

Higher Ground

“Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more.”

I Thessalonians 4:1

Suggested Reading: II Samuel 7:1-17; I Kings 8:54-61; I Chronicles 22:1-19; I Chronicles 28:1-10; II Chronicles 6:1-11; Psalm 101:1-8; I Corinthians 3:10-17; Hebrews 12:22-29; Revelation 2; Revelation 3.

Christ-Centered	Relationship Emphasis	Soul Winning	Liberal Giving	Hospitality & Entertain
Holy Spirit	Personal Holiness	Place for Revival	Self-Examination	Doctrinal Steadfastness
More Prayer	Personal Devotions	Reverent Worship	Right Relationships	Expository Preaching
Spiritually Minded	Spiritual Warfare	Church Attendance	Forgiveness & Mercy	Help your Pastor
Eternal Perspective	Fruit of the Spirit	Grow in Service	Peace & Unity	Love is the Greatest

Introduction:

- The goal of this sermon series is perfecting our church by God’s inspired goals and personal growth.
 - The text above, though only one of many, is our theme – abounding more and more in godliness!
 - By God’s grace we want to identify traits or goals of the best churches and Christians to pursue.
 - We avoid the Hebrews’ infancy Paul rebuked by leaving elementary truth to go on to perfection, which we have already done, but we seek even more (Heb 5:11-14; 6:1-3; 13:9,15-16,20-21).
 - We must hate the *status quo ... normal ... average performance ... routine religion ... a form of godliness without the power ...* and most of all ... *a good church instead of a great church!*
 - You should not want to be a good Christian – anything less than the best is losing (I Co 9:24-27).
- We want to give a church to Jesus Christ that is *exceeding magnificent*, because He fully deserves it.
 - God and Jesus Christ are great kings deserving our best by definition (Mal 1:14; Luke 19:20-27).
 - We love the story of David’s desire to build God a house and the pains he took to prepare for it.
 - He had defeated Israel’s enemies; he could have relaxed/retired, content with tabernacle worship.
 - The love and efforts David had for God’s house should be the goal for our own love and efforts.
 - Gold, timbers, and stones were O.T.; we are living stones to be fully polished (I Pet 2:4-5,9-10).
 - Every joint and part of a church is love of Christ, personal holiness, brotherly love, service, etc.
 - If or when God brags about churches in heaven, we want to be on that list (Job 1:6-7; 2:1-3)!
 - David for God’s house ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/church/exceeding-magnificent/sermon.php>.
- We just celebrated 35 years as a church on June 7, and though very thankful, we must press ahead.
 - We have come through several corrections where spiritual measures of a church were too low.
 - We marked four crossings of the Red Sea for large salvations – Baptist, PB’s, B&C, God’s help.
 - We praise God’s mercy in doctrine and practice and refined goals of holiness and Christ’s glory.
 - But there are things far more important than having doctrines properly labeled and in good order.
 - We cannot become content, complacent, lethargic, or slothful due to past blessings or successes.
 - It is human nature to relax in jobs, marriage, etc.; but we have the divine nature for greater zeal.
 - My job as a watchman is to warn you to build on a rock for the coming storm (Matt 7:24-29).
 - We are totally committed to the ancient landmarks of our faith and practice, but we also know there is spiritual fruit, perspective, and relationships that we must emphasize equally or more.
 - Male members between 18 and 40 are the ones with consciences for the future of this church.
- We need Paul’s attitude toward past accomplishments lest we think we have apprehended the goal.
 - Paul clearly chose to forget his past accomplishments in order to finish his race (Phil 3:12-14).
 - His exemplary attitude is specifically identified as the attitude we should emulate (Phil 3:15-17).
 - It is an interpretational error to assume here that Paul was forgetting past sins or his legalism.
 - Running a mile race depends on the last lap, not your position after three laps (I Cor 9:24-27).
 - The elders had a good report, not by contentment with success, but by greater deeds (Heb 11:2).

- f. They are the cloud of witnesses watching us; we must finish and win the great race (Heb 12:1-3).
 - g. Whatever you find to do, do it with your might (Eccl 9:10). God has shown us *Higher Ground!*
 - h. You and we have a very important race to run ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/running-your-race.pdf>.
5. Consider the difference between ancient landmarks, for lack of a better term, and our spiritual goals.
- a. By ancient landmarks we mean those basic points of doctrine and practice we should hold fast.
 - b. For more of ancient landmarks ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/remove-not-the-ancient-landmark.pdf>.
 - c. Just as the devils believe and tremble (Jas 2:19), they also know the ancient landmarks perfectly.
 - d. However, just as they do not have works by faith, they despise and hate each spiritual ambition.
 - e. Think Christ-centered, Holy Spirit, prayer, spiritual minds, heavenly perspective, holiness, etc.
 - f. They will allow us to hold the right doctrine of Christ if they can take us off great love of Christ.
 - g. If they can get us in the place of Ephesus – nine commendations but loss of first love – they win.
 - h. Consider how Jesus identified both least and weightier matters of the Law (Matt 5:19; 23:23).
 - i. We want do much more than merely hold paper documents of doctrinal points in church creeds.
6. You should want to be reminded of ratcheting up your performance, for you will soon meet God.
- a. We just had expository preaching of Peter’s epistles, where Christ’s coming is key (II Pe 3:1-18).
 - b. Peter said he would spend the rest of his life reminding them to strive for more (II Pet 1:12-15).
 - c. If you are not convicted to grow in grace, you should forget any church, but especially this one.
 - d. Paul labored to be accepted of Jesus Christ with zeal that appeared like madness (II Cor 5:9-15).
 - e. Your duty here is that a church advances only as many/most of its members advance personally.
 - f. The men should remember a men’s meeting with an exhortation to *onesies* for growing in grace.
 - g. Effective preaching requires understanding, remembering by review, and obedience by pressing.
7. We must identify the things important to Paul by the Holy Spirit for churches to grow to perfection.
- a. Our study of David’s exceeding magnificent ambitions for the house of God on 01/13/2008 had this list of actions church members should have for their local church: *prayer, priority, prepare, promote, positive, participate, provide, peace, praise, protect, punctual, and practical.*
 - b. For David’s ambition ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/church/exceeding-magnifical/sermon.php>.
 - c. Our study of the nature of a local church on 12/21/2011 had this list of features: *God’s temple, Spirit’s house, Christ’s body, Potentate’s property, scripture repository, treasure chest, Christ’s prophecy, angelic wonder, heavenly connection, royal connection, truth defender, salvation source, worship center, reality check, God’s seminary, small claims court, welfare agency, competent counselors, synergistic support, prayer band, replacement family, best friends, heaven’s executioner, living organism, freedom park, support group, Lord’s Supper, praise band, united nations, secret society, mega church, Christ’s bride, and hidden wisdom.*
 - d. For descriptions of local church traits ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/what-is-a-church-ppt.pdf>.
 - e. Our study of a great church on 10/1/2014 had this list: *ChristCentric, first love – hot, regenerated membership, Spirit-filled, doctrinal dogmatism, preaching emphasis, due-order details, perilous times, praying, brotherly love, forgiving, peaceful, unity, self-correcting, discipline, holiness, reverent worship, zeal, attendance, every joint, thanksgiving, evangelism, civil obedience, Christian liberty, passionate, joyful, hospitable and entertaining, welfare, work ethic, liberal, pastoral support, and many ancient landmarks.*
 - f. For descriptions of traits of great churches ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/what-is-a-great-church.pdf>.
 - g. We must advance in Bible priorities for our individual lives e.g. walking with God, filled with the Spirit, continuing instant in prayer, practical sanctification, giving cheerfully, loving bitterness-free, pleasing God over man on the job, having the peaceful wisdom from above, etc.
 - h. We want to advance in priorities scripture identifies ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/priorities2.pdf>.
8. It is very easy for churches and pastors to get distracted with various emphases that are not of God.
- a. The flesh affects your spirit at all times without total submission to the Spirit and word of God.
 - b. Thus, it is easy to prefer carnal subjects, even from the Bible, rather than the spiritual (Heb 13:9).

- c. Thus, ministries get diverted from spiritual goals to natural goals e.g. social crusades like literacy or food or AIDS, politics or activism in various ways, prosperity gospel, scientific speculation like Nephilim, conspiracies religious and political, studies of cults and heresies, current events, growth in numbers, evangelism preeminence, dreams or experiences, mysteries not gospel mysteries, history or tradition of churches or theology, philosophy or hallucination, etc.
- d. Prophecy, a glorious subject that God loves, could distract us from walking with and loving God.
- 9. Jesus commended Ephesus for nine good things, but His *nevertheless* was devastating (Rev 2:1-4).
 - a. Holding truth steadfast is important, *but* growing in grace is much more important (II Pe 3:17-18).
 - b. Brethren growing exceedingly in faith and abounding in charity caused apostle joy (II Thes 1:3).
 - c. Our goal is Samuel over Samson, David over Solomon, Job over Jehoshaphat, and so forth.
 - d. Laodicea thought they had all they needed, but they had no fellowship with Christ (Rev 3:15-20).
 - e. Remember the divine rule – to whom much is given shall much be required (Luke 12:47-48).
 - f. There is a cause we should rally to in this matter (I Sam 17:29) – church perfection before God.
 - g. We never want to hear the name *Ichabod!* from God when He removes His glory (I Sam 4:21).
- 10. It must be a group project to maximize results; every joint and part should help (Eph 4:16; Col 2:19).
 - a. How committed are you to improve your Christian character, conduct, and fruitfulness for Him?
 - b. The path of the just shines more and more to the perfect day, and we want more light (Pr 4:18).
 - c. The gospel of Jesus Christ begins with basics and advances on to full knowledge (Mat 28:19-20).
 - d. For more about every joint contributing in a church ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/every-joint.pdf>.
- 11. Decisional salvation is a distracting heresy by reducing the importance of discipleship and growth.
 - a. With eternal life guaranteed by a decision, reproducing that decision in others is the greater goal.
 - b. Since godliness, either knowledge or practice, is neglected by Arminians, there is little emphasis.
 - c. Mission statements for their churches almost always emphasize restating the Great Commission.
 - d. We understand conversion as a lifelong process of conforming more and more to Christ's image.
 - e. Calvinists vary from emphasizing sanctification to fatalism regarding it and intellectual prowess.
- 12. The questions we ask of prospective members include some goals of growth in grace and holiness.
 - a. Do you love Jesus Christ to spend the rest of life seeking, serving, and obeying Him zealously?
 - b. Will you keep the unity of the Spirit by being peacemakers and rejecting bitterness and strife?
 - c. Will you faithfully assemble with us and strive to perfect this church for the great glory of God?
 - d. Will you walk close to God and keep a holy and spiritual life to be a spiritual asset to the church?
 - e. Will you remember the church is where you love and serve, not where you get loved and served?
- 13. We fear and resent the word *perfect*, but Bible understanding makes it both achievable and our goal.
 - a. Be perfect with God (Deut 18:13; I Kgs 8:61; 11:4; 15:3; I Chr 28:9; Job 8:20; Matt 5:48; 19:21).
 - b. God knows your heart; it must be perfect (I Chr 29:9; II Chr 16:9; 19:9; 25:2; Ps 37:37; Rev 3:2).
 - c. You can be perfect with God, as He defines, even with unknown sins (I Kgs 15:14; II Cor 13:9).
 - d. You may appeal to a perfect heart in time of need, but you better be perfectly clean (II Kgs 20:3).
 - e. Since the issues of life flow from your heart, it is your duty to keep it with all diligence (Pr 4:23).
 - f. We know His perfect will (Ro 12:1-2; Ep 4:12-13; Col 1:28; 4:12; I The 3:10; He 13:21; Ja 1:4).
 - g. We want to go on to perfection, as Paul desired for the Hebrews (Heb 6:1; 13:21; II Cor 7:1).
- 14. A church is a band of believers with the Holy Spirit's presence for ordained societal spiritual growth.
 - a. Two are better for four reasons; three are not easily broken (Eccl 4:9-12); a church is powerful!
 - b. Many *one another* duties are all by divine wisdom for the spiritual growth and prosperity of all.
 - c. For more of church members' *one another* duties ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/one-another.pdf>.
 - d. David set the goal of perfection for himself and his companions (Ps 101:1-8; 119:63,79; 15:4).
 - e. Paul required bishops to be lovers of good men, which should be the focus of churches (Tit 1:8).
- 15. This study is win-win-win: a better church glorifies God, exalts Jesus Christ, adorns the gospel, silences both enemies and the wicked, benefits each member spiritually, and prepares for Judgment.
- 16. Our goal is to be more excited by the potential prize than threatened by judging any past failures.
 - a. We will not belabor the individual points until we lose sight of the aggregate goal of improving.

