationship with Christ and accept His invitation? How do you demonstrate that importance in your life?

Luke 14:15

THE EXALTATION EXPECTED:

During a meal at the home of a Pharisee on the Sabbath, Jesus describes the character that should define one who participates in “the kingdom of God.” Those who have a relationship with the Father through His Son should conduct themselves humbly—rather than pridefully exalting themselves through their self-perceived position or status in life. To illustrate, Jesus tells the parable of a guest invited “to a wedding feast” who sits “in the best place” which he thinks most honorable ([Luke 14:7](#)). Embarrassment and shame ensue when the host asks the guest who had chosen a seat of honor to move and make room for another more favored guest ([Luke 14:8-9](#)). On the other hand, the one who exercises humility and selects a less prominent seat will receive honor when the host invites him to move to a more favorable location ([Luke 14:10-11](#)).

This should have struck a chord with the Pharisees who perceived themselves as the most prominent—to the point of being elite—class of people in Israel who deserved such honor because of their education, wealth, power, and social status. Yet, God cherishes a relationship with individuals that transforms them from selfish to selfless whereby they serve humbly without any expectation of advantage or return for themselves—a relationship that compels them to serve in obedience because they love and desire to glorify Him rather than seek glory for themselves. For this reason, Jesus continues by adding that many people host social functions so that their friends and acquaintances would “invite” them “back” and, in a sense, they would “be repaid” through higher social standing. Conversely, Jesus reveals that serving others should motivate us instead of receiving something in return. When we serve with the right motives of glorifying the Lord and demonstrating His love for people, God will graciously bless us



Instruct

on the day of “resurrection” ([Luke 14:14](#)).

We must offer two cautions about this repayment “at the resurrection of the just.” This does not mean that we earn eternal life through our good works or that we should figuratively work for a promotion to a higher status in heaven. In other words, we’re not to serve so that we receive honor and glory in heaven as a reward; this is purely selfish! It detracts from the focus we should rightly place upon the Lord and the glory and honor that is due Him alone. The Pharisees as a whole sought blessing through their service; they wanted others to notice how “good” they were. Most didn’t truly want to reflect the character of the Lord to exalt and glorify Him; they wanted to draw attention to themselves!

Our reward at the resurrection, however, comes from the approval and praise of our heavenly Father. To hear “well done” from the Father will bring us more joy than any accolades, applause, or position of honor. Whether we ever think about it or even admit it, the love, support, and approval of our earthly parents means much more to us than any plaque, certificate, or honorary position. We typically don’t do these things to “make” them proud. But when what we do makes them proud and draws their praise, it gives us unspeakable joy. The same should motivate our service in relation to our heavenly Father who expresses praise when we follow the path He has designated through His Word and live the way He has shown us.

In what ways do you serve the Lord daily?
What motivates you to serve?

Question
#

Some of those sitting **at the table with** Jesus heard the parable, but didn’t fully grasp what He was attempting to convey to them as evidenced by the response of **one** man who vocalized an ecstatic proclamation (v. 15). In a prideful declaration, this man boasted, “**Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.**” He heard Jesus acknowledge that “you will be blessed” in the previous parable, but he didn’t comprehend the full scope of His message which focused on humility. Unfortunately, we also have “selective hearing” at times whereby we focus on the part of the message that we “want” to hear rather than the intended point the speaker wished to communicate. Not only did this man **at the table with** Jesus concentrate on the “blessing” he thought he would undoubtedly receive, but he also assumed that he would automatically be in attendance at this heavenly celebration simply based upon

his prominent position and his close connection with Israel's other respected leaders. Thus, he displayed hubris and arrogance—not the humility of which Jesus had just spoken. He had missed the entire point of the previous parable!

For this reason, Jesus, who knows our thoughts and discerns our motives, corrects this man with another parable designed to help him understand the responsibility of accepting the invitation to join God in intimate fellowship.

Along with the acceptance of this invitation to join God at the reunion with His people in heaven comes the transformation of our character which produces humility and shows concern for all people who need to hear the gospel.

A false sense of expectation, especially about our perceived

position in life, leads to entitlement. Entitlement subsequently focuses on what we can get from others rather than how we can contribute through serving. We will undoubtedly reap the benefits and blessings of serving the Lord when we have the right motives. But we must always remind ourselves that it's not about us or even what we receive; it's about Christ and serving Him!

PHILIPPIANS 2:3

Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.

What expectations do you have about life? How do you keep Christ the center of your focus despite these expectations?

Question # 2

Luke 14:16-17

THE INVITATION EXTENDED:

Jesus addresses this man's misguided understanding and prideful assumption that he would automatically be included in "the kingdom of God" through another parable. Although God's kingdom is open to everyone with plenty of room for all who would accept the invitation, one doesn't automatically receive entry based upon His physical lineage or achieved social status. Instead, it requires a cognitive response to Christ and an acceptance of what He did through the cross to alleviate our sin. So, Jesus relates the story of **a certain man** who hosted **a great** banquet to which he had **invited many**

Instruct

(v. 16). After extending the invitation, he then dispatched **his servant** to go to **those invited** and personally call them to **come** since everything was **now ready** (v. 17). The **man** made a noble effort to do everything within his power to ensure that the people knew the banquet was **ready** and they could **now come**. All they had to do was respond!

Most likely, we have all received an invitation to a formal function which required us to acknowledge our presence prior to attending. Usually, the acronym R.S.V.P. appears at



the bottom of the correspondence along with instructions on how to let the host know we have accepted and will attend. To gain entry into the venue, we must respond to the invitation in the right way and by the stated deadline. We cannot simply toss the invitation aside and forget about it until the day of the event. We must act upon it by confirming

our acceptance. Technically, we did nothing to earn the invitation nor did it require us to pay a fee—even though in some cases we take a “gift” to show our gratitude to the host. All we must do is respond to it. Moreover, we can’t just show up at the event and expect to get in. Our name must be verified through our response to the invitation and written on the guest list no matter who we are or how important we may view ourselves to be!

Similarly, God has extended us the most gracious invitation to join Him forever in His kingdom through Jesus the Messiah. We can do nothing to earn it or do anything to pay for it. We must simply respond. Still, we can’t ignore that invitation and fail to act upon it, assuming our lack of response will be overlooked either by God’s kindness, who we are, or what we have accomplished. In ministry through church events, we often overlook deadlines in many cases because we desire people to hear the gospel and grow in their faith. But death is a deadline that we cannot delay or circumvent. Therefore, we can’t die and excuse ourselves by claiming that we never had time to respond or just never got around to it. On the other hand, we can’t try to bargain

our way into heaven based on any human merit. If our name isn't written upon the "guest list," in this case the Lamb's Book of Life, we cannot enter and we will face eternal separation! Therefore, we must respond to the invitation by acknowledging our dependence upon Christ for our salvation.

Luke 14:18-20

THE EXCUSES GIVEN:

After receiving an invitation as well as a personal visit from the host's **servant** to announce that all the preparations had been made and the festivities were **ready** to commence, each one of the invitees **began to make excuses** as to why they could not attend the banquet (v. 18). Generally, these excuses encompass three areas: investment, business, and family—the same three areas that consume most of our time and attention even today! The first man related that he had purchased **a piece of** property to which he **must go** and oversee. So, he begged the **servant to have** him **excused**. To him, this seemed like a perfectly legitimate excuse! Although Jesus doesn't specify the purpose of the property, whether to build a house or another structure or to farm, it is nonetheless still an investment. We have many areas today in which we invest our resources, whether time, finances, and energies. And such investments can so easily consume us that we lose focus on what's most important in life—our relationship with Christ and subsequently with other people here on earth. With the booming housing market and the lack of many everyday products, properties and houses are certainly significant investments which require tremendous financial resources as well as time to maintain physically. For those of us who live in Homeowner's Associations, we know that the external appearance of our homes falls under the scrutiny of the board. We, therefore, can most likely identify with this man who excused **himself** to oversee his land. The time to care for our homes is in addition to the long hours we work every week, our family responsibilities, and other personal obligations. It takes extensive time for the physical work of maintenance



along with the research required before making necessary repairs. We can become so overwhelmed and tired from arduous yardwork or interior cleaning that it becomes easy to say we have little or no time for the Lord because we have “more” pressing matters to which to attend. We can find ourselves in the habit of thinking that we need time alone to relax—and we do—but not at the expense of pushing Christ out! Even though we may hire out much of our work around the house, we still invest in many other areas, including our hobbies and interests. Perhaps, more than anything, if we’re honest, these require an excessive amount of our attention to which we will gladly yield because we enjoy doing them. We don’t find it difficult or inconvenient to get up early to participate in them. We don’t complain and look at all the negatives; we respond with joy and patience even when things may not go according to plan. We take time to study and learn more about these areas so that we can improve or have a more enjoyable experience. Yet, how do we view our relationship with Christ, participation in the ministry to which He has called us, and service through His church? We have time, or at least make time, for the necessary things in life, for the things that interest us, and the things that we want to do. But when it comes to Christ and fellowshiping with Him, how do our lives compare?

What areas in which you invest have the most potential to distract you in your relationship with Christ?

Question
3

The servant then came to the second invitee who **excused** himself because he had **bought five yoke of oxen** which he now needed to go and **test** (v. 19). This man would have been of some means because most farmers of the period would have only owned one or two **yoke of oxen**. Nevertheless, he allowed business to get in the way of his relationship. Although God expects us to work diligently for the basic necessities in life ([2 Thess 3:10](#)) and designed it inherently within His creation, work should never overshadow one’s relationship with the Lord. We should work hard as a testimony to Him ([Eph 6:5-7](#)), to provide for our families ([1 Tim 5:8](#)), and save for retirement ([Prov 21:5, 20](#)). Unfortunately, however, many people allow work and business to interfere with their devotion to Christ.

We should never castigate someone for working hard, but we must ensure we have the right priority as we work. Some work simply to acquire. They constantly work overtime

to amass wealth. This takes a toll on their earthly relationships, especially with family, as they miss spending quality time with others. They become so focused on work that they have almost no time to cultivate their relationship with Christ and to serve Him. Rather than budget and live within their means, many amass debt or spend uncontrollably on their hobbies, thereby requiring endless amounts of work to pay for it. Yet, it's not just our jobs that require long hours. We come home to more work and business. We must



keep track of our finances and pay our bills. We must deal with insurance and other companies with which we do business—sometimes requiring extensive waits on hold and an inordinate number of transfers to different departments. In all this, we cannot lose focus on what is most important—our relationship with Christ and serving Him according to the prescription in His Word.

How do you balance work and service to the Lord?

Question
4

The final man to which the **servant** comes simply interjects that he has **married a wife and, therefore, cannot come** (v. 20). I've often heard married individuals joke that this man had the only legitimate excuse. Although stated in jest, the idea that family obligations supersede Christ is rubbish. Such an attitude has done more to damage the family than any other single thing. Christ should be preeminent in our families. Seeking Christ as a family is the most important thing we could ever do together. Christ should be the center of everything! While seeking Christ together, then comes the cultivation of the relationship between husband and wife and then subsequently between the parents and children. To get any of these out of order will prove detrimental to the development of the family as a whole! Husbands and wives need the security of knowing that their spouse is committed to seeking the Lord and abiding in Him. And children need to see this practiced within marriage through the confines of their parents' relationship to one another and with them.

Instruct

Today, families fill their schedules with a plethora of activities many of which serve a great purpose and have great significance. Many revolve around children, but we must remember that as parents God has given us a great responsibility to guide them correctly. Parents often find themselves tethered to ferrying their children to school and a number of extracurricular activities. They want their children to participate in everything. They also spend countless hours tutoring their children in homework and helping them with assignments. They want their children to succeed and have a good life. However, in pursuit of such a life, Christ frequently becomes secondary. This has as much an adverse effect on children's lives as does not caring what they do and not properly supervising them! God has called parents to invest in their children's lives by setting boundaries and pointing them to Him and His Word. He has called parents to lead their families. Family doesn't revolve around children and their desires or even parents living vicariously through their children; it should always center upon Christ and revolve around Him!

As a future parent, parent, or grandparent, what's most important to you: seeing your children get a scholarship, watching them excel in sports or the musical arts, knowing they are popular, educating them to have a high-paying job, or teaching them to live responsibly by following Christ? As believers, we all would undoubtedly say the latter: teaching them to live responsibly by following Christ. But sometimes we fail to engage in this activity! We tutor our children in scholarly curriculum or support them in athletics or band, but we sometimes fail to teach them how to live for Christ while doing these things. As parents, we would do a great disservice to our children if we don't teach them to pursue Christ above all, but we push them to attain glory, excel, and seek satisfaction in temporal activities.

How do you incorporate Christ into what you teach your children or grandchildren? How would you evaluate what your focus is with your children?

Question
5

Luke 14:21-24

THE REDIRECTION ENACTED:

Having heard these excuses, the **servant** returned to **his master** and **reported** them to him (v. 21). With this, the **master** grew **angry** and instructed **his servant** to **go quickly**

into the streets of the city, calling the **poor, maimed, lame, and blind**. The **servant** quickly did what **his master** had **commanded** and **still** found plenty of **room** at the table (v. 22). So, the **master** instructed him to **go out** once again and **compel** others to **come** that his **house might be filled** (v. 23). Even though the symbolism of the parable clearly refers to the invitation God the Father extended to the world through His Son, we can't press the imagery too far to say that anger and spite against Israel caused God to "reject" them and to love the Gentiles and include them (i.e., we non-Jews) among His people.

First, God has not rejected Israel. Many in Israel have rejected Him and suffered the consequence. This much is clear in the excuses to attend the banquet as well as how the parable ends when Jesus declares that **none of those who were invited** will **taste** his **supper** (v. 24). In other words, they have condemned themselves and denied themselves entry into the kingdom of God by refusing to accept the invitation extended through Christ's sacrificial death and resurrection. Second, God has always loved the whole world and has desire to have a reconciled relationship with every person.



Therefore, God always planned to use Israel to draw the nations to Himself and to point them to salvation through Him. Ultimately, He accomplished this through Christ! The rejection of God by many in Israel didn't thwart His original plan!

If we have a relationship with Christ, we too have become a **servant** of the **Master**. As His servants, He has tasked us with going **into the highways and hedges** (i.e., fences—perhaps in reference to going door-to-door) to **compel** people to turn to Him and have a relationship with His Son. The word **compel** doesn't envision "forcing" or coercing someone to accept Christ. Rather, it means to persuade or convince. We do so by demonstrating the benefits of a relationship with Christ first through Scripture and then by telling others how He has transformed us and given us hope. Therefore, our success in the mission He has given us is not predicated upon their response to the invitation since they of their own volition may refuse it; it is predicated entirely upon our obedience to go into all the world to share the message of the gospel.