- b. Rather than dig deep for theological nuances of points to emphasize more, we will summarize.
 - c. Altering priorities is not rocket science but rather reminders of what needs to be at the forefront.
 - d. We love details about our God, Jesus Christ, and salvation, as many documents/sermons prove.
 - e. We need no major overhaul – we need to make modest adjustments to emphasis and priorities.
17. Theme songs for this sermon series have been suggested ... *Higher Ground ... More about Jesus ... More Love to Thee ... I Am Thine, O Lord ... Nearer, My God, to Thee ... More Holiness Give Me ... Lift Me Up Above the Shadows ... I Want to Love Him More ... House of the Lord ... Take My Life and Let It Be ... Help Us to Help Each Other ...* etc.

Churches Must Advance, Grow, Improve, and Increase to Please God and Christ

Romans ... not content, Paul wanted to perfect them (1:8,11; 12:1-2; 13:11-14; 15:1-7).
I Corinthians ... they were childishly carnal and lacking in charity (3:1-4; 12:31; 13:1-7).
II Corinthians ... grace and promises should provoke great growth (3:18; 6:16-18; 7:1).
Galatians ... these churches lacked love, spiritual fruit, and devoured (3:1-9; 5:13-26).
Ephesians ... elect, accepted, quickened church needs more (1:17-19; 3:14-19; 4:11-16).
Philippians ... one of the best N.T. churches had more to do (1:9-11; 2:12-18; 3:12-17).
Colossians ... a church to be filled, increased, and strengthened (1:9-11; 2:1-7; 3:1-15).
I Thessalonians ... saints could be perfected and grow more and more (3:9-13; 4:1,9-10).
II Thessalonians ... though thankful for truth, they were to yet advance (2:13-17; 3:4-5).
I Timothy ... there is so much more beyond initial faith in Jesus Christ (4:6-12; 6:11-16).
II Timothy ... the danger is a form of godliness without power (2:1-7,19-22; 3:4-5; 4:1-4).
Titus ... God's elect have much to do beyond belief in Christ to eternal life (2:1-15; 3:8).
Philemon ... though a great man worthy of praise there was more for him to do (1:8-14).
Hebrews ... they should have been teachers, winning (5:12-14; 6:1-3; 12:1-3; 13:20-21).
James ... perfection is by trials; there is pure religion and God near (1:2-4,25-27; 4:7-10).
I Peter ... growth includes joy under trials and is by holy use of scripture (1:6-9; 2:1-3).
II Peter ... the elect should show victory and fruit unto eternal life (1:2-10; 3:10-18).
I John ... advance from truth to fellowship with God and brotherly love (1:3-5; 4:12-21).
II John ... an elect lady doing well in the truth still needed more brotherly love (1:4-6).
III John ... Gaius had done well entertaining strangers but needed to do more (1:5-8).
Jude ... we can build ourselves up by prayer, heart diligence, upward focus (1:20-21).
Revelation ... only overcomers with first love, hot zeal are approved (2:2-5; 3:15-20).

#1: Christ Centered

- A. God exalted Jesus Christ to His own right hand and expects all others to worship Him.
 - 1. Angels worshipped Him at birth (Heb 1:6); they also did at ascension (Re 5:11-12).
 - 2. God has given Him a name above every name for universal worship (Phil 2:9-11).
 - 3. The judgment for neglecting Jesus is great (Jn 5:23). Think 70 AD (Luk 19:43-44).
- B. Paul gave several apostolic priorities and warnings for ministers and churches to heed.
 - 1. Paul determined his preaching would emphasize Jesus Christ crucified (I Cor 2:2).
 - 2. He warned pastors about what they added to Christ the foundation (I Cor 3:10-17).
 - 3. He declared that he would not glory in anything else but Christ's cross (Gal 6:14).

- C. The gospel is all about Jesus Christ; the good news and glad tidings must be of Him.
1. When Philip and the eunuch met, Philip preached Jesus from Isaiah 53 (Acts 8:35).
 2. It is the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus according to scripture (I Co 15:1-4).
 3. The great mystery of godliness works from Jesus' incarnation upward (I Tim 3:16).
- D. Jesus declared that searching scripture would lead to nothing more than Him (Jn 5:39).
1. Remember that His audience had only the Old Testament, but even it was of Him!
 2. Paul summarized Timothy's scriptural childhood as faith in Christ (II Tim 3:15).
- E. The prophets and apostles emphasized knowledge of Jesus Christ over other things.
1. Abraham, the greatest Hebrew, saw Jesus' day and rejoiced to see it (John 8:58).
 2. Moses prophesied of a man like himself with far greater glory (Deut 18:15-19).
 3. John the Baptist said boldly, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30).
 4. Apostles had to see the risen Lord as a prerequisite (Acts 1:21-22; I Cor 9:1; 15:8).
- F. Hebrews' comparisons are designed to show His preeminence over all things Jewish!
1. Remember that O.T. religion was the chosen religion of the transcendent Jehovah.
 2. Jesus the Son of God is superior to the O.T. prophets and their words (Heb 1:1-3).
 3. Jesus is superior to angels by various measures and various ways (Heb 1:4 – 2:18).
 4. Jesus is superior to Moses, greatest leader of the church of the O.T. (Heb 3:1-19).
 5. Jesus is superior to Joshua, the leader that led them to rest in Canaan (Heb 4:1-13).
 6. Jesus is superior to Israel's Levitical priests by Melchisedec (Heb 4:14 – 10:39).
 7. Jesus is superior to the great faithful elders for our greater duty (Heb 11:1 – 12:21).
 8. Jesus is superior by a greater kingdom and Jerusalem above (Heb 12:22 – 13:25).
- G. The ministry of the Holy Spirit – a powerful and important matter – is of Jesus Christ.
1. Jesus promised the Spirit of truth to testify of Him (Jn 15:26; 16:13-14; I Jn 5:6-8).
 2. You cannot have one without the other; they are closely connected to require both.
- H. What else do you need for reminding of the great excellency of Jesus Christ the Lord?
1. John leaped for joy in the womb when Jesus' mother saluted her (Luke 1:39-45)!
 2. Do not angels, a star, and wise men from the east looking for a king move you?
 3. Paul counted all things in life loss and dung for the excellency of Christ (Phil 3:8).
 4. When Greeks came to the Passover, they asked to see only Jesus (John 12:20-21).
 5. Are you a Martha or Mary in your life? one chose the better thing (Luke 10:38-42).
 6. Do you, like Simon, think you are not forgiven much? Is that why you love little?
 7. Do you think Solomon was special? He was! But Christ is greater (Matt 12:42)!
 8. Do you think David was special? He was! But Jesus is David's Lord (Matt 22:43)!
 9. Are you like John, a fisherman, who laid on the Lord's bosom (Jn 13:23; 21:20)?
 10. His name is above every name – Jehovah is our Salvation (Matt 1:21; Phil 2:9-11)!
 11. If you do not love Jesus Christ (forget words), *Anathema Maranatha* (I Cor 16:22)!
 12. But if you do love sincerely (forget words), God's grace will be yours (Eph 6:24)!
 13. Do you grieve at times like Mary wondering where they have put Him (Jn 20:13)?
 14. Delighting in Jesus includes loving His appearing (I Thess 1:10; II Timothy 4:8).
 15. Real Christians rejoice with joy unspeakable and see Him precious (I Pet 1:8; 2:7).
 16. Do you love the Messianic Psalms, especially Psalms 22 and 45 about the Lord?
 17. What is your favorite passage about Christ? Haggai 2:6-9? Rom 5? Heb 1? Rev 5?

- 18.If you want to see His compassion, listen to Mary with the gardener (Jn 20:15-16).
- 19.If you delight in glorious conquering strength, then see Him on His white horse.
- 20.He defeated devils, in the wilderness, obtaining their worship, and spoiling them!
- 21.Do you like words *blessed and only Potentate*, and others like them (I Tim 6:15)?
- I. The disciples were called Christians, because our religion is all wrapped up in Him.
 1. We gladly call ourselves Bible Christians, as the followers of Christ by the Bible.
 2. Disciples were first called Christians in Paul's home church in Antioch (Ac 11:26).
 3. Paul was called a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes (Acts 24:5; Matt 2:23).
- J. How can we change to emphasize Jesus Christ in our church more than before?
 1. God graciously led us slowly over thirty years to a greater emphasis of Jesus Christ personally, and we want to remember all those changes and keep increasing them.
 2. Let us make *all subjects* include Him or point to Him, since this is quite scriptural.
 3. Let us choose *songs* that predominantly speak of Him over merely spiritual songs.
 4. We must emphasize the *experiential* over the intellectual, as with Paul (Phil 3:10).
 5. Let us *pray* as Paul did for greater revelation of Christ to us (Eph 1:17; 3:14-19).
 6. Minimize talk about *heaven* for its own sake but rather for Jesus Christ (Phil 1:23).
 7. Let us use the *name* of Jesus frequently, in spite of any Jesus Freaks that abuse it.
 8. Rather than talk about *God*, like Mormons and Muslims, let us speak of the Christ.
 9. Rather than our *proprietary doctrines*, let us make sure the Person stands forth.
 - 10.Rather than emphasize corruption of Revelation 3:20, let us *embrace its invitation!*
 - 11.While mocking foolish, freewill *missionary folly*, let us share Christ (Jn 1:35-51).
 - 12.When we gather in public or private, speak of the Lord Christ Jesus and salvation.
 - 13.Will you sing every day about Jesus Christ? Why not? Listen to singing of Him?
 - 14.Let us make sure in praying that we give glory to Christ and pray to know Him.
 - 15.We must maximize our wretchedness to maximize His graciousness (Ro 7:24-25).
 - 16.Even in the Bible, we must choose Christ as topic and direct all topics to Christ.
 - 17.We must think, speak, and examine to maintain our first, hot love of Jesus Christ.
 - 18.Each member of your family must have a personal, intimate time with Christ daily.
 - 19.Do you have favorite songs to sing or hear or passages to read or hear of Christ?
 - 20.What is your favorite sermon about Christ? Do you know how to view them all?
 - 21.Take time to quietly meditate with Christ, even in this century (Psalm 4:4; 46:10).
 - 22.Jesus has many names in the Bible. Do you know them? What is your favorite?
 - 23.We will vigorously oppose preaching and preachers like Joel's bankrupt content.
 - 24.We reject WWJD junk as phylacteries, but we must *conform* to Him (Rom 13:14).
 - 25.Pray about increasing the frequency of the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7; I Cor 11:26)?
 - 26.Let us not *fret* about government, for Jesus reigns over all (Ps 37:1,7; Pr 24:19-22).
 - 27.If a greater than Solomon is here, let us exalt the gospel of salvation over Proverbs.
 - 28.Rather than be Baptists, let's be Bible Christians, as John was inferior to Jesus.
 - 29.Making a change begins in our hearts and minds, then homes, and then our church.
 - 30.Though we rightly hate Baalmass, we can and should appreciate the virgin birth.
 - 31.Every act of obedience should be an act of love to obtain revelation (John 14:21).
 - 32.Our second greatest need, coming next, is the Holy Spirit for revelation of Christ.