Instruct

The **master** in this parable bid the **servant** to **go quickly** to spread the invitation to which he responded immediately without delay. We never know how many days we or others have upon this earth. Life, as James describes, is a fragile vapor ([Jas 4:14](#)). We also do not know the hour Christ will return to initiate judgment upon the earth. We must be ready ourselves to meet the Savior, but we must also warn others of the consequences of refusing Christ and **compel** them to accept His gracious invitation. Therefore, let us be overcomers who hit the streets, go door-to-door, and do whatever it takes to bring the message of the gospel to our city, our state, our nation, and the world. Let us not leave any one area unreached; let us go and **compel** others to join us because there is **still** plenty of **room** at the Father's table for all who will accept His invitation.

How do you engage daily in compelling others to accept Christ's invitation? Are you concerned enough about others to go door-to-door in the very community in which you live?

Question
6

Inspire

My college roommates and friends found importance in fellowshipping at Dumas Walker's so much that they invited me to join. In fact, one could say that they compelled me! They didn't become disheartened at my constant excuses, but continued pointing to the benefits until they convinced me to come along with them. I had a good time and have fond recollections when I think about it. But it didn't change my life. And I've not been back in over twenty-one years.

I can, however, tell you about Someone who has changed my life and with whom I meet daily for fellowship. If my friends found a crusty, smelly, old diner enough to invite and compel someone to go, how much more is it incumbent upon us to invite and compel someone to have a relationship with Jesus Christ—the Savior? Some people will reject Him while other people will gladly accept Him. Regardless of the response, we can't grow weary in faithfully executing the responsibilities Christ has given us. We need to find such value in the gospel and exercise compassion toward every human being that we can't help but compel them to accept Christ as their Savior and receive the life only He can offer.

Incorporate

In what ways do you see people believing they are “entitled” to “life” today? How would you help them understand that we don’t automatically inherit “life”; it only comes through Christ?

What excuses have you either given or heard given as to why someone cannot accept the gospel or, in the case of a believer, serve the Lord? How did you or should you respond?

How would you describe your burden to compel people with the gospel? How does that burden lead you to act?

August 8, 2021



*An Overcomer
Builds Community*
1 Peter 4:7-11

Focal Verse:

"As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."

1 Peter 4:10

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Introduce

With Christmas approaching in just four months, some of us may have already started proactively searching for the right gifts for our children or grandchildren. Some of the technologies that have become so prevalent today certainly have their place in a child's learning, development, and entertainment, but so also do hands-on activities from years past—such as Lincoln Logs, Erector sets, Tinkertoys, and Legos. Whether we give technological or hands-on gifts, we expect them to be used rather than just placed on a shelf, buried in a closet, or—even worse—carelessly strewn about the house for us to step on or trip over! In the case of these older toys, we want children to build with them according to the boundaries set forth by the product itself along with their specified purpose. In other words, we want them to be used properly!



Despite their many and varied uses, these hands-on sets still have limitations in what they have been designed to do. The parts must fit together in the right way to achieve something that functions. In fact, some products, like Erector sets, come with detailed instructions that allow them to be assembled into something that actually works when applied correctly! To build a crane using an Erector set, for example, the weight of the pieces must be properly aligned so that it doesn't become top-heavy and topple. The right size bolts, nuts, and washers along with the correct length of pieces must be utilized in moving parts lest they not move freely as they should. Simply jamming pieces together randomly without any workable plan would not produce something that functions. Each piece must be assembled in the way the designer intended it. On the other hand, some will create objects that technically function and even appear to work well, but they have built them with the wrong motives and apply them with the wrong purposes. Building a working trebuchet or catapult is within the realm of engineering possibility. But using it to hurl projectiles at our sister or other siblings

Introduce

doesn't constitute appropriate usage—particularly according to the expectations of our parents! We must use these gifts, like Erector sets, which we've received to build in the right way according to the expectations set forth for us.

As believers, God has invested each one of us with a spiritual gift to utilize in building His community—the church. Each gift must work together in the way He has designed and determined so that the church can function as He intended and the way the body should. Just as we give gifts to be used like those in the examples above, God expects us to use the gifts which He has graciously given us. We shouldn't sit idly or passively; we should join Him in the work He wants to do through us and allow Him to use us for the purpose which He has designed! Moreover, we should employ our gifts with the right motive and for the right purpose. Our goal should always be to glorify the Lord rather than draw attention to ourselves and promote our own abilities. Consequently, we should serve with the purpose of helping the church to grow numerically through salvation by proclaiming the gospel as well as in maturity by equipping and encouraging every member of the body to become more like our Savior daily. Therefore, let us be overcomers who build community in the right way according to the Lord's expectations and desires.

Key
Question

How has the Lord gifted you?

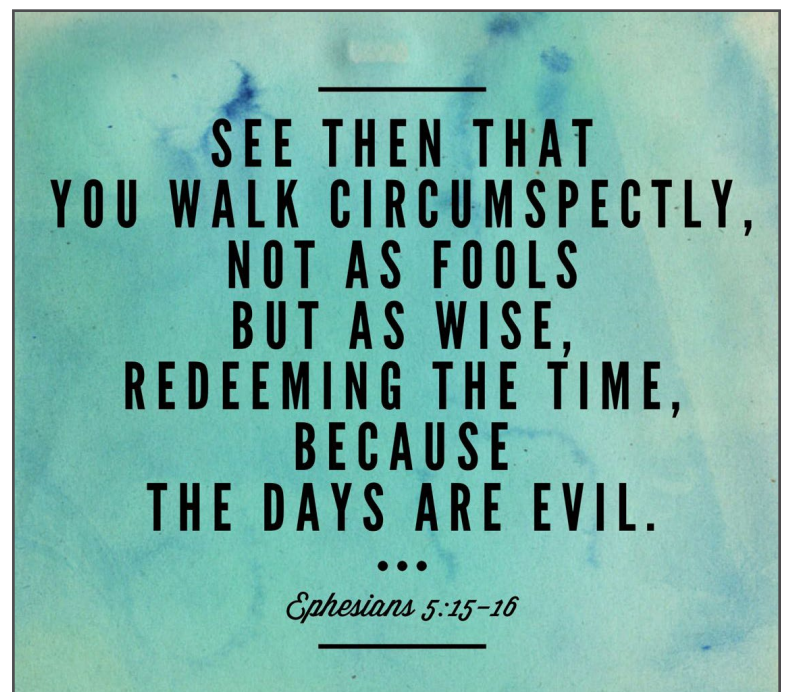
1 Peter 4:7

PRAY WITH FOCUS:

Throughout His teaching ministry on earth, Jesus proactively trained His disciples to continue ministering during His absence, but also to wait expectantly for His return. This eager expectation must be accompanied by preparation to meet the challenges in life that will inevitably arise ([1 Pet 4:1](#)). Having “the same mind” as Christ, therefore, we should “no longer” participate in the sinful activities of the flesh ([1 Pet 4:2-4](#)), but we should constantly seek “the will of God.” This requires us to be attentive and alert at all times, praying with focus. For this reason, Peter warns us of the immanency of Jesus’ return by reminding us **the end of all things is at hand** (v. 7). He could return at any moment, so we must always be prepared to receive Him.

To wait successfully for Christ’s return, we must **be serious and watchful in our prayers** (v. 7). The word translated by the NKJV as **serious** means sane, level-headed, or self-controlled. A rational and level-headed person anticipates and prepares now accordingly for what may lie ahead in the future. But his focus remains on what he can do *now* to prepare and upon the things over which God has granted him control in the present day. Therefore, our preparation to receive Christ at His future return should affect the way we live right now! It’s not something entirely based in the future. Consequently, we cannot become so hyper-focused on waiting for Christ’s return that we forget about how we are to live today. Prayer keeps us grounded and properly focused by aligning us with God’s will and reminding us to surrender to the direction of His Spirit dwelling within us. We must engage in this pursuit daily!

Through prayer, we can anticipate by planning, preparing, and practicing. Even in the midst of the heat of August here in North Texas, for example, we know Winter is



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coming! We may not know the exact date which the cold air will arrive, how severe it may be, and how long it may last, but we know that at some point it will drop below freezing. So, we must consciously take steps to anticipate the cold weather by winterizing our homes and making sure we have the right kinds of clothes in our wardrobes to protect ourselves. To winterize our homes, we must disconnect our garden hoses and cover vulnerable outside faucets. As the weather draws close, we must cover susceptible plants and take steps to protect our pets. We must also turn off our irrigation systems lest ice form on the sidewalks and streets. For our own personal protection, we must ensure we have the right type of clothing and purchase what we don't: hats, gloves, long-sleeve shirts, the right shoes or boots, and sundry other things we may need.

Similarly, we must prepare for the return of Christ today. We know with absolute certainty that He will come again ([John 14:1-4](#)), but we don't know the exact time when He will step into the sky with a trumpet blast to collect us as His people ([Matt 24:36](#)). Therefore, we must begin our preparations right now. We must be dressed in the right garments; in other words, we must remove our old, sinful way of life and put on His righteousness so we will be found pure when He comes ([Eph 4:17-24](#)). We should also practice obedience by joyfully fulfilling the tasks He has given us—sharing the gospel, showing love to others, and extending compassion.

How are you actively preparing for Christ's return right now? What more can you do?

Question
1



Peter also encourages us to be alert or **watchful** in our prayers. The word translated **watchful** actually means sober or clear-headed. It is typically used as the antithesis of one who is inebriated and lost all sense of discretion, judgment, and clarity which results in poor decisions. In fact, many modern translations urge us to be sober-minded in our decisions.

Prayer keeps us focused on Christ, thinking straight with the right perspective, and free from distraction. Fortunately, I've not been around many drunkards, but have seen some in public whether at professional sporting events or on the streets. One thing they all have in common is poor decision-making. They have no self-control and limited control over their faculties. Many, for example, make poor decisions in their speaking; they speak vulgarly, foolishly, nonsensically, offensively, combatively, and so forth. They also make poor decisions in their actions. Some become violent and pick fights, others act inappropriately through their physical passions, and most take risks that endanger others or themselves—whether driving a car, operating equipment, or simply falling down flights of stairs.

Prayer keeps us from acting foolishly when we truly seek God's will and listen for His response. It keeps us in tune with the Lord so we don't become distracted by our desires or focused on our circumstances whereby we become desperate for a solution that we act on our own rather than wait patiently upon the Lord. Prayer also gives us clarity because we see the world through God's eyes rather than our own selfish perspective which always leads to the flesh and never leads to good. Therefore, as we wait for Christ to return, let us pray with anticipation seeking how He wants us to live today while at the same time praying alertly so that He keeps us grounded in His will and on the right path.

How has prayer given you clarity in making decisions? How can you use this as a testimony about how we should turn everything to God in prayer?

Question
2

1 Peter 4:8

LOVE OTHERS FERVENTLY:

When we pray with anticipation and alertness, we will have the proper perspective which will lead us to **love** others. Peter challenges us to **have fervent love for one another above all things** (v. 8). In this context, Peter is addressing the **love** we have as believers for **one another**. This doesn't preclude loving our enemies, but it instead serves to underscore how we ought to live with each other in the body of Christ. Jesus even brings out the importance of such **love** as a testimony to the whole world. He reveals, "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" ([John 13:35](#)).

Scripture clearly defines both who we are to **love** ([Matt 22:37-39](#)) and how we

Instruct

are to **love** ([1 Cor 13:1-13](#)). We cannot allow the world to corrupt or dictate our understanding of the true practice of **love** as communicated by God through His Word. We should first **love** God ([Deut 6:5](#)) which will then lead us to **love** our neighbors ([Lev 19:18](#)), other believers, and even our enemies who hate us ([Matt 5:44](#)). Although we cannot include an exhaustive list here, we generally show **love** extending biblical compassion ([Col 3:12-14](#)), serving without expectation of anything in return ([Gal 5:13](#)), sharing the gospel which points others to life in Christ, and offering restorative correction as outline by God's Word ([Heb 12:5](#); [Gal 6:1](#)).

How has God called upon you personally to demonstrate love this week?

Question
3

But most of all, we **love** by forgiving which follows the greatest example demonstrated by our Savior. Therefore, Peter couples this command to **love** with [Proverbs 10:12](#) which acknowledges that **love will cover a multitude of sins**. The idea behind Proverbs 10:12 isn't that **love** overlooks, ignores, or permits sin. Our society as a general rule equates **love** with permissiveness and believes punishment harms a person's psyche or stunts his growth. This type of philosophy has only led to an unruly and rebellious society full of lawless individuals—all we must do is look around at our own nation today to see the fruit of this failed philosophy. The Bible tells us not to "provoke our children to wrath," but it continues to say that we should "bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord" ([Eph 6:4](#)). This means correcting them when they err ([Prov 13:24](#); [23:13](#)). **Love** should not only compel us to correct the wayward, but it also should compel us to forgive unconditionally.

Peter uses this verse to describe how we should forgive someone who **sins** against us. We shouldn't harbor bitterness in our hearts or seek revenge. Paul similarly addresses this idea in [1 Corinthians 13:5](#) where he points out that **love** "thinks no evil"—that is it does not keep a record of wrongs. **Love** forgives! Christ has called us to imitate His forgiveness. He hasn't put any conditions on His forgiveness that He offers us. He hasn't said, "I'll only forgive you if . . ." He has already extended forgiveness to us, but the choice to be reconciled to Him is up to us ([Luke 23:34](#)). We must accept that forgiveness He has already offered. If we reject His conviction through the Holy Spirit and subsequently the forgiveness He provided through the cross, then we have refused His salvation and have no life.

Christ expects us to follow this pattern of forgiveness ([Eph 4:32](#)). Like Jesus, we should extend forgiveness to all people regardless of what they may have done. We shouldn't wait for them to come and seek forgiveness from us before we offer it, but the choice to be reconciled wholly depends upon them. We can forgive, but they must be reconciled by turning from the wrong and accepting the forgiveness we have



extended. In other words, our forgiveness isn't dependent upon their response, but the process of reconciliation and being in right relationship with us is. We can't make them be reconciled with us, but we can control how we forgive and extend that offer of reconciliation to them. Likewise, we must practice the same if we're the offender and we must seek forgiveness.

In Matthew 6:15, Jesus highlights the importance of forgiveness: "But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Jesus doesn't qualify this by saying, "If they ask for forgiveness." Simply put, we are to forgive. We can't say that we're in right standing with and obedient to Christ if we haven't forgiven those who have wronged us, hurt us, or persecuted us. Having an unforgiving spirit not only fails to show **love**, but it can hinder all our relationships and, most importantly, it can keep us from effectively serving Christ. Perhaps, we need to take the first step in forgiving so that we can be in right standing with the Lord and able to serve Him effectively.

How have you had to overcome hurt or wrongdoing through forgiveness? How can harboring unforgiveness hurt our relationship with Christ and prevent us from serving effectively?

Question
4

1 Peter 4:9-11

SERVE THE LORD FAITHFULLY:

The last three verses focus on how we should serve the Lord faithfully. Perhaps

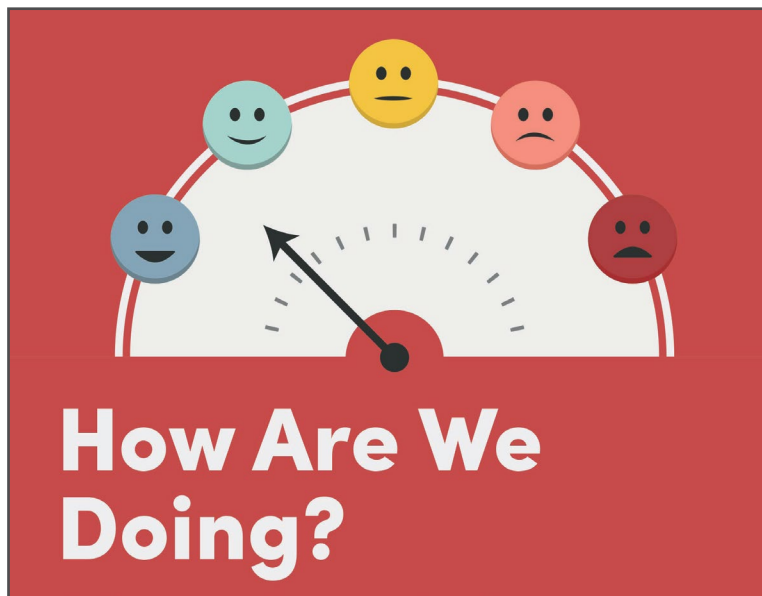
Instruct

characteristic of our own society, Peter begins with a prohibition against **grumbling** (v. 9). He exhorts **believers to be hospitable to one another without grumbling**. We serve the Lord by being gracious hosts who extend hospitality and compassion to others in the church. Hospitality in the first century centered around travelers because of the inability to find safe lodging and adequate food. Although we may have had bad experiences at times while traveling, we have plenty of selections from which to choose. However, believers, at that time, depended solely upon the kindness of others to meet their most basic needs away from home. Therefore, Peter reminds them to serve hospitably with joy rather than complaint.

In what ways has Christ called upon us individually to be hospitable to others?

Question
5

We live in a service-oriented society and have grown accustomed to being served so much that we critique and constantly complain about everything. Even if a car doesn't have a bumper sticker that reads "how's my driving," we let them know and give them a piece of our mind! As consumers, we complain about the quality of service. We



grumble about the length of lines, the time we must wait, the lack of product selection, the quality of the product, the pace of service, the lack of personal attention, the difficulty of self-checkout, the unfriendliness of the staff, and so forth. Every website for a product, service, or even a church has "customer" reviews and ratings! Rather than critiquing others, we must ask Christ to critique us and let us know how we are

doing so that we can make sure we reflect Him. What matters is not how others are serving, but how we are serving!

After a Sunday morning service, a couple from our church went to dine at a local Italian restaurant only to find it locked. Upon returning to their car to go elsewhere, a worker in the establishment motioned for them to come inside. He explained they had started opening on Sundays at 3:00 pm after the "church" crowd would dwindle. He expressed

his distaste for Christians, calling them the worst of all the customers. He lamented how they complained, were obnoxious, rude, and did not leave tips. We know from experience that we can't generalize and lump everyone into a single group as this man had. But something is to be said about how we must be cautious in how we portray ourselves and how we represent Christ! Certainly, we should evaluate how we as a church as a whole are doing, but we do a disservice when we don't ask individually: How am I doing? How am I contributing?

How would you rate your attitude toward service? How does this attitude reflect Christ?

Question
6

Next, Peter reminds us as believers to use the gifts we have been given. He points out that **each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God** (v. 10). To **minister**, consequently, means to use our gifts to serve **one another!** We must never adopt the consumer mentality in the church that we have come to be served; nor can we think that we can simply show up at worship or attend activities and everything should be done for us. Neither should we falsely believe that serving is someone else's job, so we can just attend worship on Sundays or Bible study on Wednesdays. If we honestly evaluate the church today, we may find that this view of consumerism has deeply penetrated the minds of many believers and it has affected the way they live their lives and their attitudes about service.

When we have a relationship with Christ, He bestows a spiritual **gift** upon us for the purpose of building community and maturing together as God's people (Eph 4:11-16). We alone will be held responsible for how we employ our spiritual gifts in service to the Lord through His church! God has equipped every member of the church with a variety of gifts to be used collectively to meet the diverse needs of the community and to take the gospel to the world as a whole (Rom 12:3-8; 1 Cor 12:4-31). If you see a need in the congregation or to reach the community with the gospel, don't gripe and complain about it; pray and seek the Lord concerning how He can use you to meet it. Talk to the pastoral staff about the need and then work together with the church as God leads.



Everyone can point out problems and many may even offer advice or solutions, but few take the initiative to volunteer. If God reveals a need in an area in which He has gifted us, He has done so with the expectation that He wants to use us to meet it!

How has God gifted you? How are you using your gift daily through the church to serve Him?

Question
7

Peter highlights an important point in verse 10 that we may often overlook: serving constitutes God's **grace**. We are **stewards of the manifold grace of God**. Paul puts it a slightly different way in Ephesians 3:7 where he describes his calling as an itinerate evangelist and missionary: "I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power." Therefore, not only do we dispense God's **grace** to others when we **minister**, but we are the recipients of His **grace** because He uses us to **minister**! Ministry can be difficult at times; it can require long hours and many sacrifices. Often, our work can receive little attention and garner no praise or thanksgiving. It can be physically laborious and emotionally draining. But in the end, ministry is a gift of God's **grace**! God doesn't have to use us in ministry, but He has graciously chosen to work through us if only we would surrender to Him! With this proper understanding of ministry, then we can become **good stewards of the manifold grace of God**. A steward is simply a caretaker or manager of what has been entrusted to that person. To be an effective manager, we must apply **grace** in the same way God does based upon His Word. We should never corrupt His **grace** by viewing it through the lenses of culture. Therefore, the point of Peter's statement in verse 10 is that others should see Christ in our service and they should be pointed to the hope that can only be found in Him.

In verse 11, he shows more specifically how we are God's representatives when we minister. He interjects that **if anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God**. In other words, when we teach, preach, or counsel others, it must reflect the principles found in Scripture; what we say must accurately reflect who God is and what He has communicated—not our own opinions or our own interpretations! Jesus Himself even demonstrates this principle for us: "For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak" (John 12:49-50). As God, Jesus emphasized the

importance of communicating the truth in an understandable way that conveys the message accurately and authentically!

Why is it dangerous to ask, "What does Scripture mean to you?" Why should we ask what does Scripture say?

Question
8

Peter continues with another caveat for ministry when he announces that **if anyone ministers, let him do it with the ability that God provides**. Other than complaining, people often engage in making excuses. They sometimes claim that they don't have the training, education, or **ability** to serve in a particular area. If God has called us to serve in a particular area, He has given us the **ability**! He has equipped us, so we have no excuse other than simply being resistant and rebellious. God **supplies** us with the **ability to minister** because it requires that we depend upon Him for strength and guidance; it's not something that we can do on our own! We need Him. It also reveals His power and glory as He works in and through us to accomplish His will. In this, He reveals Himself to the world at large because they can see tangible evidence of Him working in our lives!

What ability has God given you? How do you depend upon the Lord and seek guidance for Him in that ability?

Question
9

Finally, service rightly conducted leads to God being **glorified in all things**. What we do in service should never draw attention to ourselves; it should always become a platform to glorify the Lord and testify to people about His greatness. Some people only serve to receive recognition and notoriety; they serve because it makes them feel good, even giving them the sense that they have made some significant contribution. For us as believers, we know that we can't achieve anything on our own. But what we perhaps might be able to accomplish on our own has no lasting value or eternal significance. Only Christ working in us has the ability to achieve something great and eternal. Therefore, like John the Baptist, we must decrease so that He may increase ([John 3:30](#))! Let us allow Him to work in us to achieve something great! We must surrender ourselves completely, acknowledging the work He has and is doing in us so that He may **be glorified**! May we put aside our fears, our personal expectations, our opinions, outlooks, and our own desires so that we seek Him in all we do as He works to build His community through us as we serve Him faithfully.

In the introduction, we were reminded of some of those childhood toys, like Erector sets, that required careful attention to detail and exact assembly. Each piece had a specific purpose and, if assembled properly according to specifications, each would work together as a whole to produce something that functioned. However, children sometimes failed to construct a working unit because they misused pieces or misplaced them. God isn't like this with His people! He has assembled every person in His family—the church—in exactly the right place. As the Master Architect, God has fitted together every piece perfectly and ensured it will function in the way He designed. He invested each member with a gift to make a specific contribution in building the community and maturing together collectively. He has given every piece the ability to function and guarantees a lasting impact when we seek Him and follow His guidance.

Because every piece has a function, God expects everyone to serve. No one in the church should sit idly and view their contribution to the body as what he or she does from roughly 9:30 am to 12:00 pm on Sundays when “attending.” God does command regular fellowship for prayer, Bible study, and accountability. But He also commands us to serve daily with the right perspective. We must remember that we represent Him in everything we say and do when we claim to be His child. So, let us work together with Him to build a community in the holy way in which we live, in how we love and forgive, and how we use the gifts and abilities He has given us to serve others on His behalf.

Incorporate

What do you spend more time in prayer doing: asking God for your petitions or seeking how you can serve? What does this say about our focus?

How do you participate in growing FBCFW and helping the church as a whole to mature? Why must you first take responsibility for your own growth and maturity? How does a lack of growth even amongst a few members affect the whole church?

How do you glorify the Lord through your service? How does this help you not only to minister to people within the church, but also share the gospel with those in the secular community?

August 15, 2021



An Overcomer is Compassionate

Luke 10:25-37

Focal Verse:

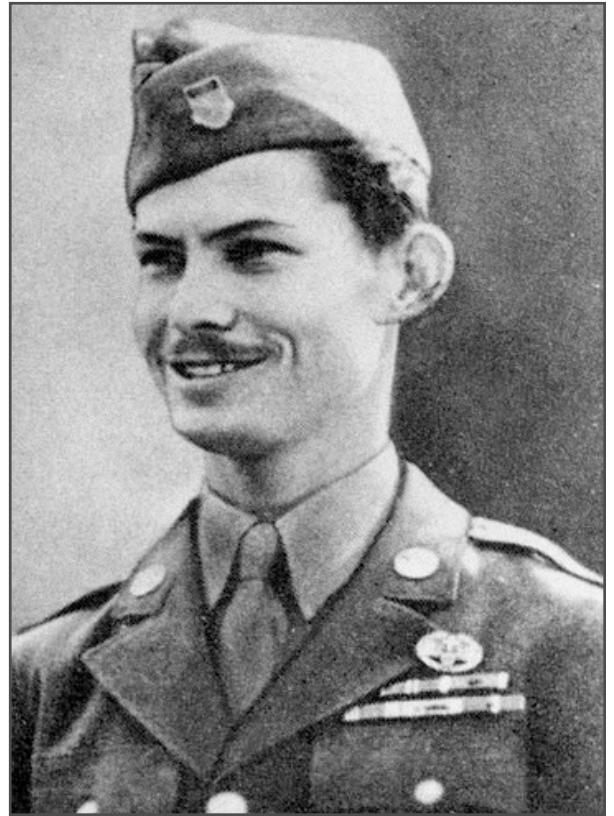
“But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion.”

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Luke 10:33

Introduce

In 1945 on the island of Okinawa, the United States and Japan engaged in one of the most deadly and brutal campaigns of the Pacific theater toward the close of World War 2. With such great carnage on both sides, the escarpment that ascended onto the battlefield became known as “Hacksaw Ridge.” With only one way to ascend atop the plateau, US soldiers climbed a series of ropes to where the Japanese waited hunkered down in caves and trenches ready to attack. Because the Japanese had the upper hand in controlling the high ground, US naval ships constantly pounded the island with their long-range weaponry to give troops on the ground time to establish a position which would afford them some cover and give them a chance to defend it against the enemy’s advance. Of all the brave men who fought valiantly and of the many who gave their lives in defense of our country, we owe the utmost gratitude. But the story of one soldier stands apart—army medic Private Desmond T. Doss who inspired the movie that bears the name Hacksaw Ridge (2016).



Doss, a conscientious objector, joined the Army voluntarily to serve his country with the sole purpose of becoming a medic to treat the wounded. Because of his religious convictions, however, he refused to carry a weapon or participate in any weapons training. His views eventually led to his physical abuse by the men of his platoon and nearly a court martial. Through the intervention of higher-ranking officers, he was ultimately allowed to continue pursuing his role as a medic without being forced to participate in any weapons training. In 1945, he then found himself on Okinawa in one of the bloodiest battles of the war.

Waves of soldiers had already tried to scale the cliff onto the battlefield to establish a base, but none had done so successfully yet. Now, Doss and his unit would have the chance. As per the plan, they waited for the Navy to shell the island and give signal to advance. As one of the first soldiers to ascend the cliff, Doss immediately found a position in which he could retrieve the wounded and treat their injuries, but soon after

Introduce

they had ascended their cover stopped. At that point, one of the soldiers bellowed, “We’ve lost our cover” as the unit retreated to safety—that is everyone but Doss who stayed in order to rescue those left behind because he viewed his service as a calling and recognized that he had a job to do.

Staying atop the cliff on the plateau, Doss incessantly scouted for wounded soldiers. Throughout the night, he treated their injuries and then lowered them over the cliff to safety and further medical attention. Despite being wounded four times himself, Doss never flinched in his duties. He continually prayed, “Lord, let me rescue just one more.” With his hands lashed raw by the coarseness of the ropes which he used to lower the wounded, he continued even as the enemy advanced toward his position. As he stumbled upon wounded Japanese soldiers, he also treated them and then lowered them over the cliffs as well; he didn’t callously leave them to die, thinking they’re getting what they deserve. He showed compassion and love for all.

Desmond T. Doss could have easily remained out of the war because of his conscientious objections. He could have easily retreated when his platoon lost cover from the Navy and every other soldier fell back. He could have harbored resentment against his fellow soldiers who mocked and beat him, questioning his patriotism. He could have felt an even greater animosity toward the Japanese who had attacked the US without provocation. Yet, he didn’t; he displayed sacrificial love and compassion. Jesus calls us to have this same kind of sacrificial love which motivates us to extend compassion to all our neighbors—that is any human being whom God has created. Therefore, let us be overcomers who exhibit such compassion as Christ has taught.