- K. For a little more on this great subject that should be the most precious treasure of all:
1. A Name Above Every Name ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/bible/god/a-name-above-every-name.php>.
 2. Unsearchable Riches of Christ ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/pdf/unsearchable-riches.pdf>.
 3. He Is Altogether Lovely ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/bible/christ/he-is-altogether-lovely.php>.
 4. More sermons about Christ ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/christ.php>.
 5. More documents about Christ ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/bible/christ/christ.php>.

#2: Holy Spirit Emphasis

- A. We cannot be afraid, ashamed, or embarrassed of this glorious, great topic for growth.
1. Baptists can be too fearful of this matter, due to fear and rejection of Pentecostals.
 2. While rejecting Charismatic perversion of the truth, we must not neglect the Spirit.
 3. There is nothing cheap, effeminate, weak about the Holy Spirit! Benny Hinn? Yes!
 4. Charismatics and Pentecostals are likely the most ignorant about the Holy Spirit.
 5. Their “anointin,” barking revivals, slaying in the spirit, etc. is likely devil worship.
- B. The Holy Spirit is God. He deals with us by His three persons with different emphasis.
1. He is your Creator (Gen 1:2; Job 33:4) and regenerates you (John 3:5-8; Titus 3:5).
 2. He is the Presence of God with us – called the Comforter by Jesus for our comfort.
 3. He relates to your spirit whether by praying with you or providing joy and peace.
 4. He is not just Power of new birth (John 3:8; Tit 3:5). He is the Person of God in us.
 5. He is earnest and seal (II Co 1:22; Ep 1:13-14; 4:30; Gal 4:6; Rom 8:16; I Jn 4:13).
- C. We may think Him more behind the scenes, but He is powerfully present everywhere.
1. He moved on waters at creation; He prompts Christ’s return (Gen 1:2; Rev 22:17).
 2. Men did great things by the Spirit in the Old Testament – Moses (Num 11:17,24-30); Joshua (Num 27:18); Othniel (Jdgs 3:10); Gideon (Jdgs 6:34); Jephthah (Jdgs 11:29); Samson (Jdgs 13:25; 14:6,19; 15:14); Saul (I Sam 10:6,10; 11:6; 19:23); David (I Sam 16:13-14); Amasai (I Chr 12:18); Azariah (II Chr 15:1); Jahaziel (II Chr 20:14); Zechariah (II Chr 24:20); Elihu (Job 32:8).
 3. Men had great gifts and did great things by the Spirit in the New Testament – Jesus did everything you can imagine (John 3:34; Heb 1:9; Isaiah 11:1-5); Stephen (Acts 6:5,8,10; 7:51; Matt 10:16-20); Peter healed by his shadow after preaching with total boldness (Acts 2:14; 5:15); Philip (Acts 8: 29,40); Paul healed by his hankies after preaching with total boldness (Acts 9:19-22; 19:12); the whole church spoke in tongues (Acts 2:1-5); their prayer meeting shook the house (Acts 4:31-33); they had a wide range of revelatory gifts for the truth without the canon (I Cor 12:1-11).
- D. The prophecies and fulfillment of the Holy Spirit are great indeed in both testaments.
1. The O.T. foretold the great gift of God at Pentecost (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:15-21).
 2. Jesus’ glorious words about water deserve your attention (John 4:13-15; 7:37-39).
 3. The power of Pentecost has not dissipated or disappeared; it is just different today.
- E. I am thankful for Ian Paisley’s opening words to every sermon after reading the scripture: *And God shall stamp with his own divine approval this reading from the infallible book. Amen. To this end I take the Promised Holy Ghost, the Blessed power of Pentecost to fill me to the uttermost, I take, thank God He undertakes for me, and the people of God said, Amen!*

- F. The comforting and kind words of Jesus before dying are special indeed (John 14-16).
1. Jesus left the apostles, but He sent the Spirit as replacement Comforter (14:15-18).
 2. Loving obedience of God brings greater love and permanent fellowship (14:21-23).
 3. The perfect revelation of the Comforter was primarily for the apostles (14:25-26).
 4. Though not named specifically, abiding in Christ obtains Spirit vitality (15:1-11).
 5. The Comforter, or Spirit of truth, testified of Jesus Christ through them (15:26-27).
 6. It was expedient for Jesus to depart to initiate the sending of the Spirit (16:6-7).
 7. The apostles by the Spirit reprov'd the world of three mysterious things (16:8-11).
 8. The Spirit of truth revealed Christ and mysteries fully to the apostles (16:12-15).
- G. You cannot do anything without the Holy Spirit; you can do all things by the Spirit.
1. God sent word to Zerubbabel that he could rebuild Jerusalem by Him (Zec 4:6-10).
 2. You get spiritual strength by abiding in Christ by faith and obedience (John 15:5).
 3. Jesus is in heaven in His human nature, but His Spirit is in you (Gal 4:6; Phil 4:13).
- H. The Spirit's work reveals Jesus (Jn 16:13-14; 15:26; Ep 1:17-19; 3:14-19; I Jn 5:6-8).
1. The Holy Ghost is to glorify and reveal Jesus Christ, not Himself, as Pentecostals.
 2. We must keep the priority right, though Jesus Christ is subject to God (I Co 15:28).
 3. Instead of "babblin bout da anointin," we declare the crucifixion and resurrection.
- I. He is the candlestick – life, light, vitality, wisdom of the church (I Co 12:13; Rev 2:5).
1. This point alone is sufficient to reveal His crucial value to any church's ambition.
 2. By one Spirit are we all baptized into the body of the local church (I Cor 12:13,27).
 3. Kingdom righteousness, peace, and joy is by the Holy Ghost (Rom 14:17; 15:13).
 4. He is the Spirit of revelation even in reading your Bible (Eph 1:17-19; Ps 119:18).
 5. See emphasis to Ephesus (Eph 1:13,17; 2:18,22; 3:5,16; 4:3-4,30; 5:9,18; 6:17-18).
 6. There is more revelation and vitality (John 14:23; Rom 5:5; Eph 3:19; II Pet 1:4).
- J. He is the holy God of heaven, and He will be your enemy if you resist Him (Is 63:10).
1. Calvinists and Arminians argue about resisting the Holy Ghost – but He is never resisted in regeneration (Jn 3:8); it is only allowed in conversion (I Thes 5:19-20).
 2. Do not offend Him; He can leave you ignorantly bankrupt or turn to oppose you.
 3. Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is a separate category of sin (Matt 12:31-32).
 4. Ananias and Sapphira sinned against the Holy Ghost by lying to church (Ac 5:3-9), which should warn and frighten every hypocrite that enters this holy house.
 5. Paul warned Hebrews of frightful vengeance for despising the Spirit (Heb 10:29), which is true of us if we miss, neglect, deny, or despise the Spirit in our church.
 6. As early as the Flood we read God would not always strive with man (Gen 6:3).
 7. His merciful conviction must be obeyed, lest He withdraw and leave you helpless.
 8. When the LORD left Samson, he was only a shadow of himself (Judges 16:20).
 9. David was very concerned that God would take away the Holy Spirit (Ps 51:11).
- K. God gives the Spirit to baptized believers that obey Him (Eph 1:13; Acts 2:38; 5:32).
1. The Holy Ghost is the Comforter after Pentecost (Acts 9:31). Think of the martyrs.
 2. The promise of the Holy Ghost included us pagan Gentiles far away (Acts 2:39).
 3. It is by this Spirit we internally cry, *Abba, Father*, to God (Gal 4:6; Rom 8:15-16).
 4. It is by this Spirit you can grow in glory to glory to be like Christ (II Cor 3:18).

5. The Spirit assists praying in content and fervency, which is fabulous (Ro 8:26-27).
 6. Assurance of God's love for you and eternal life is by the Holy Ghost (Rom 5:5).
 7. Joy is by the Spirit – John in Elisabeth's womb, or yours (Lu 1:41,44; Rom 15:13).
 8. Fruit is by power of the Holy Ghost in you (Eph 5:8-10; Gal 5:16-25; II Pet 1:3).
- L. There are various degrees of filling and power by His various ministries, by each person He operates within, and by varying degrees of power at different times.
- M. How can we change to emphasize the Holy Spirit in our church more than before?
1. We must pray more, for more of the Spirit and His filling and power in us (Luke 11:13), just as Paul prayed in various epistles for such blessings on the churches, which can be hard for those addicted to praying for no more than carnal needs.
 2. If Elisha could pray what he did, for a double portion of Elijah's spirit, and get that hard blessing, what of us? We should pray boldly to show God desire and zeal.
 3. Being filled is an imperative, passive-voice submission, choice, request (Eph 5:18), which we seek for positively and protect negatively by no grieving or quenching.
 4. Rather than abuse spirits (wine and strong drink), though they were created for mood-altering purposes (Pr 31:6-7; Ps 104:15), we should emphasize the Spirit!
 5. Altering your countenance is *by faith* for Spirit power (Rom 15:13), which Peter identified as partaking of the divine nature by believing promises (II Pet 1:3-4).
 6. We must live holy lives to not vex, grieve, or quench the Holy Spirit, for He is holy and expects holiness (Is 63:10; Eph 4:30; I Thes 5:19; I Cor 6:19-20).
 7. We must confess sins as soon as we realize them to stay a holy vessel for His use, and we should believe God's forgiveness (I John 1:9; Isaiah 58:6-9).
 8. We must pray for the Spirit's divine power to live the victorious lives in Christ's strength that we should live (Phil 4:13; II Peter 1:3; II Cor 12:9; Rom 15:13).
 9. We must pray for Spirit revelation, for even the Bible, written by Him, is only open to those that God blesses (Eph 1:17; 3:14-21; Ps 119:18; I Cor 2:10).
 10. He inhabits the church – in us collectively – so love of it honors Him (Eph 2:22), for prosperity is promised those who love God's house (Ps 122:6; Neh 5:19).
 11. Therefore, fulfilling your role as joint or part in the church pleases Him (Eph 4:16).
 12. It is His body, so ministers and members must treat it carefully (I Cor 3:16-17).
 13. Our bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost, so we must honor Him (I Cor 6:19-20), which is done by perfecting holiness in fear of God (II Cor 7:1 cp II Cor 6:16-18).
 14. The Bible is His work – He is the Author – so love of it honors Him (II Pet 1:21), which He has exalted above all His name for your encouragement (Ps 138:2).
 15. Preaching the word is by Him, so love of it honors Him (I Thes 5:19-20; Ac 7:51).
 16. Let us seek to be in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, like John on Patmos (Rev 1:10), thus our efforts for 15 years to prepare carefully and extensively Saturday nights.
 17. When we sin, confess and turn from it, begging God to leave His Spirit (Ps 51:11), for He has every right and some precedents of doing so (I Sam 16:14; Rev 2:5).
 18. If He assists prayer (Rom 8:26-27), and praying should be done in Him (Eph 6:18; Jude 1:20), then we must emphasize prayer as His spiritual exercise of choice.

19. Being Christ-centered and Spirit-filled are closely connected to require each other, so that seeking one will enhance the other and neglecting one will hurt the other.
 20. We must hate the flesh by mortifying it, and we must walk in the Spirit by bearing His fruit, remembering that they are great enemies to each other (Gal 5:16-25).
 21. We must avoid any hypocrisy, for consider Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:3-9).
- N. For a little more on this subject, consider these other sermon outlines or documents:
1. Simple outline, *The Holy Spirit* ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/holy-spirit.pdf>.
 2. Expository outline, *I Thess 5:19* ... http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/5_19.pdf.
 3. Slides sermon, *Charismatic Religion* ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/charismatic-religion.pdf>.
 4. Simple outline, *Fruit of the Spirit* ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/fruit-of-the-spirit.pdf>.
 5. Sermon, *Building Up Yourself* ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/building-up-yourselfes.pdf>.
 6. PowerPoint slides, *Are Ghosts Real?* ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/ghosts.pdf>.

#3: More Prayer Public and Private

- A. We already pray publicly and privately, but we must increase in this spiritual exercise.
1. We know by experience and conviction that we pray more when needs are greater.
 2. We know by experience and conviction that we pray more when closer to the Lord.
 3. Prayer is the barometer of a soul and a church, for it reflects spiritual mindedness.
 4. Prayer is the activity, exercise, and fellowship of a soul close to God and His word.
 5. Prayer is the most powerful thing we can do for the soul benefit of self and church.
 6. Recent reminders are sermon *Power of Prayer* and Kendrick Brothers' *War Room*.
- B. The importance of prayer can hardly be calculated, and it impacts every part of life.
1. We may have great influence by prayer in our children, families, nation, church, evangelism, against the devil, health, wisdom, prosperity, safety, fruitbearing, etc.
 2. Five great men interceded successfully – Moses, Samuel, Noah, Daniel, and Job.
 3. Great things, both natural and spiritual, happened by prayer in both testaments.
 4. Jesus taught us to ask (Matt 7:7), and James that we lack for not asking (Jas 4:2).
 5. Jesus taught that faith like a mustard seed could move mountains (Matthew 17:20).
 6. If God can do above what we ask or think, let us set the bar high (Eph 3:20-21).
 7. God and Christ have made themselves very vulnerable and willing to us by prayer.
 8. God and Christ have made us responsible for our own deficiencies by not praying.
- C. When dedicating Jehovah's temple, Solomon emphasized the church's use of prayer.
1. Solomon prayed for God to hearken to prayers toward the temple (II Chr 6:21-40).
 2. God answered his prayer of dedication by promising to hear prayer (II Chr 7:14).
 3. Local New Testament churches are temples of God, and His presence is there, so prayer should be emphasized (I Cor 3:16-17; II Cor 6:16; Ep 2:21-22; I Pet 2:4-5).
 4. Location on earth is no longer important, so men pray everywhere (I Timothy 2:8).
- D. Consider Bible examples, especially of the New Testament, of great churches praying.
1. There are many examples of prayer, but a comprehensive list is beyond this study.
 2. We want our spirits lifted up to God, so consider Elisha's request (II Kgs 2:9-12).
 3. Hezekiah's great Passover celebration carried prayers into heaven (II Chr 30:27).
 4. Anna, a widow indeed, spent decades in serious prayer (Luke 2:36-38; I Tim 5:5).

5. Jesus and Paul illustrate prayer beyond our comprehension (Luke 6:12; Rom 1:9).
 6. The church before Pentecost had unified prayer and supplication (Act 1:13-14,24).
 7. The church after Pentecost had unified prayer with spiritual fruit (Acts 2:41-47).
 8. The church's leaders, Peter and John, attended to prayer at its set time (Acts 3:1).
 9. The church responded to persecution with prayer and was blessed (Acts 4:23-33).
 10. The church altered its administration to protect apostles' prayer time (Acts 6:4,6).
 11. The church at Samaria received the gift of Holy Ghost by prayer (Acts 8:15,22,24).
 12. The church saw Saul converted to prayer and Peter heal by prayer (Acts 9:11,40).
 13. The church had things happen for Gentiles by prayers (Ac 10:2,4,9,30,31; 11:5).
 14. The church responded to more persecution with continuous prayer (Acts 12:5,12).
 15. The church at Antioch's ministers were led to Gentiles after prayer (Acts 13:3).
 16. The churches of the Gentiles received Paul's prayers for ministers (Acts 14:23).
 17. The church at Philippi was started with emphasis on prayer (Acts 16:13,16,25).
 18. The church at Ephesus had a prayer meeting with Paul on the shore (Acts 20:36).
 19. The church at Tyre also had a prayer meeting with Paul on the shore (Acts 21:5).
 20. The apostle Paul testified an early trip to Jerusalem included prayer (Acts 22:17).
 21. The island of Melita saw the father of its chief man healed by prayer (Acts 28:8).
 22. Paul showed that praying for souls of men is most definitely scriptural (Rom 10:1).
 23. Warfare against the devil requires the action of persevering prayer (Eph 6:10-20).
 24. The prayers of saints – N.T. believers – rises up to God as incense (Rev 5:8; 8:3-4).
- E. Prayer is not an option; it is taught throughout the N.T. by both example and precept.
1. Christian warfare against the devil includes armed activity of prayer (Eph 6:10-18).
 2. Paul constantly illustrates prayer for churches (Rom 1:9; Eph 1:16-19; 3:14-19).
 3. He directed Timothy to prayer for those in authority as a priority (I Tim 2:1-3,8).
 4. He described other men given to constant prayer for spiritual prosperity (Col 4:12).
 5. There is an intimacy assumed about confession and prayer that is rare (Jas 5:16).
 6. Striving or wrestling with God should be done for church and pastor (Rom 15:30).
 7. Prayer must have a pure life, forgiving heart, and bold confidence (I Tim 2:8), as taught elsewhere (Ps 66:18; Is 1:15; Jn 9:31; Matt 5:24; 6:14-15; 21:22; Jas 1:6-7).
 8. We must love the truth and obey it for prayers to be heard (Ps 145:18; Prov 28:9).
 9. Delighting in God is a prescribed means for His blessing (Is 58:13-14; Job 22:21).
 10. We must be fervent with whole hearts in order to find God as we desire (Je 29:13).
 11. Be importunate without ceasing (Luke 11:5-8; 18:1-8; I Thess 5:17; Rom 12:12).
 12. Pray as if everything depends on God, but work as if God only uses diligent means.
 13. Spiritual requests, especially by Paul, are convicting and enlightening (Ps 119:18,27,35-36; 122:6; Luke 11:13; Rom 1:9-12; 10:1; Eph 1:15-19; 3:14-19; Phil 1:9-11; Col 1:9-11; I Thes 3:9-13; II Thes 3:1-2; Mark 9:24; Col 4:12; Ja 1:5).
- F. How can we increase our praying both in private and in our church more than before?
1. We have had sermons and slide presentations about the role and power of prayer, and review of them should be made from time to time to provoke and remind you.
 2. We began men's prayer ten minutes before the first service on September 21, 2008.
 3. We began a monthly schedule to pray for every member and friend in May, 2009.

4. We began a small pastor's prayer meeting on Tuesday nights on Nov 18, 2014.
 5. You could have prayer at the end of each meal for other matters, not just before it.
 6. We could pray more at the end of our services, not just at the beginning or during.
 7. Whenever you get together with friends from the church, make sure prayer occurs.
 8. When anything occurs in your family, use it for prayer of thanksgiving or petition.
 9. You may feel uncomfortable at first, but you can pray by email, phone, text, etc.
 10. Prayer should be the first resort or response rather than any other human substitute, so there should be frequent grabbing or lifting of hands and offering up of prayers.
 11. Pursue greater effectiveness, fervency, righteousness, spiritual content (Jas 5:16).
 12. Rather than closing eyes, lifting hands is the Bible position (I Kgs 8:22; I Tim 2:8).
 13. Help your pastor pray more by jealously guarding his time for prayer (Acts 6:4).
 14. Your pastor is committed to praying more for the spiritual needs of the church.
 15. If there is a need in conversation after a service, grab hands or lift hands and pray; you should feel free to do it huddled in the sanctuary or other rooms front or back.
 16. More prayers for salvation like Paul for conversion and evangelism (Rom 10:1).
 17. Emphasize spiritual requests – Holy Spirit, wisdom, Christ revealed, more faith, incline heart, make me to go, quicken me, forgive me, conversions, ministers, open scripture, nation for godliness and honesty, will of God, peace of Jerusalem, etc.
 18. De-emphasize natural things that constitute most prayers by those ignorant of the Bible, such as health, jobs, money, cars, houses, spouses, weather, accidents, etc.
 19. Fasting to show seriousness with God is good (Matt 17:21; I Cor 7:5; Acts 13:1-3).
 20. Remember to kneel sometimes, for this is a scriptural position (Acts 20:36; 21:5).
 21. The movie *War Room* has a good goal and result, but Jesus taught the closet for personal prayer 2000 yrs ago (Matt 6:5-6; 14:23; 26:36-39; Mark 1:35; Luke 5:16).
 22. A prayer partner is good with a Bible basis and promise (Matt 18:19; I Cor 7:5).
 23. Agree by *Amen!* (Neh 8:6; I Cor 14:16; Rom 1:25; 9:5; 11:36; 15:33; 16:20,24,27).
 24. Paul only made mention of requests to pray for more (Ro 1:9; Eph 1:16; Phm 1:4).
- G. We should not be surprised that it is connected to the Spirit (#2), for He assists prayer.
1. The Holy Spirit assists with fervent groanings and correct content (Rom 8:26-27).
 2. Our access to the Father, especially in prayer, is by the Holy Spirit (Eph 2:18).
 3. Yet, even with many spiritual gifts, prayer includes understanding (I Cor 14:15).
- H. For more on the subject of prayer, especially the importance and power of prayer.
1. There is much more about prayer in the following outlines, especially the first one.
 2. Comprehensive outline on prayer ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/effectual-prayer.pdf>.
 3. Slide presentation to pray more ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/power-of-prayer-slides.pdf>.
 4. Sermon outline on its priority ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/prayer-is-a-priority.pdf>.
 5. Sermon outline on its power ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/power-of-prayer.pdf>.
 6. Slides about inspired requests ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/inspired-prayer-requests.pdf>

#4: Spiritual Mindedness

- A. There is a war for your mind, which is the combination of your heart and your inputs.
 - 1. Paul told believers to renew their minds based on God's great mercy (Rom 12:1-2).
 - 2. We are to choose the mind of Jesus Christ (Phil 2:5; I Cor 2:6; I Peter 1:13; 4:1).
- B. The Holy Spirit clearly identifies spiritual mindedness as a desired trait (Rom 8:5-8).
- C. Paul prophesied that Christians would become great lovers of pleasure (II Tim 3:4-5).
- D. There are very many exciting things in our lives and world living in America in 2015.
 - 1. Not all of them are sinful, but even those that are not sin are weights slowing us.
 - 2. Marriage and children may be exciting, but they detract from Christ (I Co 7:29-35).
 - 3. Great jobs with great pay are great things, and we should work diligently and advance according to Bible rules, but it is a lesser thing by far than those above.
 - 4. We have a race to run, and it is a spiritual race, which is hindered by natural things.
 - 5. For more about the Christian race ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/running-your-race.pdf>.
- E. However, the Bible makes clear that spiritual things above are far more important.
 - 1. We have known a church before holding the truth, but valuing this life too much.
 - 2. If you can see it, then it is temporal and far lesser than spiritual things (II Co 4:18).
- F. We must purposefully set our affection above and help each other to do the same.
 - 1. God tells us what things to think about ... so think upon those things (Phil 4:8).
 - 2. All that is in the world is not of God, and flirting is spiritual adultery (James 4:4).
- G. We must have love of God, His works, His words consuming all parts of our being.
- H. We should delight and glory in Him above all other things (Psalm 37:4; Job 22:21).
- I. Jeremiah 9:23-24 contrasts three things causing delight to worldlings or His children.
- J. Let the dead bury the dead, for we walk by faith toward heaven (Matt 8:22; Phil 3:20).
- K. If earthly minded, we are belly worshippers and enemies of Christ (Phil 3:18-19).
- L. Health, wealth, family, friends, jobs, politics, houses, cars, and all such are far lesser.
 - 1. We should be willing to have a broken body, if our spirit/soul was fat and well.
 - 2. The song, *What Empty Things*, devalues wealth, safety, health, and friends to God.
- M. Consider growth from Bible economics to the new Bible economics of Luke 16:1-12.
- N. Mere truth alone is hardly anything, for the devils themselves believe it trembling.
 - 1. For more about spiritually mindedness ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/spiritually-minded.pdf>.
 - 2. For another view of spiritual saints ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/spiritual-champions.pdf>.
- O. How can we increase our spiritual mindedness in private and public more than before?
 - 1. Conversations should be directed and encouraged toward spiritual subjects, just as they are directed by almost everyone for new jobs, engagements, babies, cars, etc.
 - 2. When you get with even one soul, you should have an agenda to protect from folly.
 - 3. We have to talk of worldly things e.g. jobs, but we can put them in spiritual light.
 - 4. What is your Facebook page about? What is its theme, its content, its appeals?
 - 5. When you write an email or send a text, include a verse as more than letterhead.
 - 6. Fathers must take the lead to set the foundation, parameters, and goals for this.
 - 7. We must guard, limit, and correct worldly inputs to minds and families, for we will never amount to more than what is in our hearts, which is a choice (Matt 12:34).
 - 8. You cannot have your cake and eat it; God does not allow it (Matt 6:24; Jas 4:4).