Key
Question

To what person or people is it hardest for you to show compassion?

THE METHOD DESCRIBED:

A certain lawyer, that is a scribe or expert in biblical law, **stood up** to test Jesus by posing the question: “**Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life**” (v. 25)? This “expert” had ulterior motives in asking this question. He didn’t truly want to know the answer. Rather, he wanted to show off how much he knew and how little the one to whom he addressed it actually knew. In other words, he hoped to entrap Jesus and make Him look bad. But as we soon shall see, the **Teacher** turns the tables on this “expert” and makes him look utterly self-absorbed and foolish. Jesus doesn’t reply with a declarative statement, but He responds with two other questions: “**What is written in the law? What is your reading of it**” (v. 26)? He uses these two questions to make a definitive point. First, Jesus elevates Scripture as the sole, and final, authority on any matter. To answer any question correctly, we must first discern what God has said in His Word and not the mere opinion of what some “expert” says about it!

Second, Jesus assesses the lawyer’s own knowledge of Scripture while at the same time offering him a clue as how to respond. By the nature of the question, **what is your reading of it**, it may seem as if Jesus wants the man’s opinion on how he interprets it. But the word translated **reading** can specifically mean to read aloud which would have added significance in the first century since Scripture was read in an assembly when all or many in Israel had gathered to “hear” it. Thus, Jesus is asking what have you heard read from Scripture—

not what does it mean to you! Hence, the way it was phrased should have reminded the **lawyer** of [Deuteronomy 6:4-5](#) and God’s clarion call to those assembled under Moses to “hear.” Scripture records, “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.” And this did jog the lawyer’s memory, for he recites



Instruct

[Deuteronomy 6:5](#) in [verse 27!](#)

Jesus' emphasis on and call to "hear" Scripture and by extension to "hear" God speak takes on special relevance for us today. We live in a society in which everyone wants to be heard whether individually, online, or in a group. Although they want to justify and promote their perspective under their guise of tolerating and accepting all views, they truly cannot say that everyone's opinion, view, value, or belief carries equal weight. In the secular world, what matters most is what "I" hold to be relevant: *my truth, my facts, my choice, or my belief*. Those who clamor for acceptance and equality the loudest have especially bought into this deception; they attempt to force their outlook on others who disagree with them! Even more dangerous, however, is people who have little knowledge in one area who then perceive themselves to be experts in everything! This becomes most evident with many who consider themselves highly educated—such as the **lawyer** Jesus confronted. They may have a wealth of knowledge and can answer a multitude of trivia questions, but in the end their opinions and knowledge do not matter if what they believe differs from the reality God has inherently created in the world and specified in His written Word!

How do you prevent yourself from imitating the world's pattern of needing to be "heard" and elevating your own opinions? If you haven't, what needs to change?

Question
1

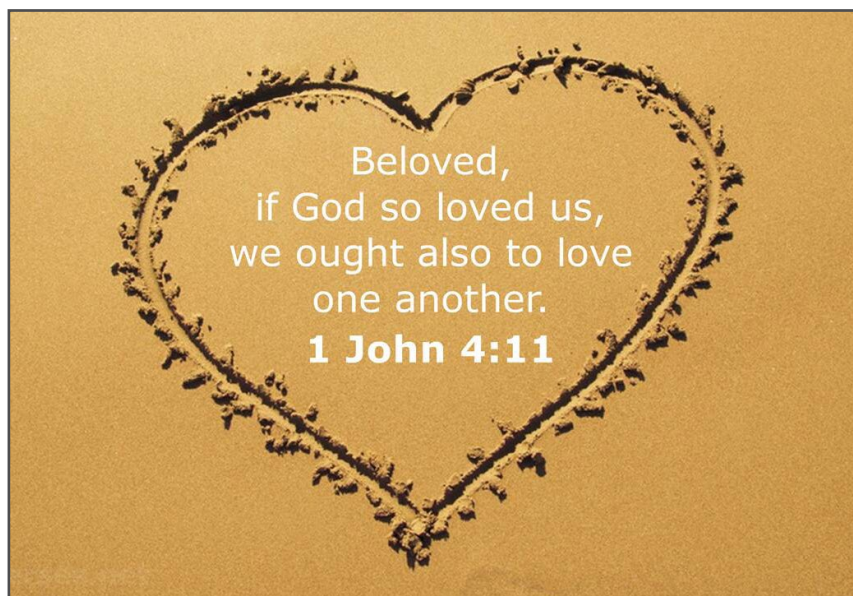
As believers, we cannot afford to fall into the same trap as the world, wanting to be heard and thinking we're an "expert." We need to turn to the Lord and depend upon Him. We must hear God speak and others must hear and see how He has spoken to us in the way we conduct ourselves. When we have a question, are faced with a decision, or need guidance, we must always ask, "What does Scripture say? Have I read and heard what God has said to me?" This cannot be our last resort, thinking we have it all together and can navigate life on our own. We must read and hear Scripture first! Then, we must assess our understanding to make sure it matches what God has said. If our understanding matches what Scripture communicates, then we must live it and apply it. If it doesn't, then we must change our beliefs and practices accordingly.

What is the process that you use when making a decision or seeking guidance?

Question
2

As we saw earlier, the **lawyer** answered Jesus' questions by quoting from [Deuteronomy 6:5](#) which directs us to **love** God above all else. At the same time, this man **rightly** recognized that we express our **love** for God in a tangible way by loving other people. For this reason, he adds [Leviticus 19:18](#) to the command from Deuteronomy 6:5 which also bids us to "love **your neighbor as yourself**" (v. 27). **Love** should be evident in every facet of our lives when we have a relationship with Christ. It should motivate our actions and characterize our speech as defined by God in Scripture. If it doesn't, the Apostle John has succinctly stated, "He who does not love does not know God, for God is love" ([1 John 4:8](#)). Through Scripture, the lawyer **rightly** recognized the importance of **love** to God. And Jesus confirms this correct response, but adds, "**Do this and you will live**" (v. 28). But, as we will see, his knowledge didn't translate into his actions.

From the rest of Scripture, we know that we cannot **do** anything to earn salvation. And Jesus is not telling this **lawyer** that he can. (We will discuss this more thoroughly in the next section.) Rather Jesus is saying that the one who has a relationship with the Father does these things. He loves! He first loves God which then compels him to **love** others. **Love**, therefore, becomes the fruit or evidence that one belongs to the Lord. To **love** in the way God intended, we must maintain the right priority and focus. Apart from loving God above anything else in our lives, we will become selfish in our outlook; only He can keep us rooted and grounded in the right way to **love** when we seek Him first ([Eph 3:17](#))! When we don't **love** God above all, our perspective becomes highly subjective and severely skewed as the **lawyer** would soon discover. Only Christ can help us recognize our deficiencies when we seek a true evaluation of our lives; only He can enable us to **love** in the way we were designed.



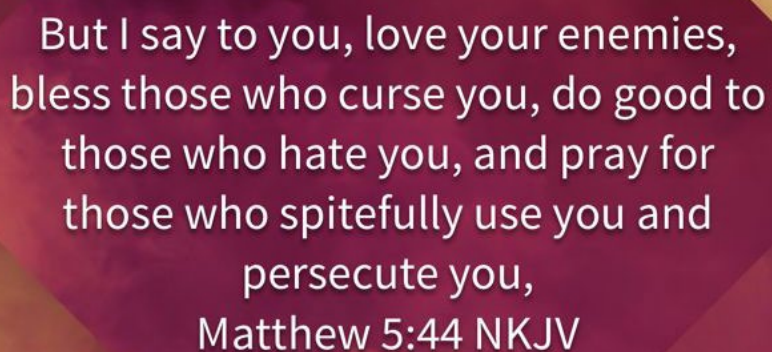
How would you evaluate the tangible evidence of love for God and others in your life?

Question
3

THE MISUNDERSTANDING DECLARED:

Although Jesus had applauded the man for answering correctly, the **lawyer** soon realized he could never **do** these things and **live**. He knew that he couldn't **love** in the way that Scripture demanded! So, he sought to **justify himself** by asking Jesus another loaded question, "**And who is my neighbor**" (v. 29). The man's response here in verse 29 exposes the inherent problem with his first question: "**What shall I do?**" If we could perfectly fulfill the law on our own, we could earn salvation based on the merit of our own righteousness ([Rom 4:2-4](#)). But we can't! No one can keep the law perfectly and this is why we need Jesus to save us through His righteousness. He has done for us what we could not do for ourselves. When we compare ourselves to Christ, we will see our inadequacy and insufficiency which reminds us that we must depend upon Him for our salvation. When we see **love** from His vantage point, we will understand exactly how self-centered and self-absorbed our **love** truly is apart from Him.

Even though the text doesn't explicitly say it, the man comes to the realization of the inadequacy of his own **love** because he seeks to defend himself. Perhaps, someone even came to mind whom he found it extremely difficult to **love**. Nonetheless, Scripture doesn't say that he hated or failed to **love** anyone in particular. On the other hand, it does imply that he had insufficient **love** because he attempts to **justify himself**. Rather than looking for opportunities to show **love** to all, the man was looking for an excuse or a way out of loving everyone. Such a perspective, as we saw



But I say to you, love your enemies,
bless those who curse you, do good to
those who hate you, and pray for
those who spitefully use you and
persecute you,
Matthew 5:44 NKJV

in the previous section, is not from God! Scripture simply commands us to **love** everyone; it does not promote loving in the least way in which we can eek by.

One of the chief problems with works-based thinking is that people do the minimum when the Bible exhorts us to the maximum! According to such works-based thinking, we **love** those who

reciprocate or those whom we find it easy and tolerable to do so. But this kind of thinking stops short of promoting **love** for those who have hurt, wronged, offended, slandered, persecuted, betrayed, misused, or lied to us. It says that we don't have to **love** our enemies as long as we don't hate them enough to harm them. Scripture, however, reveals that when the **love** of God abides in us we will supernaturally find the ability to **love** our enemies! We may not find it easy, but the Holy Spirit dwelling within us compels us to exert maximum effort which shows **love** even to them.

Who do you find it most difficult to love? How has God supernaturally helped you to show love to them?

Question
4

Luke 10:30-32

THE MINISTRY DECLINED:

Jesus addresses the lawyer's question with perhaps His most widely known parable. Although the secular world may not know the details of the story or even that it originated with Jesus, they somewhat know the point behind it when someone refers to a "Good Samaritan." Generally, the world uses this designation to describe someone who comes to the aid of another person—particularly a random stranger or passerby who springs to action the moment a crisis occurs while others may simply watch. But at the heart of the story, Jesus wishes to communicate so much more than a random act of kindness or strangers banding together to help in a time of crisis. He wants us to understand the depths of **love** and compassion that we should exercise as God's children for all His creation.

Knowing both the heart and mind of this lawyer, Jesus may have used this parable to expose this man's lack of **love** for a particular group—the Samaritans—thereby further highlighting his inability to **love** as Scripture demands! Generally, the Jews and Samaritans held equal animosity toward one another based on their heritage and religious beliefs. Technically, the Samaritans were of Jewish descent. They descended from those who remained in the Promised Land during the exiles of the Old Testament where many Jews were taken captive and brought to Assyria or Babylon (i.e., like Daniel and his friends).

The Jews who returned from exile believed those who had remained were impure because many intermarried with people from other nations. They also saw their worship of the Lord as corrupt because they followed different traditions and held

Instruct

worship in a different location ([John 4:20](#)). Likewise, the Samaritans saw the Jews who



returned from exile as the ones who were impure and corrupt for these very same reasons! These differences in heritage and religious practices drove an insoluble wedge between these people groups which led to utter disdain and hatred between them. As a Jew, this lawyer would have most likely held these same views which is why Jesus likely chose this

parable to highlight what true love and compassion entail.

How can holding biases against or having misconceptions about particular groups of people hinder us from showing love by sharing the gospel?

Question
5

The parable begins when an unnamed **man** sets out to travel **from Jerusalem to Jericho** on a dangerous stretch of road. Even though Scripture doesn't expressly identify his nationality, we can assume he is Jewish since he departs **from Jerusalem** and this would fit the radical context of compassion highlighted in the parable where his nemesis comes to render aid. While on his journey, **thieves** attacked the **man**, stripping **him of his clothing**, wounding **him**, and **leaving him half dead** (v. 30). As fate would have it, two religious men would travel on that very same road; surely, as fine, upstanding religious people they would stop and offer assistance!

The first, **a priest** who had likely just finished his time of service in the temple in Jerusalem, noticed the helpless, **half-dead man**, but he **passed by on the other side** (v. 31). Next, **a Levite** happens upon the gruesome scene. Both priests and Levites were of the lineage of Aaron, but they had different roles in Israel's worship. As a general rule, the priests would perform the sacrifices and rituals whereas the Levites would assist the **priest** in these endeavors. Although it does not constitute an exact parallel, the **priest** would equate more with the modern idea of a pastor while the **Levite** would be an associate pastor within the church. Nevertheless, the same result

occurs with the **Levite** as with the **priest**. The **Levite came, looked, and passed by on the other side** of the road (v. 32). Neither man displayed any compassion nor had any compunction to help!

Over the years, I've heard many sermons and read many books that attempt to delve into the reasons why these two men failed to help. The fact that Jesus doesn't include any reason or offer any speculation as to why they didn't help is very telling.

They had no good reason for not stopping and rendering aid! They just did not want to do it for whatever reason. To attempt to speculate on their motivation, whether religious, political, or



otherwise, misses Jesus' whole point in the parable! The ones who should have known the love of God and displayed it to this man didn't! They chose to ignore him and pass him by.

Upon whom has God called you to show compassion? Upon whom do you find it difficult to have compassion?

Question
6

Imagine leaving after worship to go to a restaurant to eat lunch when suddenly a marauding band of **thieves** springs upon you. After robbing you and stealing most of your clothes, they thrash you and leave you **half-dead** on the sidewalk. As a popular after-church-lunch-spot, many people would pass by so you would stand a good chance of receiving help. First, a pastor walks by. He surveys the scene and then takes a wide berth around only to continue into the restaurant to have lunch. Then, an associate pastor ventures by. "Help has arrived at last," you joyously think. But he also passes by and enters the restaurant. Those whom the world would say should have loved you the most didn't. They failed. They showed no compassion or mercy. They didn't display the love of God that they professed they had. Instead, they acted selfishly. This is the radical message behind the parable that Jesus gives as an illustration to help us examine our lives and determine if we truly have the love of God abiding within us. Do we truly pass this test on love that Jesus gives?