9. For bodily exercise or things like it, we must shout of its little value (I Tim 4:7-9).

#5: Heavenly Perspective

- A. This is different than being spiritually minded – this is a future perspective of heaven.
1. A heavenly perspective is part of being spiritually minded, but consider it separate.
 2. As part of being spiritually minded, we must adjust our perspective to eternity.
 3. If we do not believe heaven is real, then it will not be part of our thought process.
 4. If we do not hate the sinfulness here and love the holiness there, we will degrade it.
- B. Baptism was intended to alter priorities for a resurrected life and heaven (Col 3:1-4).
- C. Real Christians want to go to heaven where things are far better (Heb 12:22-24).
- D. It is far too easy and tempting to get excited about this life now and degrade eternity.
1. We have more to keep us excited about living here and now than any previously.
 2. Too bad we are not underfed bond slaves in fear of our lives, then it would be easy.
 3. There are things here that we must be diligent about, but they cannot consume us.
 4. But ... what if heaven is just ½ of what the Bible teaches? It deserves all of you!
 5. Anything you admire or desire on earth can easily be trumped by heaven's least!
- E. We must keep in our minds the coming of Jesus Christ and eternity in sinless heaven.
- F. Asaph got straightened out in church by reminders about eternal reversals (Ps 73:17).
- G. God recently led us to consider Peter's epistles, and they were much in this direction.
1. I Peter 1:3-4 quickly directed us to our hope of an incomparable eternal inheritance.
 2. II Peter 3:11-14 closed out with a view of all things burning and a new universe.
- H. What are you doing to get Paul's attitude that it is far better to depart (Phil 1:23)?
1. Would it be better to depart? If not, you are holding on to something too much.
 2. The only reason you should want to stay is to do more for the kingdom spiritually.
- I. What are you doing to get John's attitude that the quicker Jesus comes the better?
1. Or are you wishing, if you think about it at all, that you want time for fun here?
 2. If you would stop for a moment and believe, heaven trumps even your imagination.
- J. Jesus lived a holy life and beat a terrible death for heaven's joy (Heb 12:2; Ps 16:11).
- K. We must remember that even neutral or godly things like marriage can be hindrance.
1. More about a heavenly lifestyle ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/heavenly-lifestyle.pdf>.
 2. Danger of weights in Christian race ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/running-your-race.pdf>.
- L. How can we improve our upward perspective in private and public more than before?
1. We must include and emphasize heaven and its things over earth and its things.
 2. We must believe and encourage one another that eternal things are the real things.
 3. In all our discussions and preaching about earthly efforts, we must stress heaven.
 4. We must correct those who exalt the future too much and are dysfunctional here.
 5. Rather than focus on the good things of this life, let us point out their deficiencies.
 6. Let us exalt funerals, and there will be many more, as great events of departures.
 7. Not just the progress to new Bible economics, we must embrace the lesson itself.
 8. We must learn to number our days here and realize how few and brief they are.
 9. We should identify and remind each other of the deceitfulness of this life now.

#6: Relationship over Religion and Truth

- A. God saved you, not to keep you from hell, but rather for you to know Him (Jn 17:3).
1. The first end of all things, including your salvation, is the glory of God (Pr 16:4).
 2. The purpose of salvation is to have a family in heaven to display God's glory.
 3. He wants you to know and delight in Him over just bare pardon, thus adoption.
 4. It is God's glory Himself that is the basis of election and reprobation (Ro 9:13-24).
- B. What do we mean here, since many heretics speak similar things about their heresies?
1. We mean walking with God is to be exalted above any academic list of doctrines.
 2. We mean delighting in God Himself is to be chosen over delighting in the church.
 3. We mean fellowship with God and Christ is better than new arguments for truth.
 4. We do not mean that loving Jesus replaces or trumps most emphasis on doctrine.
 5. We do not mean a peace in your soul allows you to alter or neglect any doctrine.
 6. We do not mean that you can worship God any way you choose as long as sincere.
 7. For more about walking with God ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/pdf/walking-with-god.pdf>
- C. If you see this as merely a repetition of the first point, Christ centered, that is okay.
- D. Both Paul and John stress experimental and personal knowledge (Phil 3:10; Rev 2:5).
- E. Believing the truth elevates you from pagan idiots to the level of depraved devils.
1. Pagan idiots do not know truth, because they are still worshipping buffalo chips.
 2. But the devils themselves believe more doctrine than you know, and they tremble.
 3. There is no value in and of itself in believing any doctrine without loving the God of the doctrine with a changed life dedicated to His glory and serving His children.
 4. The amount of truth believed has little to no bearing on a soul's eternal destiny.
- F. Four sermons were preached in September of 2013 that were of great importance.
1. Fellowship with Christ by Rev 3:20 ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/pdf/fellowship-with-christ.pdf>
 2. Filled with God by Ephesians 3:14-19 ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/pdf/filled-with-god.pdf>
 3. Drawing nigh to God by Jas 4: 8-10 ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/pdf/drawing-nigh-to-god.pdf>
- G. How can we improve our fellowship with God in private and public more than before?
1. We should reclaim Revelation 3:20 and emphasize it for its glorious invitation.
 2. Rather than only fearing, loving, or knowing God, we want to delight in Him.
 3. Let us value *Knowing God* and *He Is Altogether Lovely* over the Five Phases.
 4. Let us correct error that honors, justifies, or excuses those merely 'believing truth'.
 5. Let's not settle for God's providence in events but His character in the providence.
 6. Rather than spiritual songs about the dear old church, let us exalt His attributes.
 7. Rather than meditation for self-examination only, let us meditate on His works.
 8. With greater prayer mentioned above, you will have more fellowship with Him.
 9. With more of the Holy Spirit listed above, He will teach us more of Christ's love.
 10. Without time and quiet, this will never happen. Activity and/or noise are curses.

#7: Personal Holiness

- A. Holiness becomes or beautifies God's house, the place of the Holy Spirit (Ps 93:5).
1. David stressed the worship of God in the beauty of holiness (Psalm 29:2; 96:9).
 2. Real worship is not a praise band but personal holiness – in the beauty of holiness.

3. If we want to have a great church in God's sight, then we must be holy for Him.
4. Holiness is identified and exalted as God's will for *Higher Ground* (I Thes 4:1-8).
- B. God is holy, and He rightly demands our holiness (Leviticus 20:7; I Peter 1:15-17).
 1. When Isaiah met God, he was immediately convicted of common sin (Is 6:1-8).
 2. Israel wore a blue ribbon on the fringe of garments for holiness (Num 15:30-41).
 3. We should remember Moses and Joshua meeting Him (Ex 3:1-6; Josh 5:13-15).
 4. His name is holy; He is thrice-holy; the four beasts know it; He swears by it!
 5. We studied Peter's epistles, and a new universe demands holiness (II Pet 3:10-14).
- C. Holiness is spiritual purity or sinlessness by consecration to His use without pollution.
 1. We are made holy by the work of sanctification, God's first and then our own.
 2. Righteousness is legal correctness; holiness is moral or spiritual perfection to God.
 3. Holiness is extreme and intolerant! It hate any and all evil or moral compromise.
 4. It is impossible to serve and worship God without it (Joshua 24:19; Ezek 20:39).
- D. We want to have a holy church for the Lord, but it is only obtained by holy persons.
 1. Walking in fellowship with God requires our holiness for He is light (I John 1:3-7).
 2. Rather than reverent worship, which is listed later, we want to be holy before God.
 3. No man can see God without holiness (Heb 12:14); only legal and vital are perfect.
 4. See *holy* for Spirit, Scriptures, angels, people, place, covenant, hill, temple, name.
- E. But there is a problem, in that most Christians and churches are unholy (II Tim 3:2).
 1. There is a lightness about sin today that reduces conviction and fear to a minimum.
 2. Seeking entertainment and fable for assemblies, they do not consecrate themselves.
 3. It is rarely preached; less seldom demanded; never enforced in today's churches.
 4. Are you sighing by reason of the lightness and abominations (Jer 32:32; Ezek 9:4)?
 5. This will be one of the hardest traits to embrace, for our vile natures hate holiness.
 6. Nothing is holy or sacred anymore; all is profaned, from the unborn to sodomy.
- F. Surely an important point in the Old Testament, holiness is also important in the New.
 1. God has called us to holiness, and Romans means nothing without it (Rom 12:1-2).
 2. He created and saved us, and we owe Him holy bodies and spirits (I Cor 6:19-20).
 3. He will draw nigh for fellowship with holiness by separation (II Cor 6:14 – 7:1).
 4. Your new man is fully holy; you can be holy by God's power (Ep 4:24; II Pet 1:4).
 5. Prayer is done by men, but they are to pray with holy hands lifted up (I Tim 2:8).
- G. For much more of holiness to please God ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/holiness-fringe.pdf>.
 1. Consider the sermon slides for *Techno Sins* ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/techno-sins.pdf>.
 2. Consider the sermon for *Forgotten Sins* ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/forgotten-sins.pdf>.
- H. How can we improve our personal holiness to please our holy God more than before?
 1. We hate it; it is unpopular; it requires sacrifice; it makes us strange (I Peter 4:1-5).
 2. We learn to hate sin, sinners, sinful lifestyle, sinful entertainment, light preachers.
 3. Each member must daily or more frequently confess all sins after self-examination.
 4. Each member must be vigilant and severe against the carnal, sinful inputs around.
 5. We sing, *More Holiness Give Me*, but you must check every thought and activity.
 6. We must not take indirect pleasure in sin by friendship or entertainment (Ro 1:32).
 7. One of the most unholy things in your house is your television (Ps 101:3). Beware!

8. You cannot be more holy than your affections and your thoughts. Purify them all.
9. Your speech reflects affections and thoughts; improve it to be holier than before.
10. Any use of wine or strong drink must be guarded to maintain holy conversation.
11. Our Saturday night time of preparation, quite unique to us, is part of consecration.
12. Reject unholy family or friends to consecrate yourself like Levites (Ex 32:26-29).
13. We must desire, expect, and accept preaching on this subject under various titles.
14. We must continue to embrace strict discipline to avoid compromise (Jer 23:9-11).
15. Keep your body, the Holy Spirit's temple, holy by avoiding any sinful activities.
16. All sexual thoughts, conversation, or actions must be limited by God's standards.
17. Women must kill idleness, pride, debate, tattling, busybodies, folly, and other sins.
18. Holy women fear their husbands with meek and quiet spirits, like Sarah (I Pet 3:5).
19. We must highly esteem scripture and its standard of holiness for us (Ps 119:128).
20. We must emphasize the holiness of God versus love, as we consider His attributes.

#8: Personal Devotions

- A. How can our church be great, if we ourselves and our families are not so in traits 1-7?
 1. A church is not building or organization, but a congregation of consecrated saints.
 2. A church is not a meeting for Bible teaching, but an organism, body tied to Christ.
 3. A church, God's temple, cannot be better than its combination of individual stones.
 4. Traits so far of great Christians are *Christ-centered, Holy Spirit, prayer, spiritual minded, heavenly perspective, relationship over religion, and personal holiness.*
 5. How can or will we excel in those seven things, if we are not doing them at home?
 6. It is hard to imagine a church where the majority or all the members excelled here!
- B. Does the Bible teach personal devotions? Can we establish them as a general rule?
 1. We use *devotions* for private time to commune, fellowship, draw nigh, invite in, read Bible, pray, confess, meditate, self-examine, review sermons, sing, study, etc.
 2. Not mentioned in the New Testament? Neither is spanking children, so use O.T.
 3. The patriarchs walked with God and worshipped him individually, though they also directed family worship (Gen 5:22; 6:9; 12:8; 28:16-22; 31:13; 35:1-3; etc.).
 4. Joshua did not leave the tabernacle, in desire to fellowship with God (Ex 33:11).
 5. Job practiced private worship that including confessing sins of his sons (Job 1:5).
 6. David was personally obsessed with God's word and rightly so (Psalm 1; 19; 119).
 7. Devotions are indicated, described, or commanded many times in David's Psalms (Ps 1:2; 4:4; 16:7; 17:3; 37:4; 27:8; 42:8; 63:6; 77:5-6; 119:11,55; 143:5; 149:5).
 8. For much more about David and his heart ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/heart-of-david.pdf>
 9. David and Daniel both prayed three times a day on their own (Ps 55:17; Dan 6:10).
 10. Jesus taught secret devotions His Father would reward openly (Matt 6:1-8,16-18).
 11. Jesus withdrew Himself several times for long prayer (Lu 5:16; 6:12; Mark 1:35).
 12. John was identified as the disciple Jesus loved and laid on his bosom (John 13:23).
 13. Peter went up on a housetop about noon, not a big assembly, to pray (Acts 10:9).
 14. The Bereans were described as noble for searching the Bible daily (Acts 17:11).
 15. Christians arm themselves against Satan personally, and pray much (Eph 6:10-18).

16. James gave devotional advice to individual men to sing psalms for joy (Jas 5:13).
17. The glorified Jesus warned and then invited Laodicea to sup with Him (Rev 3:20).
- C. God chose a variety of verbs to describe what each Christian should do in devotions.
1. Great men *meditate* on God, word, and works (Ps 1:2; 63:6; 77:12; 119:15; 143:5).
 2. Great men *muse* on things of God, which is to be absorbed in thought (Ps 143:5).
 3. Great men *ponder* their way, which is part of godly self-examination (Prov 4:26).
 4. Great men *consider* God and their lives (De 4:39; Ps 48:13; 64:9; 119:95; Ha 1:5).
 5. Great men *search* their spirits about their relationship with God (Ps 77:6; La 3:40).
 6. Great men *examine* themselves to be in the faith (I Cor 11:28; II Cor 13:5; Ga 6:4).
 7. Great men *think* on their ways and turn unto the Lord (Ps 119:59; 94:19; Phil 4:8).
 8. Great men *remember* God, word, and works (Ps 20:7; 42:4; 63:6; 77:10-11; 143:5).
 9. Great men *commune* with their hearts of their relationship with God (Ps 4:4; 77:6).
 10. Great men *delight* in the Lord, glory in Him (Ps 1:2; 37:4; 119:47,77; Is 58:13-14).
 11. Great men *glory* by exulting joyfully in Him (Ps 64:10; Je 4:2; I Cor 1:31; Ga 6:4).
 12. Great men *take pleasure* in God and His great works (Psalm 111:2; 92:4; 104:34).
 13. For much more of delighting in God ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/pdf/delight-in-the-lord.pdf>.
- D. Self-examination is a key trait of great men (Psalm 26:2; 139:23-24; Job 34:31-32).
1. Paul taught self-examination in the New Testament (I Cor 11:28; II Cor 13:5).
 2. Spiritual exercise, far better than bodily exercise, will help you live and meet God.
- E. Our lives and world are too busy and too noisy, always distracting us from quiet time.
1. There is need for quiet time for the devotions above (Ps 46:10; Ha 2:20; Zec 2:13).
 2. Even home is no longer safe for refuge ... phone, computer, television, radio, etc.
 3. Yet some devices can be used for helpful spiritual matter e.g. select music with lyrics, audio sermons or outlines, prepared daily devotions, have Bible read to you, Bible search function, video sermons, website search function, search Internet, etc.
 4. How will you tell the Lord that you were too busy for personal time with Him, when you waste hours daily for yourself to no real profit? This will be terrible!
- F. Life is too prosperous and pleasant to crave devotions with God (De 6:10-12; Pr 30:9).
1. Daily blasts of ease and pleasures are against it (Is 32:9-11; Am 6:1; Matt 24:12).
 2. If you delight in a thing, you want to know as much about it as you can discover.
 3. If you delight in someone, you will avoid any personal conduct that would offend.
 4. If you delight in something, you want to be around it and take in all its pleasures.
- G. More about the heart of David in private ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/pdf/heart-of-david.pdf>.
1. David *confessed sins* regularly, even sins of ignorance (Ps 19:12; 25:7; 32:5; etc.).
 2. David *meditated* regularly, thinking about God (Ps 4:4; 63:6; 104:34; 143:5; etc.).
 3. David *prayed* regularly, addressing himself to God (II Sa 2:1; Ps 5:3; 55:17; etc.).
 4. David *examined* himself, searching for any sins (Ps 17:3; 26:1-2; 139:23-24; etc.).
- H. How can we improve personal devotions to privately worship God more than before?
1. Test yourself with intimate, personal verses like these: Gen 15:1; Ps 27:8; 37:4; 42:1-2; 63:1; 73:25-26; 130:6; 143:6; Isaiah 26:8-9; Jer 9:23-24; Lam 3:24-26.
 2. Remember that God is not impressed with words without your heart (Isaiah 29:13).
 3. Remember God is jealous and wants you to love Him only, above all else, always.

4. Remember you have more to draw nigh to God than O.T. saints (Heb 7:19; 10:22).
5. You must set a time or times for it and not allow anything to interrupt your plan.
6. This is usually easier in the morning, when there are few distractions and demands.
7. It does not need to be long or tiring; taking any time is far better than no time at all.
8. It needs to be focused, personal, intimate, transparent, supplicating time with God.
9. You must be eager, impressionable, vulnerable, receptive, expressive, thankful.
10. Come humbly with a broken spirit; He cannot deny or despise (Ps 51:17; Is 57:15).
11. Your goal is to meet God and Jesus Christ, feed your heart and mind, in that order.
12. Your chief goal is not Bible expert; even pastors rely on public ministry (II Ti 2:2).
13. You should start with begging or supplicating prayer for His blessing (Ps 119:18).
14. There is no fellowship with outstanding sin (Ps 66:18; Pr 28:9; Jn 9:31; I Jn 1:5-7).
15. Seek a goal! His face, assurance, works, will, words, holiness, love of you, etc.
16. We have a very simple Bible reading program for short, understandable readings.
17. We have daily devotionals to go with the readings to provoke your consideration.
18. We have a variety of reading schedules to fit the needs or preferences of anyone.
19. We have other daily devotionals like Charles Spurgeon's, *Morning and Evening*.
20. We have sermon and other documents or outlines of all kinds to direct your mind.
21. It is not reading more chapters or verses, but pondering the verses read much more.
22. You can read just to read ... you can read to know God, hear God, love God, etc.
23. There are 1,440 minutes in a day, and you waste hundreds of them. Worship God!
24. Bible study is not key, for God chose ministers to do it (Ezra 7:6; I Tim 4:13-15).
25. Reviewing sermons trusts God for providentially sending you messenger/message.
26. How can you reduce cares of this life, the weights, to pursue God (I Cor 7:25-35).
27. Your devotions have the specific goal to keep yourself loving God (Jude 1:21).
28. Your devotions have the specific goal of praying in the Holy Ghost (Jude 1:20).
29. We have much material on the website e.g. sermons, songs, memory verses, etc.
30. What draws you to God ... *Messianic Psalms, Altogether Lovely, Knowing God?*
31. Do we need to list the top 365 verses in the Bible for meditating on things of God?
32. Some benefit by journals; you should use whatever works to quicken your heart.
33. Time in bed seeking God is scriptural (Job 33:14-18; Ps 4:4; 17:3; 63:6; 77:6).
34. For more about reducing weights ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/running-your-race.pdf>.
35. For using Psalm 119 for prayer ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/prayer-from-psalm-119.pdf>.

#9: Spiritual Warfare

- A. Satan, or the devil, is the great enemy of God's children and churches since Eden.
 1. We walk by faith, not sight; there are things good and bad out of sight (II Cor 5:7).
 2. Paul feared Satan could deceive Corinth like he had Eve (II Cor 11:2-4,13-15).
 3. Satan has not accused believers to God since Jesus put away our sins (Rev 12:10).
 4. He was cast out of heaven and was bound from deceiving the nations (Rev 20:1-3).
 5. However, he is very active seeking to destroy foolish, weak Christians (I Pe 5:8-9).
 6. Learning his history and his involvement elsewhere has little value in comparison.
 7. If he is to be loosed a little season, we must be more vigilant than ever (Rev 20:3).

8. For much more about the devil ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/pdf/power-of-darkness.pdf>.
 9. Playing with the devil will destroy you ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/pdf/abaddon-apollyon.pdf>.
- B. The Christian life is more serious than most teach; a deadly enemy wants to kill you.
1. We walk by faith, not sight; there are things good and bad out of sight (II Cor 5:7).
 2. You must be sober and vigilant to resist this evil adversary by faith (I Pet 5:8-9).
 3. You are at war! This enemy seeks to destroy you! A foolish life will let him win!
 4. You are flesh, blood, and foolish ... do not underestimate the spirit world's power.
 5. The air is not just for breathing; it holds created spirits, good and bad, always near.
 6. You are part of a great drama that transcends anything you have ever imagined.
 7. You know in the life-and-death struggle of war a sleepy sentry can cost many lives.
 8. He is walking about, not omnipresent, but able by his army of devils to find you.
 9. His agenda, desire, and intentions are to destroy God's kingdom and His people.
 10. He will take advantage of any opening by God's permission or their foolishness.
- C. He is a created spirit, meaning he is Potter's clay for God's own personal pleasure.
1. However, he was created with intelligence and power greater than any or all men.
 2. He is an evil spirit allowed to introduce evil into the universe for God's own glory.
 3. He likely knows you better than you know yourself and knows things to affect you.
- D. Consider a short timeline of his position, activities, and history with God and men.
1. He was created before Adam, likely before creation's days, in a holy condition.
 2. He was a high and mighty angel, maybe highest, similar to Michael the archangel.
 3. He sinned by pride and was cast down from official duties in heaven (Luke 10:18).
 4. He retained right to return to heaven, where he would accuse saints (Job 1:6-11).
 5. Jesus confronted and defeated many of his projects among men (Luke 10:17-20).
 6. Jesus paid for sin; he was confined to earth (John 12:31; Rom 8:33; Rev 12:7-10).
 7. He was bound from deceiving all the nations as before, until near the end (Rev 20).
 8. He will be cast into the lake of fire for eternal torment made for him (Matt 25:41).
- E. Consider some examples of diabolical deeds and intents of this creature against you.
1. He quickly corrupted our parents to ruin Eden and damn all men by three deaths.
 2. He further ruined this family, causing evil Cain to kill righteous Abel (I John 3:12).
 3. He took David and provoked him to number Israel against the Bible (I Chr 21:1-6).
 4. He overthrew Job's life and health by moving armies, weather, and wife (Job 1-2).
 5. He and his angels are involved in manipulating pagan governments (Da 10:13,20).
 6. He resisted Joshua the high priest during the rebuilding of Jerusalem (Zech 3:1).
 7. He and his cohorts wrecked havoc in the life of a Gadarene, a lunatic, and swine.
 8. A woman was bowed 18 years by a spirit of infirmity from Satan (Luke 13:10-17).
 9. He wanted Peter, the Lord allowed it, and Peter fell far and fast (Luke 22:31-32).
 10. He entered Judas Iscariot and moved him to conspire and betray Jesus (Jn 13:27).
 11. Satan took a covetous couple Ananias and Sapphira to steal and lie (Acts 5:1-11).
 12. He went after brother Paul with a thorn in the flesh, but God used it (II Co 12:7-8).
 13. There is power in the air that affects men and moves them against God (Ep 2:1-3).
 14. The Spirit chose the word and activity of wrestling to describe the fight (Eph 6:12).
 15. Those opposing themselves against truth are the devil's captives (II Tim 2:25-26).