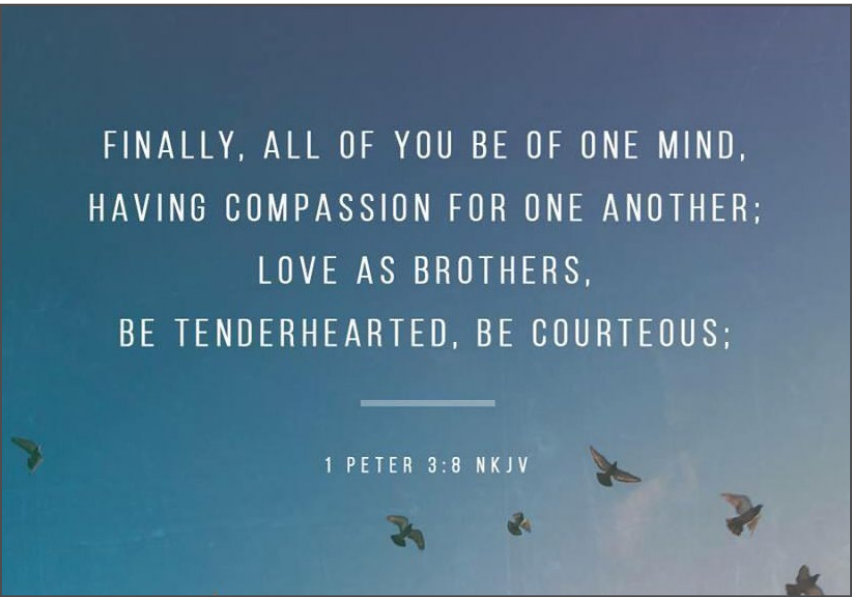
Luke 10:33-37

THE MERCY DISPLAYED:

Finally, a **certain Samaritan** came upon the scene (v. 33). However, he didn't respond as the two previous men had. **When he saw** what had happened to the man, **he had compassion**. He dropped everything and did whatever was in his power to help him. It no longer mattered where the Samaritan was going, who he had to meet, or what business he had to conduct. What mattered was showing **compassion** to this severely injured man! So, he began to clean and bandage **his wounds, pouring oil and wine** on them to sterilize them (v. 34). Then, he placed **him on his own animal** to take him to a place where he could recover. The Samaritan **took care of him** and subsequently arranged for continued care at an **inn**. He paid the **innkeeper** two days' wages (i.e., two **denarii**) and left him with the instruction to **take care of** the man and the promise that he would **repay** whatever it cost (v. 35).

Jesus ends the parable with a question: "**Which of these three do you think was**

neighbor to him who fell among thieves" (v. 36)? In so doing, Jesus underscores the type of love and compassion that we must exhibit toward all God's creation—all our fellow human beings—including those with whom we may not see eye to eye and with whom we may be at odds like the Jews and Samaritans. Once again, the **lawyer** answers Jesus correctly



FINALLY, ALL OF YOU BE OF ONE MIND,
HAVING COMPASSION FOR ONE ANOTHER;
LOVE AS BROTHERS,
BE TENDERHEARTED, BE COURTEOUS;

1 PETER 3:8 NKJV

by acknowledging, "**He who showed mercy**" (v. 37). Jesus concludes his teaching by encouraging the man to **go and do likewise**.

To illustrate the radical nature of what Jesus told this man, let's return to the scenario where you were beaten outside of the restaurant. The people whom you would have expected to help you the most and to show **compassion** didn't: your family, your friends, your church family, and even fellow Texans. Not one of them showed any **compassion** until a person of Middle Eastern descent stops. He doesn't ignore

your plight. He cleans your **wounds**, bandages them, and takes you in his personal car to the hospital where he makes arrangements for your care and recovery. He even tells the hospital staff he would pay what the insurance doesn't and gives them a down payment for the care in good faith. Like Jesus, we must ask, "**Who showed compassion?**" It may startle us to find out that those who should show compassion don't.

If we have a relationship with Christ, He has called us to display such **compassion**—even to those with whom we may have great differences. Our **compassion** doesn't earn us salvation or even a better standing, but it does show clearly that we belong to God and are in right standing with Him! We shouldn't just seek the minimal requirements as believers to **love** one another which can also be difficult to do at times; we should surrender all and allow Christ to work through us so we can show **compassion** that imitates His to the whole world around us. We should show **compassion** to all people regardless of their backgrounds. But our goal in showing this **compassion** to all people should always be pointing them to Christ. **Compassion** isn't simply listening to what other people believe, identifying with them, or taking pity upon them. It should motivate us to the specific action of sharing the gospel with them. It's not **compassion** if we don't share the gospel and point them to the one who can heal their wounds and save their lives!

When you show compassion to others, how do you ensure you point to Christ and share the gospel? If you don't, how and why should you start doing that?

Question
7

In the introduction, we met Desmond T. Doss, who as an Army medic, played a pivotal role in rescuing and treating the wounded on Okinawa. Some of those whom he rescued on the battlefield were the very ones who had ridiculed and beaten him during basic training. Likewise, he also rescued some of the Japanese who were relentlessly shooting at him and his colleagues. It could have been very easy for Doss to be highly selective in the ones to whom he gave aid. He could have sought to show compassion only to his friends and those who had first shown compassion to him. He could have envisioned this as payback and saw them as getting what they deserved. But he didn't. He extended mercy and compassion to all!

Christ has called us to extend the same mercy and compassion that He has shown us. Jesus loved the whole world that He died for us all. He displayed such compassion on the cross that He gave His life for us while we were yet sinners and His enemies! In our pursuit of showing such compassion to others, we must always make sure it's based on Scripture and it points people to Christ. Being "compassionate" without sharing the gospel and introducing people into a loving relationship with Christ isn't really compassionate at all. Compassion requires us to point them to the one who can cleanse them, heal their wounds, and save them. We are simply the vehicle or agents that God uses to proclaim His message by being His representatives. He alone does the transformation and saving. Therefore, let us be overcomers who are compassionate representatives of Christ!

Incorporate

What is the world's view of compassion? How does that differ from God's view?

Although you may have heard this parable many times, what has God shown or emphasized to you this time about compassion? What are some things that you're doing well? What are some areas in which you may need improvement or even to change?

What are some ways that you can show people compassion and mercy but then transition to the gospel to show them the only true source of mercy?

August 22, 2021



An Overcomer Offers Comfort 2 Corinthians 1:3-14

Focal Verse:

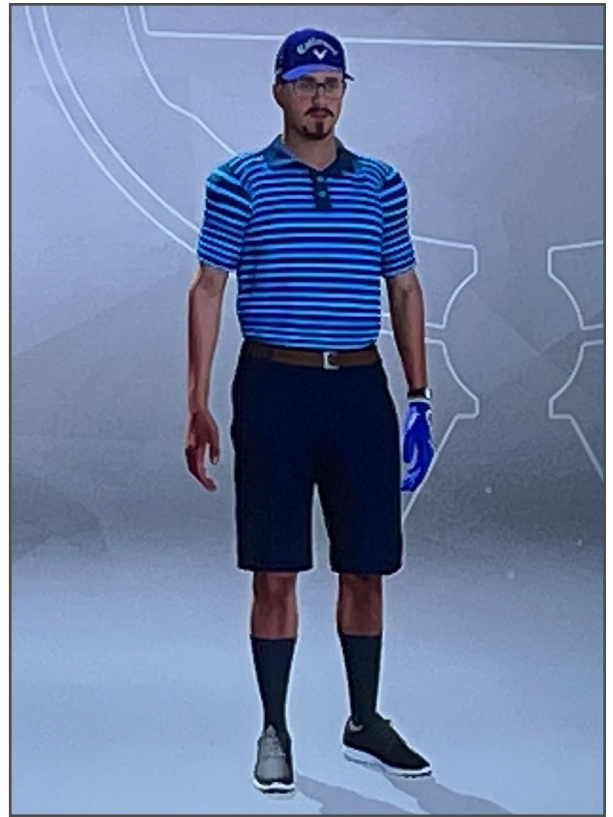
“Who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.”

2 Corinthians 1:4

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Introduce

Recently, I purchased PGA Tour 2K21 for my Playstation 4 and began playing the career mode, creating a golfer whom I aptly named Ace Slicer. With a steep learning curve in knowing how to drive the golf ball, putt with accuracy, and play in various weather conditions—especially in the wind—I set the level on “beginner.” Even on such a basic level, it was difficult to predict how the wind would affect the ball; in addition, it was almost impossible to decipher the greens to determine how the ball would break and know how hard it must be hit to sink the putt regardless of distance. In many ways, the game truly imitates the difficulties in the sport of golf! Making mistakes, whether by failing to read the greens properly or having the ball blown awry by gale-force winds, infuriated me.



The problem was indeed compounded by the commentary of the announcers who offered no solace with their words, but instead sought to provoke rather than comfort. Once a wind gust of sixteen miles per hour blew my ball so far off course that one announcer lamented, “I wish there were a house to knock that one back.” If the creators of the game had designed a way to throw the club or slam it on the ground, I would have. Another time, when I came up short on an extremely long putt over sixty feet, the announcer needled me by saying, “I hate to use the word choke, Luke, but that’s exactly what he did.” Still, on other misaligned shots the announcer bellowed, “How do you leave that one short? That’s criminal.” Frustrated to the point of rage by their choice of words, I often found myself wishing they would simply stop talking or even thinking about turning the commentary off completely. Nothing they said provided comfort; it actually exacerbated the situation by stirring the emotions of frustration, bitterness, and anger—which I failed to control.

Sometimes when we face challenges and difficulties in life we become depressed and despondent because we think we’re alone. No one knows how we feel. No one has faced the depths of suffering we have. Consequently, nothing anyone says or does can offer comfort. Nothing helps. Nothing alleviates our struggles or quells our pain. Life

Introduce

itself seems out to get us at every turn. At other times, however, we attempt to find comfort in others with whom we perceive we can identify because they have endured the same problems. They know what we've experienced and how we feel. In the end, such empathy sought among other humans is short-lived and ineffective; it fails to offer true and lasting comfort. True comfort only comes from the Lord who saves and sustains us!

Still, God does use us as His instruments to comfort others by allowing us to relate to one another through common experiences. We point others to Him by showing how He has helped us to overcome difficulties in our own lives. We can only offer comfort and hope, however, when we rely upon the Lord for wisdom and keep our focus on Him! God will use us in a variety of ways to bestow comfort upon others if we will submit to Him, listen, and act as He leads. Sometimes we need to say nothing, but just be there for the person. At other times, comfort comes through encouragement and sharing our testimony about how God has delivered us. Still in other situations, comfort must come by speaking the truth in love to help others reorient their thinking and refocus on Christ when they have become sidetracked in their pursuits. Therefore, let us turn to the Lord for comfort so that He can use us as His instruments to dispense comfort to others as He directs.

Key
Question

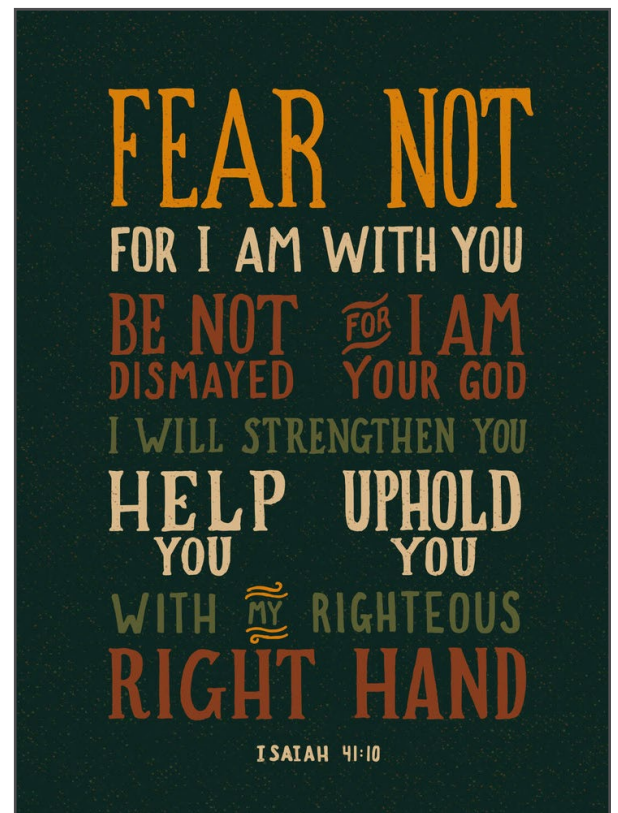
How has God comforted you during difficult times in your life?

2 Corinthians 1:3-4

THE COMFORT FOUND IN CHRIST:

Rather than beginning this letter with a customary thanksgiving in which he expresses gratitude for God working through the church, Paul commences with a declaration of praise for the **comfort** and **mercy** which God offers him and by extension all believers. In addition to the external hardships Paul faced in Asia and continues to face in his ministry, he has also encountered trouble from those inside the church in Corinth. A group has sought to challenge his authority and calling as apostle by God, thereby threatening the integrity of the gospel message he lovingly declared unto them. He experienced tremendous opposition and obstacles at every turn. At Paul's conversion and call on the road to Damascus, Jesus even revealed to Ananias, "For I will show him [Paul] how much he must suffer for My name's sake" ([Acts 9:16](#)). Any hardship or problem that Paul had endured before following Christ would not abate, but be intensified many times over.

Speaking from purely a human perspective, Paul had nowhere to turn for **comfort** and solace here on earth. His own kinsmen, the Jews, would disown and turn against him. Just as he had once persecuted the followers of Christ, he himself had now become the target of fierce Jewish persecution (Thessalonica). He also encountered numerous problems within the secular communities to which he sought to bring hope of the gospel. He was often imprisoned (Philippi) or hauled before the courts to face charges of insurrection and rioting (Corinth and Ephesus). One would think that he would find at least some comfort from within the believing community, but even there he had to endure many problems. Groups challenged the doctrine of the gospel (Galatians and 1 Timothy), others abused their freedom in Christ to live sinfully (1 Corinthians), and some preached out of envy and spite ([Phil 1:15](#)). Aside from these problems in ministry, he also suffered physical



ailments, particularly failing eyesight ([Gal 6:11](#)) and whatever the thorn in the flesh may have been which God chose not to remove ([2 Cor 12:7-10](#)).

In human terms, Paul was isolated without hope, with no one upon whom he could depend, and nothing that could bring him lasting **comfort**. But thankfully Paul didn't view his situation in these terms! He knew exactly where to turn, upon whom he could depend, and in whom he could find **comfort**. Despite his dire circumstances, Paul breaks into spontaneous praise exclaiming, "**Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort**" (v. 3). He knew the source of his **comfort**. It begins with God and no one or nothing else! Yet, people often search everywhere else for **comfort** first and some never turn to God which only serves to drive them deeper into depression and despair. When we fail to seek **comfort** from God first, we will feel isolated and disheartened because we truly have no one with whom we can connect. No one knows our situation intimately; no one else knows exactly what we are facing and how we feel even if they have experienced similar hardships. Only God does!