- F. You can resist the devil and send him packing, because Jesus Christ has defeated him.
1. Both Peter and James taught this rule of resisting the devil (I Peter 5:9; James 4:7).
 2. He will flee those who resist; he will take advantage of doors you give (Eph 4:27).
 3. It is an imperative command – *resist!* – rule of success for believers and churches.
 4. He is the spirit behind the lusts of every sin in your life that steal you from Christ.
 5. You can keep yourself from sin, and if so, then Satan cannot touch you (I Jn 5:18).
- G. We do not play games with exorcism or such, as we believe that was an apostolic gift.
1. Jesus specifically gave it to the apostles, and they performed it (Mark 16:17-20).
 2. There is not a mention of it in any epistles, but there are commands to resist him.
 3. Jesus taught us to fast and pray; we can hate giving place (Mat 17:21; Eph 4:27).
 4. We pray for those sick, but we do not anoint with oil and pray the prayer of faith.
- H. How do you resist the devil? The Bible is not silent about defeating him in your life.
1. The concept of resisting Satan is not difficult. *Do not do what he wants you to do.*
 2. Jesus resisted with three answers of scripture, and he left Him alone (Matt 4:1-11).
 3. Paul gave a clear description of armor/actions to stand against him (Eph 6:10-18).
 4. Paul's rule is to give no place by rejecting lying and anger (Eph 4:25-27; Jn 8:44).
 5. Paul's similar rule is to know his devices about lack of forgiveness (II Cor 2:6-11).
 6. His arsenal is three things shown three times (I John 2:16; Gen 3:6; Matt 4:1-11).
 7. You resist the devil by being strong in the word of God against sin (I Jn 2:13-14).
 8. Hear the gospel well; he snatches it away, brings persecution, etc. (Luke 8:11-15).
 9. Hate envy or strife; love peace and gentleness; they are God or Satan (Jas 3:14-18).
 10. Have a gentle spirit, or you are of another spirit, like sons of Zeruiah (Luke 9:55).
 11. You deny place by cutting off hands or plucking eyes (Matt 5:27-32; Rom 13:14).
 12. You must flee and mortify any lusts you have (Col 3:5-8; II Tim 2:22; Pr 4:14-15).
 13. Prayer is powerful, but prayer with fasting was required for a lunatic (Matt 17:21).
 14. The devils said they knew Jesus and Paul *and* hypocrite imposters (Acts 19:15).
 15. Do better than Lot, Achan, Samson, Saul, David, Amnon, Solomon, Ahab, etc.
- I. You cannot move away from the hope of the gospel in its claims, promises, or duties.
1. God wants worship in spirit and truth (John 4:20-24), so the devil will push error.
 2. We guard our religion and ancient landmarks as carefully as we can against him.
 3. As early as Cain, there were inventions in worship by the devil, who killed Abel.
 4. We preach the truth to deliver men from his blindness (Ac 26:16-18; II Cor 4:3-4).
 5. Satan is very involved in the RCC and its blindness (II Thess 2:9; I Tim 4:1-3).
 6. He has another Jesus, spirit, gospel we must strictly reject (II Cor 11:3-4,13-15).
 7. The martyrs and remnant of Jesus resisted him steadfastly to death (Rev 12:11,17).
 8. We must not get distracted with battles or conspiracies other than the real one.
 9. We must be so fixed in truth we will not be moved by scripture abused (Matt 4:6).
 10. He looks for carnal Christians, for they are easy prey; strong Christians resist him.
- J. For more about the devil and his operations and how to resist him, see these links.
1. Sermon, *The Power of Darkness* ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/power-of-darkness.pdf>.
 2. Sermon, *Give No Place to the Devil* ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/give-no-place.pdf>
 3. Sermon, *Jesus the Stronger Man* ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/christ/stronger-man/sermon.php>.

4. Slide presentation, *Abaddon and Apollyon* ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/pdf/abaddon-apollyon.pdf>.
 5. Slide message, *Armour of God* ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/pdf/armor-of-god-Nathan-11-06-2013.pdf>.
- K. How can we improve standing against the devil and resisting him better than before?
1. We know, believe, and declare Jesus Christ's total victory over him, his devils, and his claims against us (Luke 11:20; Col 2:15; Heb 2:14; I John 3:8; Rev 12:10).
 2. Minimize any intellectual exercise learning about him, but rather resist him. Get it!
 3. Grasp that flesh and blood foes are of little concern compared to this angel of light.
 4. Resist all temptations to all sins; resist any idea of relaxing your Christian stand.
 5. Prayer is strongly connected here, because it is the activity of soldiers (Eph 6:18).
 6. Let us keep ourselves from all sin, since he will flee such and not touch (I Jn 5:18).
 7. Pray that God will not lift His hedge, like He did Job, David, Hezekiah, and Peter.
 8. Pray for a hedge like He put around Job that Satan knew well was there for him.
 9. Stop fighting distracting windmills like City Hall or Washington, which are games.
 10. Rejoice in the great gift of repentance that gives power over Satan (II Ti 2:24-26)!
 11. For more of repentance and its power ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/pdf/repentance-factor.pdf>.
 12. Choose forgiveness and mercy; hate anger and bitterness (II Cor 2:11; Eph 4:27).
 13. You must hate the things God hates or you are leaning toward His enemy Satan.
 14. Do not lie to yourself that envy, bitterness, or strive is anything else (Jas 3:14-18).
 15. Keep your marriage peaceful and romantic, or he will gain inroads (I Cor 7:1-5).
 16. The television is his pulpit of enticing sight and sound for carnal living (Ps 101:3).
 17. The Internet can be a pulpit and video monitor for diabolical temptation to sin.
 18. Avoid excessive activity and tiredness; recall he tempted hungry Jesus with food.
 19. Relationships with the opposite sex must be guarded, for he will work to ruin two.
 20. Reject anything to do with witchcraft: Halloween, Ouija boards, horoscope, zodiac signs, Merlin the Magician, Harry Potter, worldly music, reading about the devil, magic, fortune cookies, fairy tales, demonic video games, palm readers, another Jesus, another spirit, another gospel, Charismatic or Pentecostal activities or doctrines or practices, and other similar introductions to sorcery or the occult, etc.
 21. Witchcraft sermon outline ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/heresy/witchcraft/sermon.php>.
 22. Women give place by modifying their role in marriage and home (I Tim 5:11-16).
 23. The greater your love and obedience to Jesus Christ the less opportunity for Satan.
 24. Music has long been a tool for opening up the consciousness to devilish influence.
 25. Friends, contentment, hair length, and quick confession of sin help resist the devil.
 26. Remember that fasting might be needed to add to your prayers (Matthew 17:21).
 27. Forgive everyone that offends you immediately, in your heart, and love instead.
 28. Stop foolish thinking! Most thoughts are worthless and/or fertile ground for Satan.

#10: Fruit of the Spirit

- A. This trait of *Higher Ground* is different from trait #2 of the Holy Spirit listed above.
1. That trait was the person and ministry of the Spirit often neglected by Baptists, for we want to be more conscious of Him in theology, salvation, service, prayer, etc.
 2. This trait is the inspired lists of fruit, effects, results, or works of the Holy Spirit.

3. If a boss gave you a list of things to be promoted ... what about God's list of fruit?
- B. We love the doctrine of regeneration by the sovereign operation of the Spirit (Jn 3:8).
 1. If we make our boast of living in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit (Gal 5:25).
 2. If we rejoice in freedom from condemnation, let us walk after the Spirit (Rom 8:1).
 3. This trait should excite the spirit of God's elect to maximum effort to please Him.
- C. The *fruit* of anything is that which is produced, its effects, results, or consequences.
 1. We judge men by their fruits or results, as we do trees (Matt 7:15-20; Jas 3:9-18).
 2. The Bible uses *fruit* for godly traits that please Him (Matt 12:33-37; 13:8,23; Mark 4:7; Luke 6:43-45; 8:14-15,18; Rom 6:21-22; 7:4-5; Phil 1:11; 4:17; Col 1:10).
 3. For more about fruit bearing ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/parable-of-the-sower.pdf>.
- D. God did not save you to live any way you please; you should rather bear much fruit.
 1. John the Baptist blasted those Jews without fruit in their lives (Matthew 3:7-10).
 2. God took His kingdom from the Jews and gave it to us for fruit (Matt 21:41,43).
 3. Jesus gave a harsh parable about a fruitless fig tree in His vineyard (Luke 13:6-9).
 4. John wrote about abiding in Jesus Christ the vine to bear much fruit (John 15:1-8).
 5. Paul wrote that the gospel bore fruit throughout the world and in Colosse (Col 1:6).
 6. Lack of fruit shows disregard for salvation or reprobation (II Pet 1:8-9; Jude 1:12).
 7. We work out what God worked in to be blameless without rebuke (Phil 2:12-16).
 8. If you do not produce fruit, you will be chastened for it or taken out (Heb 12:11).
 9. For Jesus cutting down fruitless trees ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/cut-it-down.pdf>.
- E. Fruit on trees or fruit in a Christian's life is obvious; others can tell much about you.
 1. We want all men to see our good works and glorify God (Matt 5:16; I Pet 2:11-12).
 2. We want to adorn the gospel and silence enemies by our constant virtuous conduct.
 3. Belly worship is obvious (Phil 3:18-19) – listen, watch, count, compare, measure.
 4. About adorning the gospel ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/things-becoming-sound-doctrine.pdf>.
 5. About actions louder than words ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/actions-speak-louder.pdf>.
 6. About being living epistles of Christ ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/living-epistles.pdf>.
- F. Paul and Peter provide several lists that we may combine together for the Spirit's fruit.
 1. Galatians 5:22-23 is known best, which lists nine fruits opposite works of the flesh.
 2. Ephesians 5:9 is much shorter, but it adds righteousness and truth to his longer list.
 3. II Peter 1:5-8 is eight things to prove election and that Peter committed to stress.
 4. James 3:10-18 repeats several and adds purity, humility to exhortation, and mercy.
 5. Hebrews 13:15 may add public and/or verbal praise, the fruit of our lips to God.
 6. We may thus form a list of 18 ... love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, righteousness, truth, virtue, knowledge, godliness, purity, humility to exhortation, mercy, praise.
 7. This list is not exhaustive, but helpful; you may disagree with overlap or exclusion.
 8. The list could be expanded into a comprehensive practical manual of conduct.
 9. For much more about Spirit fruit ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/fruit-of-the-spirit.pdf>.
 10. For much more about Spirit fruit ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/what-god-calls-fruit.pdf>.
- G. Our first need is to get a brief definition or description for these fruits of the Spirit.
 1. **Love** is unselfish care for another's godly profit (I Cor 13:4-7; Ja 2:8; II Co 12:15).