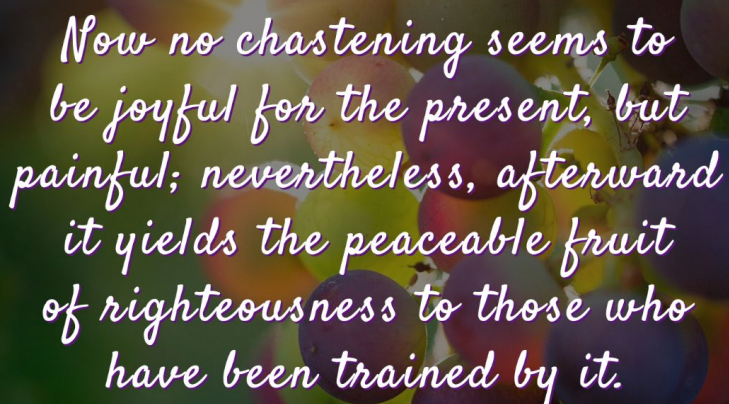
Hence, Paul reminds us that it is **God who comforts us in all our tribulation** (v. 4). The word translated **tribulation** refers to an intense type of distress—not minor inconveniences in life, but severe distress and affliction. These times of tribulation reflect major periods of upheaval in our lives from the death of a spouse or loved one, the loss of a job or prolonged financial stress, chronic health crises, conflict with family, divorce, wayward children, national tragedy, natural disaster, persecution for faith in Christ, and so much more. As our Creator who made Himself flesh to conquer sin and death on our behalf, God knows how we feel because He personally endured everything that we have faced or will ever face in life. He alone can identify with us and, therefore, only He can offer true **comfort** (see v. 7). [Hebrews 4:15](#) best summarizes the empathy shown by Christ: "For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weakness, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin."

How does knowing we have a Savior who has experienced everything that we have give you comfort?

Question
1

We must offer two caveats here about the **comfort** God provides during times of distress before advancing our discussion. First, we must examine our lives to determine

the nature of the distress or trouble. Sometimes what we regard as “trouble” is actually the chastisement and correction of the Lord. To be clear, Paul is not referring to distress brought about by God’s correction in this context. But, as humans, we tend to generalize without evaluating the specifics of the situation and we must remind ourselves that we at times bring distress upon ourselves by our own actions. If “trouble” has come to us as a result of God’s correction, He will always tell us why so that we can repent and be restored to right fellowship. In this case, God will never leave us wondering or guessing. How would we be able to correct an action if He did not clearly specify what we need to change? After we determine the nature of the distress and have ascertained correction is not the cause of the situation, we should not continue asking, “Why is this happening to me?” God often does not reveal the specifics of “why” things happen the way they do. Although from the book of Job we know as the audience his distress offered proof of his faithfulness, God never directly revealed to Job why these things happened to him and Job never really asked this question. He only besought God to come to his defense against the accusations of his so-called friends. Even in 2 Corinthians, Paul doesn’t ask “why.” To some extent, we experience distress simply because we live in a fallen world and not a result of anything we have done. God never promises to tell us “why” things happen, but He does promise to **comfort** us. Therefore, continually asking “why” puts the spotlight on the circumstances and the results rather than on God who can deliver. The question “why” then induces self-pity and self-loathing rather than dependence upon the Lord, thereby intensifying the problem. Consequently, we must learn to accept whatever event may have occurred and look to God for the **comfort** only He can provide.



Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

Hebrews 12:11

How has God comforted you even though He may have not told you “why” something happened the way it did?

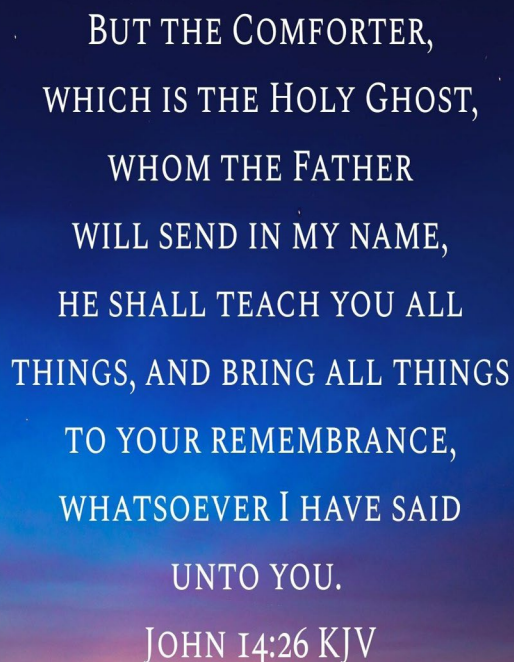
Question
2

Having recognized that **comfort** and mercy come from the Lord alone, only then can

Instruct

He use us to **comfort** others. We are merely the agents through whom God at times chooses to dispense His **comfort**. Having received **comfort** from God ourselves, **we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble** (the same word earlier translated **tribulation**), **with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God** (v. 4). **Comfort** may come in a variety of ways: through our presence, through words, or through tangible means of assistance or help. But we must always be mindful that true **comfort** does not depend upon us; it comes from God. We are only a vehicle through whom **comfort** flows.

Therefore, we should not regard ourselves as “counselors” seeking to analyze and



BUT THE COMFORTER,
WHICH IS THE HOLY GHOST,
WHOM THE FATHER
WILL SEND IN MY NAME,
HE SHALL TEACH YOU ALL
THINGS, AND BRING ALL THINGS
TO YOUR REMEMBRANCE,
WHATSOEVER I HAVE SAID
UNTO YOU.
JOHN 14:26 KJV

resolve a problem. We are “counselors” only in the sense that we point people to the security of God’s promises found in the assurances of Scripture. When offering words of **comfort**, we should always start with Scripture! As we will learn in a bit, we can share our personal experiences, particularly about how God has helped us to overcome. But we should always start with the very words from God Himself since He is the source of **all comfort**! In fact, God will give us the very words to say in those situations. If we have studied and know God’s Word, He will bring the perfect Scripture to mind that will offer more **comfort** than any words of wisdom ever could!

Because God’s Word repeatedly demonstrates His faithfulness and care for us, it gives hope to those in distress when they are reminded that they can trust and depend upon Him for everything.

How have other believers used Scripture to offer you comfort in times of great distress?

Question
3

After pointing others to the hope in Scripture, then we can share with them from our personal experience about how God has helped us in a great time of distress in our lives. We can only do this if we ourselves have experienced the transformative **comfort** God offers. Even though every experience in life is unique with a different

set of circumstances and challenges, many of us still face similar kinds of problems. Personally, I may have not experienced the death of a spouse, for example, but many of you have. In that case, you can offer **comfort** and hope to others which God has personally shown you. We must still exercise care with our words and not generalize or lump every case together. Yet, those who have experienced distress in a particular area in life can testify to how God has strengthened, encouraged, and delivered them through that situation.

The key to offering **comfort** through personal experience is to point to what God has done and continues to do. We cannot become sidetracked in this endeavor to highlight God's work. Simply revealing what you did, wise advice that you received, or how you found **comfort** in "something" will never provide **comfort** that lasts. God's work must be evident in our lives to provide that lasting **comfort** by demonstrating only what He could do for us. Only when we point to God can people find hope in the midst of their circumstances because they can also see God at work in the midst of ours and recognize His faithfulness to His Word.

How has God used others to comfort you through their experiences?

Question
4

2 Corinthians 1:5-7

THE CONSOLATION IN THE COMMUNITY:

In verses 5 through 7, Paul further explains what he has said in the previous two verses by citing Christ as a specific example of the hope we can have in the midst of suffering. In so doing, he emphasizes that the **consolation** of the community rests wholly upon Christ who has Himself overcome the adversity of the cross and the stigma of death. In Paul's argument, verse 5 has a two-fold purpose. First, it describes the source of distress that he, and other believers, will face. We will experience opposition to the gospel! As ones who proclaim the gospel, we must endure suffering and persecution at times—



just as Paul experienced throughout his ministry. For this reason, he can say that **the sufferings of Christ abound in us**. In other words, we as believers suffer on behalf of Christ. Second, this verse also refers to the **sufferings** and opposition that Christ Himself endured while on earth to the point of death on the cross! We can find hope, endurance, and perseverance through these very **sufferings of Christ** that occur when we proclaim the gospel precisely because He Himself defeated death and paid the way for us to have life!

Consequently, **our consolation also abounds in Christ**. Coupled with verse 6, this **consolation** comes through the gospel—that is the death and resurrection of Jesus. Christ gives us hope because He guarantees us life when we surrender to Him. Thus, the proclamation of the gospel, even though accompanied by persecution, is the way that leads to life in Christ. With this understanding, Paul can write, “**Now if we are afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation . . . or if we are comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation**” (v. 6). To paraphrase Paul in more modern English, he is saying, “Even though we had to endure much suffering, we proclaimed the gospel to you so that you might be saved through it.”

Apart from the cross, we have no hope and apart from the resurrection we can receive no **consolation** because we have no life. Therefore, we must look to the gospel event (i.e., Jesus’ death and resurrection) to see how we can overcome. When we look to the cross and realize what Jesus did, it will give us the strength to endure any challenges that may arise in life. Hence, Paul can proclaim that Jesus’ suffering **is effective for enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer**. We need to look to Someone greater to overcome—Someone who has gone before us and paved the way for victory. Too often, we lose sight of the cross and forget the gospel because we’re focused on our problems. When we become focused on our problems, we generally look for a solution when we should actually be looking to the Savior. He may choose to alleviate the problem at times, but at other points the problems and distress may remain. Whether the distress ceases or remains, He will always provide the strength we need if only we would seek Him. Therefore, let us look to His example on the cross and how He overcame suffering so that we could have life in Him!

How does the cross give you hope?

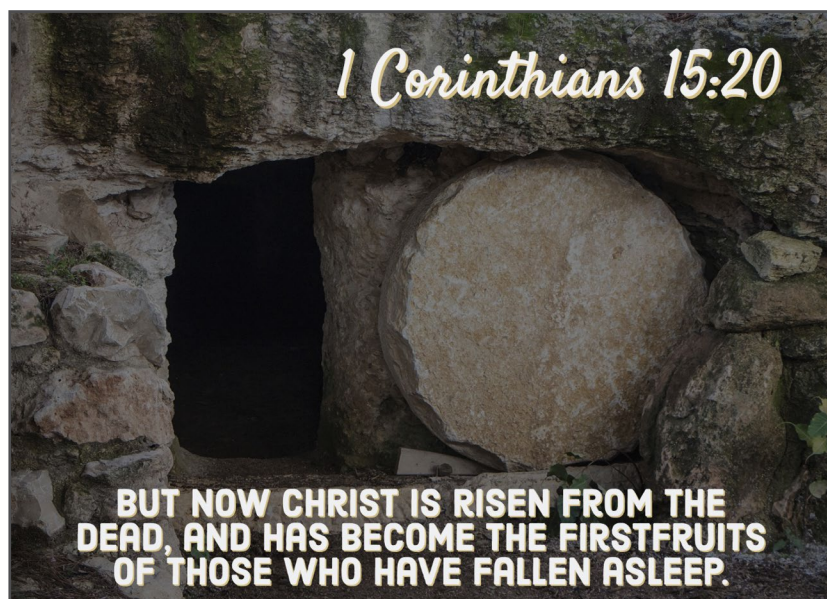
Question
5

As a result, Paul can assert that **our hope for you is steadfast because we know that you are partakers of the sufferings, so also you will partake of the consolation** (v. 7). Earlier, we learned that Jesus can “sympathize” or identify with us because He has endured everything that we will ever face in life. However, it’s not just Christ identifying or even empathizing with us that brings **hope** and **comfort**. To tell someone “I feel your pain” does nothing to alleviate the problem and often only represents a token gesture. Christ doesn’t just feel our pain or know what we’re going through. He did something about it. Paul and the Corinthians can have **steadfast hope** because Christ firmly stands on His promises! Their **hope**, and ours, is pinned upon what Christ has done—not merely a feeling He gives.

For this reason, Paul acknowledges that they **are partakers of the sufferings**. The word **partakers** is from the Greek word *koinonia* which we frequently translate

“fellowship.” We can have “fellowship” and be made in right standing with the Father through the Messiah’s sacrifice. To “partake” then means to accept His sacrifice by repenting of our sins and having a relationship with Him! **Consolation** then comes in the form of the eternal life He guarantees through the resurrection. To receive **hope**, we must belong to His family; as members of His family, we can rest assured He’ll deliver upon His promises!

We are also **partakers** on another level as well. We’ve not only receive the gift of life through His suffering, but we will also experience suffering because of our faith in Him. Only when we have a relationship with Christ can we persevere in the midst of hardships, hurt, and heartache in this life and find **comfort**. We may not know “why” things happen or even be privy to the outcome of events here on earth. But we know the final outcome is the life that awaits us in heaven. No one or nothing can ever rob us of the security and joy of that blessing! Our confidence remains in the promise of Christ.



Looking back on your life, how has Christ given you hope through the promises He’s fulfilled?

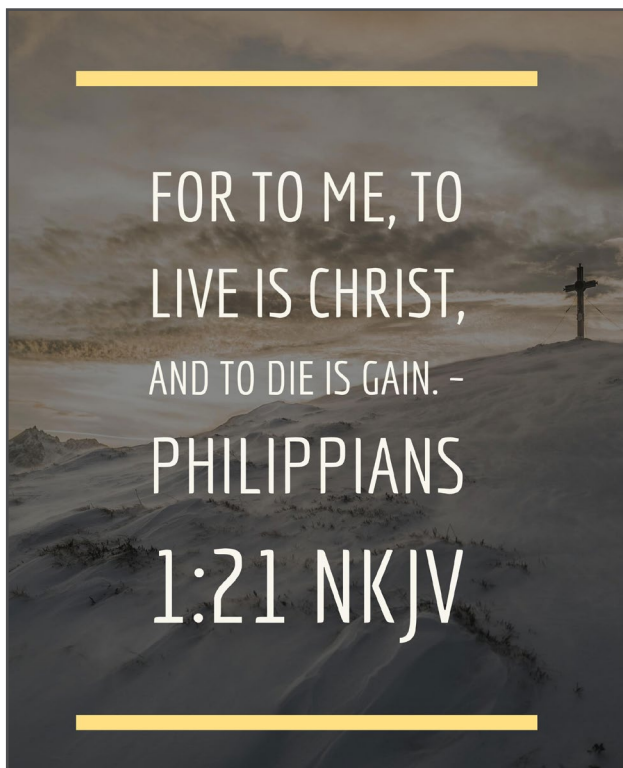
Question
6

2 Corinthians 1:8-11

THE CONFIDENCE PLACED IN GOD:

Paul now provides a personal testimony as evidence about how God has brought him **hope** and **comfort** in the midst of severe tribulation. He wants the Corinthians to know about **the trouble** which they experienced **in Asia** (v. 8). The problem was so great that they **were burdened beyond measure**, deprived of **strength**, and **even despaired of life** itself. Today, we would say something akin to “I can’t take anymore. I’ve had enough. My problem is too great to bear!” This was not some run-of-the-mill problem; it weighed heavily upon Paul and his missionary team. He even describes them as having the **sentence of death** upon themselves (v. 9). Paul doesn’t tell us what the exact nature of the problem was and we should not doubt that some wished literally to kill him for proclaiming the gospel!

God allows us to encounter such problems because it reminds us in whom we should have confidence and where we should place our **trust**. Thus, Paul interjects that **we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead**. Only God could deliver them **from so great a death** (v. 10). On their own, Paul and his team could never thwart an angry mob, Jewish leaders, or the Roman government whatever the case may be. God is the one who **delivered** them.



But notice how Paul speaks of God’s deliverance captured by the present tense: **does deliver us**. Certainly, God has **delivered** him and his team from immediate death. Yet, the problem hasn’t ceased; the **death sentence** still remains upon them! Paul doesn’t know the outcome of this earthly trial. But what He does know is that He can **trust** God who **will still deliver** them. How can Paul say this if he doesn’t know the ultimate outcome of the **death sentence**? Whether God **delivers** them from physical death at the hands of their enemies to continue their ministry on earth or He **delivers** them through death to call them home for eternity, God has **still delivered**

him! This should also give us **hope** today. God may choose to **deliver** us from a trial or hardship on earth; but, if He doesn't, He will grant us ultimate deliverance from a second death to eternal life with Him ([Phil 1:19-26](#)). This should give any of us who has a relationship with Him unshakable confidence and hope!

At the conclusion of his personal testimony, Paul thanks them for **helping together in prayer for them that thanks may be given by many persons on their behalf for the gift granted to them through many** (v. 11). Besides pointing people to Christ through Scripture and reminding them of His faithfulness to His promises, **prayer** is the best way we can offer **comfort** for others facing difficult times in life. Certainly, we can intercede on their behalf that God might remove the hardship if it is His will. And, like anything we pray, we must discern and pray according to God's will.

Yet, we can also pray in other specific ways that can offer **comfort**. We can pray for their strength to endure. We can pray that they maintain focus upon the Lord and remain grounded in His Word. We can pray that they trust in Him alone, always seek guidance from Him rather than others, and depend upon Him for true **comfort** and assurance. When we practice these principles set forth in Scripture, particularly 2 Corinthians 1:3-11, we can become overcomers who offer **comfort** because **all comfort** comes from God alone. We are His ambassadors only when we align ourselves with what He Himself has said and what He has called us to do!

How has God called you specifically to pray for others during hard times?

Question
7

Although Ace Slicer is part of a videogame, it serves to underscore that we cannot find solace and comfort just anywhere. Life, however, is not a game that we can turn off, redo, or mute people who give bad advice. Words or advice spoken in haste without considering the Lord can have the opposite effect to comfort. They can cause deeper despair and more trauma. At best, the comfort the world offers does not last. If fortunate, it may last long enough to get us through one problem before we face the next. Then, we must deal with a whole new set of circumstances and problems, finding that the words or actions which comforted us before no longer do so now. As believers, however, we can have comfort that lasts because we serve a God who does not change; we serve a God who, despite our own unfaithfulness at times, will always remain faithful to His promises!

Therefore, we can only overcome through the comfort that He has offered us through His Son. As Job surmised, life is short and full of problems. But Christ promises an eternity where He will remove sin, sickness, and sorrow if we repent of our sins and turn to Him. We may not know the outcome of the individual trials that we will face here on earth. We may not know how long they will last or whether God will choose to deliver us from them. One thing we do know, however. God has promised to deliver us through any temporary trials that we face here on earth to give us eternal life! We can rest assured on His promise. Consequently, we can find hope and comfort regardless of the circumstances. Let us not merely look for a solution, but let us look to the Savior who has provided us with the ultimate solution to our problems and trust implicitly in Him. Then, we can receive comfort as ones who have overcome through Him and we can be overcomers who offer others comfort because we point them to Christ!

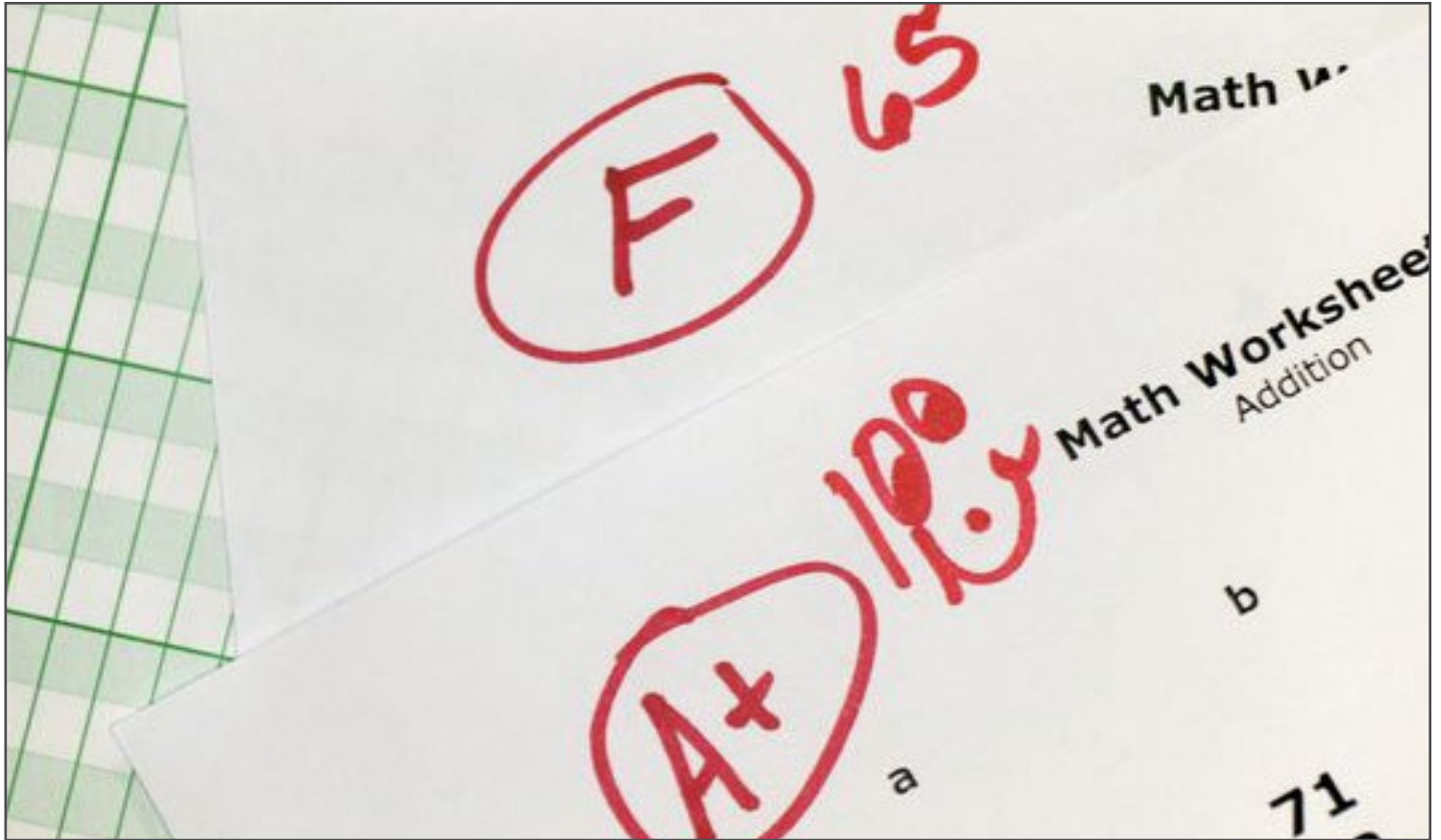
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During difficult times in life, what is the first thing you do to find comfort? How does that align with Scripture and the principles in this lesson?

What Scriptures offer you comfort? How has God called on you to use those Scriptures to offer comfort to others?

How have people prayed for you that has offered you comfort? How did you see God at work through those prayers and your situation?

August 29, 2021



An Overcomer Critiques Correctly Galatians 6:1-5

Focal Verse:

"But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another."

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Galatians 6:4

Introduce

Although far from a handy-man and one who can build something that could function as well as look aesthetically pleasing, I enjoy watching do-it-yourself renovation shows on television occasionally. These shows seek to restore beautiful and ornate buildings to their original grandeur along with giving them needed modern updates and upgrades for functionality and comfort. Inevitably, challenges lurk around every corner and



expensive surprises arise as restoration begins. For example, one simply cannot paint over an object or even add a fresh coat of paint to a room, particularly if the house was built prior to 1978. The restorer must first test for the presence of lead in the previous paint applied! If found, the old, toxic paint must be safely removed and properly disposed before any new paint can be added.

Restoration of older structures can also potentially highlight another dangerous substance which a renovator must remove: asbestos. Researchers discovered an increased risk of cancer from inhaling asbestos—formerly used in products like insulation and ceiling tiles. With such a high-level risk associated with its removal, contractors typically call experts to remove it. But before the experts even begin the process to dispose it, they take measures to prepare and protect themselves—lest they fall victim to the dangerous substance. They dress in full-body hazmat suits complete with respirators appropriately rated to filter the tiny particles of dust. Before removing the suit at the end of the day, they take equal caution to clean it and prevent any particle from becoming airborne. While they work, they completely isolate the room, sealing any doors, windows, and vents to prevent the asbestos from escaping and contaminating others.

Any renovator must deal with the problems they find—whether lead, asbestos, wiring, or plumbing—and restore the building to like-new condition. Theoretically, they could gloss over the problem and hide it through cosmetic fixes, but this usually worsens it and certainly does nothing to alleviate it. At times in life, we all need restoration. Christ

Introduce

has made those of us who have a relationship with Him a new creation ([2 Cor 5:17](#)). But the reality of continuing to live in the physical flesh means that we will err at times. And we will need restoration through Christ.

As the church, God has given us the responsibility to help one another in this endeavor by pointing one another to His Son. To help effectively restore someone, we must first examine our own lives so that we can have the right perspective through the Holy Spirit. Just as those who remove asbestos first protect themselves, we must first protect ourselves from harm lest we also become tempted and find ourselves engaged in the very same activity. Only when led by the Holy Spirit and maintaining the proper perspective can we point others to Christ and His Word which can remove the harmful, destructive sin in their lives and restore them. We ourselves are not the “experts” who can restore; only Christ can do that. But we are the agents whom He uses to point to the need of restoration and Him as the source for restoration. Therefore, let us be an overcomer who critiques correctly, keeps ourselves unstained by sin, and the one whom Christ can use as a tool that brings about restoration in others.

Key
Question

How has God used others to point you to restoration in Him?

Galatians 6:1

THE PROCESS OF RESTORATION:

In the previous chapter, Paul has just finished discussing the new life we now live in the Spirit and how it stands in complete contrast to the way in which we formerly lived according to the flesh. He has commanded us to “walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh” ([Gal 5:16](#)). Because we still live on in the “flesh”—that is a physical existence—we are still subject to the desires of the flesh if we don’t exercise self-control in the Lord and completely surrender to the leadership of the Holy Spirit. When we fail to give the Spirit full control in our lives, we become selfish in our outlook and make unwise choices that seek to gratify our desires rather than fulfill the will of the Lord. During those times, we make bad choices and are carried away by our own desires in need of correction. This correction, and chastening, ultimately comes from the Lord because He disciplines those whom He loves. Yet, God at times calls upon other believers to help correct the course of a wayward brother or sister. With this subject, Paul begins his instruction in [chapter 6](#).

Therefore, Paul exhorts the church that **if** anyone **is overtaken in any trespass**, those **who are spiritual** should seek to **restore** the person (v. 1). Before moving on to address the attitude with which one should attempt to **restore** the person, we must first define what it means to be **spiritual**. The world, and sometimes those in the church, have a skewed view of what it means to be **spiritual**. Theoretically, one could have a vast intellectual knowledge of Scripture and be able to recite arcane facts and not be **spiritual**. One could even “pray” elaborate prayers many times a day and still not be **spiritual**. The Pharisees and other Jewish leaders proved this when they interacted with Jesus! One could even be considered mature in his or her thinking, contributing rationally and reasonably to a discussion. Even so, they may not



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be **spiritual**!

On the contrary, the term **spiritual** is not so much about what we “do,” but who we follow. To be **spiritual**, therefore, means nothing less than being completely surrendered to the Holy Spirit and led by Him! When we are led by the Spirit, He will always influence and affect what we do. Thus, Paul can say, “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit” ([Gal 5:25](#)). We can have the Spirit living within us because we’re a child of God, but we can still wrestle control from Him and not walk with Him. If we aren’t walking with the Spirit daily and attempt to “**restore**” someone, this is a recipe for disaster! Without the Spirit guiding us, we can easily become prideful rather than wanting true restoration. We want to show how “**spiritual**” we are by how “unspiritual” another is. In [5:26](#), Paul even warns against becoming “conceited” perhaps for this very reason! In addition, we can become wrathful and vengeful instead of showing mercy which leads to repentance (Jas 1:20). When we walk in the Spirit, we will see things from God’s perspective which allows us to point others to restoration in Him if they will only receive it.

How do you prepare yourself “spiritually” before confronting someone in blatant sin?

Question
1

When we are led by the Spirit, we will always display the right attitude and have the right motives in seeking restoration. Paul, therefore, states that we should **restore**

MOREOVER IF YOUR BROTHER SINS AGAINST YOU,

go and tell him

HIS FAULT BETWEEN YOU AND HIM ALONE.

**IF HE HEARS YOU,
YOU HAVE GAINED YOUR**

brother.

Matthew 18:15

such a one who has erred in a **spirit of gentleness**. Taking our cues from Scripture as a whole, we can identify four principles that will help us practice **gentleness** when God uses us to **restore** a fellow believer. First, we must follow Jesus’ own prescription for discipline within the church ([Matt 18:15-20](#)). When we see someone sinning (i.e., we have first-hand

knowledge and not simply hearsay) or they have sinned against us, we are to approach them individually in a one-on-one setting. Often, this prevents the person from

becoming more defensive and feeling as if they are being targeted by the group. It also alleviates the temptation of the group to pile on the person or, even worse, to gossip, forgetting the grace Christ has shown them.

Yet, Jesus still makes provision for taking a small group to correct a wayward believer. If the person refuses to listen, then take two or three witnesses as a testimony to the truthfulness of God's Word in reference to his or her specific situation. If that doesn't lead them to repentance, only then is it to be told to the church and the appropriate steps taken as a congregation. Sin is serious. It's not something with which we can trifle. At the same time, we need to point people to the grace and mercy that Christ offers when they seek restoration through repentance of their actions.

How have you seen biblical discipline practiced in the church? Why do we not see it practiced more often?

Question
2

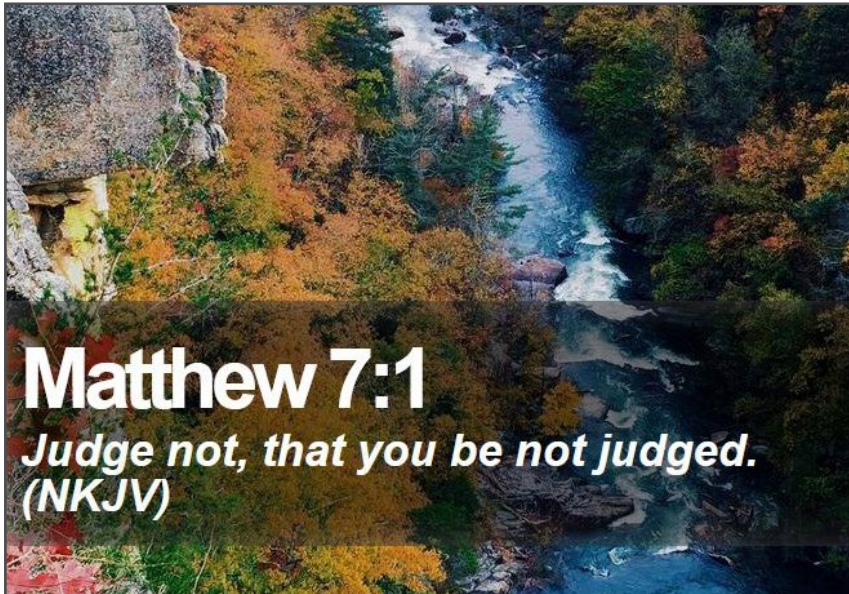
Second, we must be specific about the charges against the person and present evidence from Scripture that shows their error. We should not speak in generalities or vagaries when it comes to correcting sin. Good parents, for example, explain the specific infractions to their children and point to the evidence of how they transgressed the expectations and boundaries set forth for them. If they didn't, the child would never know what must be corrected! God doesn't speak in generalities, but He has set forth His expectations clearly in His Word. In spiritual matters which constitute sin against the Lord, therefore, we must show people exactly what God's Word says. It doesn't matter whether or not we approve of an action; it doesn't matter what we think. It matters what God has said. Therefore, we always need to start with what God has said in Scripture. Then, it becomes the responsibility of the person to listen and follow the leadership of the Spirit!

This leads us to the third principle which will help us to practice **gentleness**. We must remember that the Holy Spirit is the one who convicts as well as the one who performs the restoration. We function as the conduit which funnels people to Scripture and points them to God. In His sovereignty, God has given mankind the freewill to respond to Him. He could force us, but He doesn't. He has given us the choice. This means that we can either accept or reject what He has said in His Word; thus, we can choose to remain disobedient. If God has given mankind that choice, we certainly cannot force people to repent. All we can do, and all God has called us to do, is show them in Scripture and urge them to listen to Him. Once we show them, we can intercede for

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them in prayer that they might respond with repentance.

Finally, to exercise gentleness means that we approach the situation with humility



without being judgmental. We must never compromise the truth of Scripture, but always stand firmly upon it and speak it in love ([Eph 4:15](#)). In addition, Jesus warns us against having a judgmental attitude: “judge not lest you be judged” ([Matt 7:1](#)). This doesn’t mean that we cannot judge or differentiate between right and wrong; it does not mean

that we cannot speak against things which are clearly sinful. It means that we should not be judgmental and speak with an arrogant attitude. We must remember the grace and mercy God has extended us when we sinned!

In what situations has God offered you grace when you have erred? How does that knowledge help you remain humble in confronting sin?

Question
3

To apply these four principles effectively, we must be led by the Holy Spirit. Each case in which restoration is needed is somewhat unique. People have different personalities, but the same human frailties. We need discernment from the Holy Spirit to implement the process of correction. Although we must never alter or water down Scripture, the way we approach the situation may change depending upon the personality of the individual. For those who have children, you know that one form of communication may work for one, but not the other. Therefore, we must tailor the approach to fit the specific child in their specific situation. Only the Holy Spirit can help us accomplish this within the church and institute correction which doesn’t compromise His Word.

In addition to having **a spirit of gentleness**, we must also prepare ourselves spiritually **lest we also be tempted**. However, Paul doesn’t cite specifics here about how we should prepare. But a general rule, especially applicable in our society, is that we should seek one-on-one restoration with the same gender. If that is not possible, then

one's spouse or another person should be present for accountability. In addition, we must prepare spiritually through prayer so that we ourselves don't become distracted. Jesus teaches us in the model prayer to ask for deliverance from distractions—whether temptation or trials ([Matt 6:13](#)). We may not find the situation which requires restoration in another tempting to us, for we are tempted by our own desires. But if we lose focus on Christ, we can become distracted by the areas which tempt us the most. Therefore, we must prepare by maintaining focus on Christ, so that we don't find ourselves in a similar situation needing repentance.

Galatians 6:2

THE PROPER RESPONSE:

Next, Paul commands us to **bear one another's burdens** which fulfills **the law of Christ** (v. 2). The proper response to living within a family of believers—the church—is to meet **one another's** needs in whatever ways God has given us ability. Although Paul doesn't elaborate upon **the law of Christ** in this particular verse, we know from the overarching context of Galatians that he is battling the error of legalism. Legalism adds requirements from the law given to Moses in the Old Testament to salvation in Christ. According to this errant system, it is Christ plus the law—particularly being circumcised, participating in festivals, and exercising purity especially through the food laws—that saves. Scripture, however, makes it abundantly clear that only Christ saves. The law cannot save because it cannot transform the person and no one can completely fulfill it.

In addition to wrongly adding to the requirements of salvation in Christ, legalism seeks to fulfill only the letter of the law which minimizes the responsibility of a person who then attempts to do the least just to get by. Even though those who practice legalism may not see it this way, such people view their responsibilities as a checklist.

For example, loving one's neighbor means loving only those in close proximity to them or those like them—as the lawyer attempted to argue with Jesus in Luke 10:25-35. For the legalist, it definitely doesn't include loving one's enemies! Similarly, the prohibition



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against murder, for the legalist, doesn't go beyond killing another human being. Yet, Jesus and John agree that anger and hatred both constitute murder. Life, however, is not just a series of checkmarks on a list. It entails following the Spirit who shows us a greater and higher way of fulfilling the law which God has set forth. **The law of Christ**, therefore, stands in stark opposition of doing the minimum; in Christ we should seek to show maximum devotion to Him!

With this background, we can begin to understand what it means to **fulfill the law of Christ**. Jesus summarized the entire Old Testament into two commandments. We are to love God above everything which then compels us to love others as ourselves. Thus, loving God first and then loving others fulfills **the law of Christ**. In loving God, we should never do just the minimum to seek by; we must be wholly devoted unto Him, allowing the Spirit to show us how to exert maximum effort in every area. For instance, how many of you when dating or even now as a married couple had a checklist to determine if someone loves you? On that list may be superficial things mingled with substantive ones: took me to a nice dinner, remembered our anniversary, cleaned the house, bought me flowers, and so forth. And once all the "requirements" were met on that list, then you didn't expect anything more. You were satisfied! Most likely, this sounds ludicrous to us. We want someone to show love daily and be completely devoted to us—not someone who simply checks requirements off a checklist! But we often do this very thing with the Lord. We look at our love and devotion to Him as a legalistic checklist—mostly filled with superficial things along with a few substantive ones. We may have noble things on that list like pray, read Scripture, give, attend Bible study and worship, and the like. We may be able to check these things off with regularity, but we must still ask ourselves how devoted to the Lord are we truly? Scripture certainly commands us to do these things, but not just view them as the minimum we must do. Giving, for instance, doesn't replace serving. And serving does not replace giving our tithes and offerings. Christ has called us to devote ourselves completely to His service as He leads.

How would you evaluate your devotion to the Lord? In what areas do you do well and where might you need improvement?

Question
4

To **bear one another's burdens** means to share life together. In our Western, individualistic mindset this is sometimes difficult because we tend to compartmentalize our lives and highly value our privacy. Although we don't have to share our most private and intimate burdens with the entire church, and we definitely ought to use discretion what we share online, we still must learn to walk together as we mature in Christ. This requires a great sacrifice of time and availability. It takes time to know someone and understand how God can use us to meet a need that they may have. It also requires us to make ourselves available to God as His instruments to meet those needs. For example, we may bear one's burdens by helping them financially when they have suffered job loss and God has given us the resources to be able to do so. At other times, it may be helping someone deal with temptation and being there to offer support and accountability when they feel vulnerable and weak. Still, others may need encouragement when going through difficult times. God has called us to meet the needs of those in the church as He leads and provides!

In what ways has God called upon you to bear the burdens of another?

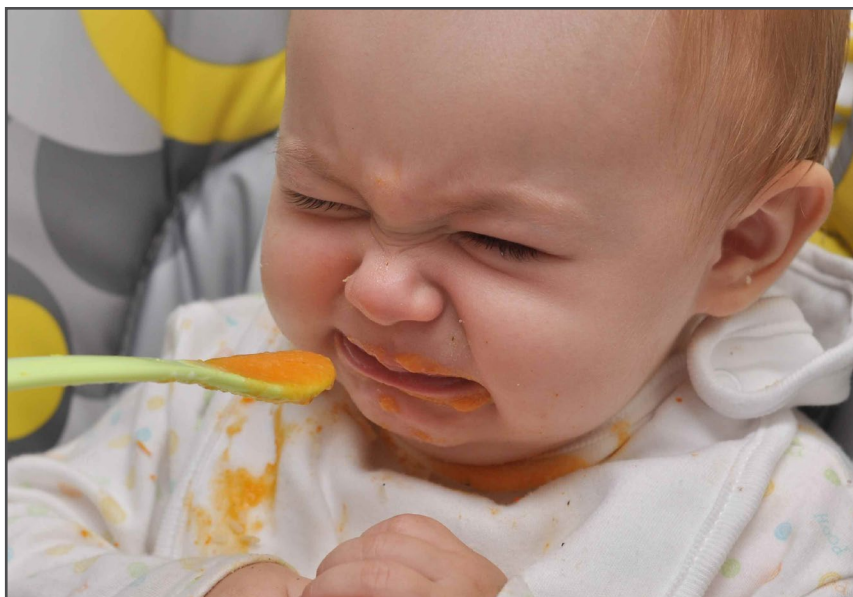
Question
5

Galatians 6:3-5

OUR PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY:

Even though Paul calls us to **bear one another's burdens**, we are still responsible for our own choices and actions. Bearing **one another's burdens** doesn't excuse us from personal responsibility! We are responsible to pull our own weight; we can't sit back like freeloaders and let others do all the work! For this reason, Paul advises **each one to examine his own work** (v. 4). This will bring joy because he has done his part; he himself has contributed and not just watched others do the work. Consequently, Paul concludes with the admonition for **each to bear his own load**. God has gifted us to work together as one body, but He has given us different tasks and responsibilities to ensure the body matures as it ought.

To illustrate, let's take a common complaint I've heard in ministry over the years: "I'm not getting fed." Unless the church teaches something contradictory to Scripture or it has no opportunities for discipleship, then this is not a valid complaint! Even if no opportunities existed within the church, one still has no excuse for not getting fed because they can do so through their own personal quiet time. What these individuals mean is "I chose not to eat." For new believers, we must walk hand-in-hand together



with them, teaching them to read, study, and apply God's Word. For every member of the church, we should also provide the necessary tools and avenues to mature together corporately. But if we're not growing, then it's our responsibility. We must take ownership of our own choices! Those who don't are like a baby who makes a face and refuses to

eat. The parent has provided the food, but the child is ultimately responsible for eating it!

We live in a world that fails to take responsibility and shifts the blame to others. People blame their environment, their circumstances, their upbringing, and even God! If we don't see growth in our lives personally or in the church (either spiritual or numerical), then we must ask ourselves: how have I contributed? What have I done about it? We should not pass the buck, looking around at others in the church; we should not even blame the culture and the godlessness that has become so prevalent. We must first look at ourselves and determine how well we have done our **work** in Christ.

How would you evaluate your contribution to the local church? How faithful are you in sharing the gospel, serving, and caring for others in the church?

Question
6

The same goes when we seek to **restore** another person; we must first examine our own lives to determine how faithful we have been to fulfill God's calling before we can ever point others to restoration in Him. To critique correctly as an overcomer, therefore, we must be in right standing with the Lord which means that we must submit to the leadership of the Spirit. Before ever seeking to **restore** someone else engaging in sin, we need to evaluate our own lives. We can only obtain a true and accurate evaluation if we seek the Holy Spirit. Otherwise, we can skew our assessment by thinking more highly of ourselves than we ought (v. 3). Only when we have the proper perspective can we then help others find restoration in Christ.

As we observed in the introduction, home restorations can expose many problems with which we must deal whether wiring, plumbing, paint, or many other things. We cannot sweep them under the rug and move on. We must bring them up to code and fix them, so they don't eventually cause even greater problems. We must also do the same in the church regarding sin. We shouldn't go around like judgmental inspectors, looking for everyone else's faults. We must first examine our own lives and make sure that we have properly dealt with our own. We must have the right perspective which starts with asking the Spirit to critique us so that we can be in right standing to walk with Him daily.

Even though we should not go around the church like inspectors, we cannot ignore the problem of sin either when it becomes evident. We must also deal with it in the right way as God leads and has outlined in Scripture. Failing to confront sin can eventually draw a whole church off course if the body is not careful. To deal with sin, we must be led by the Spirit. The Spirit will always do the convicting and restoration. We are simply the agents whom God uses to point others to His Word and restoration in Him. Let us, therefore, be overcomers who critique correctly by having the right perspective which comes from the Lord so that we can work together as His people, loving, serving, and growing in Him.

Incorporate

With what attitude do you approach “known” sin within the life of a believer? What steps do you take to confront it and lead them to restoration? If you don’t confront “known” sin, why don’t you?

How has God used others to bear your burdens in the church? What did you learn from those situations? What can you take from these times that can help you bear other’s burdens?

What Scriptures have helped you accurately assess your work / responsibility? What has God taught you about your perspective through them? How have they helped you take more ownership in your growth and service to the Lord?

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