2. **Joy** is heartfelt gladness from knowing the Lord (Phil 4:4; Hab 3:17-19; Lu 10:20).
 3. **Peace** is sweet contentment trusting God and not fighting (Is 26:3-4; Jas 3:17-18).
 4. **Longsuffering** patiently endures adversity and adversaries (Eph 4:2; Col 1:11).
 5. **Gentleness** is an easygoing and tender kindness (I Thes 2:7; Tit 3:2; Jas 3:17-18).
 6. **Goodness** is moral purity and benevolence (Psalm 112:5; Prov 13:22; II Tim 3:3).
 7. **Faith** is confidence in God and His promises (Heb 11:6; Rom 4:17-22; Job 13:15).
 8. **Meekness** avoids personal attention, esteem, or glory (Nu 12:3; Gal 6:1; Eph 4:2).
 9. **Temperance** is self-discipline of passions (Prov 16:32; Phil 4:5; I Cor 9:24-27).
 10. **Righteousness** does what is right by God's definitions (Prov 12:10; Phil 1:9-11).
 11. **Truth** is love of honest and hatred of hypocrisy (Rom 12:17; I Jn 4:6; Phil 1:18).
 12. **Virtue** is noble strength, moral purity to always do right (Pr 31:10-13; I Chr 4:9).
 13. **Knowledge** knows God's will for your life (Phil 1:9-11; Col 1:9-11; Eph 5:16-17).
 14. **Godliness** is sobriety to conform to God's character (Mat 5:43-48; II Cor 7:10-11).
 15. **Purity** is innocence of attitude and ambition (Jas 1:27; 4:8; I Pet 1:22; Prov 22:11).
 16. **Easy to be entreated** is open to advice or correction (Pr 9:7-9; 27:5-6; Ps 141:5).
 17. **Mercy** forgives those who offend you (Mic 6:8; Mat 18:21-35; Jas 2:13; Pr 19:11).
 18. **Praise** is verbal thanksgiving to God, often before others (Ps 34:1-3; Mal 3:16).
- H. How can we increase in fruit to please God more and more by working out His grace?
1. Remember, the presence of the Holy Spirit in your life is by fruit, not by feelings.
 2. Do not put stock in your feelings, thoughts, or words, because only fruit counts.
 3. Do not cheapen the gospel and confuse yourself (fiery dart) by waiting for feelings.
 4. Remember, the presence of the Holy Spirit in your life is by fruit, not gifts, because Judas Iscariot had more gifts than Kenneth Copeland, Benny Hinn et al.
 5. It is a lie you cannot do these things (fiery dart); you have the power (II Pet 1:3-4).
 6. We cannot think ourselves Christians except by measuring ourselves by this fruit.
 7. We do not wait fatalistically for the Spirit to produce fruit; we must learn and do it.
 8. The word of the truth of the gospel teaches fruit in believers (Col 1:6; I The 2:13).
 9. Our new man loves this fruit, but the old man hates it, so we must daily put him on.
 10. We must confess our sins quickly and thoroughly to avoid quenching or grieving.
 11. If we seek daily to live for Jesus Christ and heaven, the Spirit will bear this fruit.
 12. Love the Bible and feast on it, for it is the written mind of the Spirit (I Co 2:11-13).
 13. You, your family, and our church is beautiful to God by fruit, not looks or words.
 14. Of minor consequence, we stress fruit (singular) lest we be distorted and deceived.
 15. Trust your pastor as the Spirit leads him and speaks to you directly (Is 30:20-21).
 16. Let us commend and encourage visible manifestations of these fruits (III Jn 1:12).
 17. Let us warn the unruly and meekly restore those in faults (I Thess 5:14; Gal 6:1).
 18. It takes review to remember and practice these various aspects of the Spirit's fruit.

#11: Soul Winning

- A. We need the Spirit's fruit more, the trait above, but we also need this fruit (Pr 11:30).
1. God's word should affect our lives, and God expects all of us to be soul winners.
 2. We cannot deny the inspired duty and charitable logic that makes this a goal for us.

3. Other proverbs also tell men to save souls (Pr 10:11,21; 13:14; 15:4; 18:21; 25:25).
 4. How sweet are you to those near (Prov 27:9), and how much like iron (Pr 27:17)?
 5. A righteous man should have the fruit, effect or results, of affecting others for God.
 6. A wise man will be a soul winner, and he will use his wisdom to do it effectively.
 7. You should want to share the glory and joy you felt by hearing truth with others.
 8. Christ-centered is first, for we must delight in God, but we must also help others.
 9. Your life may be reduced to two goals – love and service to God and to other men.
 10. We must not enjoy God, His truth, His wisdom, and congregational joy ourselves.
 11. An epitaph, *He delighted in God above all others; he was a tree of life to all others.*
 12. Your life and your legacy should be the souls you turn to righteousness (Dan 12:3).
 13. You will have your affections more like Christ, and you will benefit in knowledge.
 14. A life of service is the only way to live; it is what the gospel and salvation teaches.
- B. We first define the doctrine to avoid confusion or heresy in the matter of saving souls.
1. Our doctrine about the souls of men is entirely different from most or all religions.
 2. God Jehovah, First Cause of all things, gives eternal life unconditionally to some.
 3. Not a single one of these souls can be or will be lost eternally from final salvation.
 4. All the operations of grace from eternity to eternity are by God's grace in Christ.
 5. God knows where he has one or many (Acts 16:14; Acts 18:9-11; II Tim 2:19).
 6. Paul, the greatest evangelist or missionary ever, only sought elect (II Tim 2:10).
 7. There is no human effort or lack thereof that impacts the souls in heaven or hell.
 8. The purpose of the gospel is to locate and educate elect to their God and Saviour.
 9. Practical salvation includes these components: *knowledge, assurance, obedience, fellowship, salvation, peace and rest and pleasure, and prosperity and success.*
 10. Bible soul winning shares the truth with those that have not heard and have heard.
 11. We must care for the woman of Sychar, Zacchaeus, Cornelius, Lydia, Apollos, etc.
 12. We must also care for those falling into error from the truth like Peter (Gal 2:11).
 13. We primarily intend here individual soul winning, not church evangelistic projects.
 14. **Evangelism.** The preaching or promulgation of the gospel to the unconverted.
 15. There were apostolic evangelists, but no more (Eph 4:11; Ac 8:5; 21:8; II Tim 4:5).
 16. Unconditional salvation ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/salvation/unconditional-salvation/sermon.php>.
 17. Five phases of salvation ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/salvation/five-phases-of-salvation/sermon.php>.
- C. We are not bound by the Great Commission, as so many churches see it as a mandate.
1. It was given specifically to the eleven apostles, no matter what scripture you check.
 2. It included features that only they could fulfill e.g. waiting in Jerusalem, special miraculous power, geographical progression, variety of great miracles, etc.
 3. Fulfilled before 70 A.D. by twelve different references e.g. Mat 24:14,32-35; Mark 16:20; Acts 17:6; 21:28; 24:5; Rom 1:8; 10:18; 16:19,26; Col 1:6,23; I Tim 3:16.
 4. No souls are at risk to miss heaven, for God and Jesus Christ guaranteed not to lose any (John 6:38-39; 10:27-29; 17:2-3; Rom 8:28-39; Eph 1:3-14; II Tim 1:9; 2:19).
 5. The Commission is not emphasized, repeated, implied, or mentioned in any epistle.
 6. Many duties are in the epistles, but all are practical godliness and spiritual growth.
 7. No church lives by the Commission in reality, for they cannot keep its many terms.

8. No man lives by their view of the Commission, for they live far too comfortably to give any credence to their doctrine that eternal souls hang in the balance.
 9. They reject Jesus' rules of evangelism, for they promote deputation (Matt 10:5-10).
 10. This does not mean we do not care about spreading the truth ... thus this section!
- D. If we are Bible Christians, if we let God's word direct us, we will love men's souls.
1. Andrew went and got Peter, and Philip went and got Nathaniel (John 1:35-51).
 2. Jesus crossed the sea in a storm to save only one Gadarene (Mark 4:35-41; 5:1-20).
 3. Jesus sat down at Jacob's well for a woman of Sychar and others (John 4:4-42).
 4. Jesus and the Spirit record two of Emmaus with burning hearts (Luke 24:13-35).
 5. Jesus taught the perspective of leaving 99 sheep to go find one lost (Luke 15:1-7).
 6. The Spirit sent Philip into the desert to find the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-40).
 7. The Spirit allowed Paul to be imprisoned for the Philippian jailor (Acts 16:19-34).
 8. Consider Paul's weighty statements that are often neglected (Rom 9:1-8; 10:1-4).
 9. This man endured all things for the elects' sakes to hear the truth (II Tim 2:10).
 10. It is the second command, let us not neglect it any more than we would the first.
- E. If we are Bible Christians, if we let God's word direct us, we will speak up for truth.
1. Job was a soul winner (Job 4:3-4; 29:21-25); Elihu saved his (Job 33:1-7; 36:1-4)!
 2. Before Solomon, David knew righteous men spoke out (Ps 37:30; 66:16; 119:46).
 3. David and Hezekiah spoke about training of children (Ps 34:11; Is 38:19; Ep 6:4).
 4. Consider – four generations – like preachers (Psalm 78:1-8; Joel 1:1-3; II Tim 2:2).
 5. For more examples of converting children – Naomi, Samuel, Timothy, and others.
 6. Jesus told the Gadarene to tell friends what God had done for him (Mark 5:19-20).
 7. Cornelius did not keep his faith to himself, but told many more (Acts 10:2,24,33).
 8. Aquila and Priscilla went after a powerful speaker to convert him (Acts 18:24-28).
 9. When men heard Paul preach, they brought others the next time (Acts 13:43-44).
 10. The Thessalonians are an example of sounding out the gospel (I Thess 1:2-10).
- F. We are accused of not caring about souls, but that is due to proud, stubborn ignorance.
1. Arminians and Calvinists do not live their doctrine that salvation depends on them.
 2. If an Arminian believed eternity depends on him, he should live like John Baptist.
 3. If a Calvinist believed justification is *sola fide*, he would live like the Arminian.
 4. But neither of them live sacrificially like that, because even they don't believe it.
 5. We seek to convert to save, not elect, justify, regenerate, or glorify (II Tim 2:10).
 6. We do avoid fools and scorners (Ps 9:7-8; 23:9; 26:4-5; Matt 7:6; II Thess 3:1-2).
 7. Arguing or debating is not right; we ignore foolish questions (Pr 14:7; II Ti 2:23).
 8. Our website uses modern means to reach many thousands in over 220 countries.
- G. We should be soul winners in the sense of converting men from darkness to light.
1. These men need not be aborigines – think about the eunuch, Cornelius, Apollos.
 2. There is no Bible precedent for aborigines, brothels, or those farthest from God.
 3. We live in a so-called Christian nation, so most we will ever meet are “Christians.”
 4. Of course, we start with our children, immediate family, and then extended family.
 5. Spouses are able to save spouses with or without speaking (I Cor 7:16; I Pet 3:1).
 6. We then consider neighbors, colleagues, fellow students, friends, strangers, etc.

7. What can you do to get some beautiful feet ... like those that taught you the truth?
- H. We should be soul winners in the sense of recovering men from error back to truth.
1. This is the soul salvation of converting a brother that fell into error (Jas 5:19-20).
 2. We are told to do this work, and we are told how to do it (Gal 6:1-3; Rom 15:1-2).
 3. Church members have such duties to each other, not just the ministry (I Thes 5:14).
 4. This is not a new duty, for Moses taught it to Israel in 1500 B.C. (Leviticus 19:17).
 5. Paul exhorted Timothy to two aspects of faithfulness to save hearers (I Tim 4:16).
 6. When a church fulfills its *one another* duties, there are salvations occurring often.
 7. The Great Commission folks barely understand or mention this apostolic duty.
- I. For more details about personal and church evangelism, see the following links.
1. For more about loving other souls ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/love-of-a-soul.pdf>.
 2. For the goal of one soul at a time ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/evangelism-one-at-a-time.pdf>.
 3. For the wisdom of small-pill efforts ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/evangelism-small-pill.pdf>.
 4. For many small-pill suggestions ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/evangelism-small-pill-table.pdf>.
 5. For our FAQ about evangelism ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/faq/saving-souls.php>.
 6. For Proverbs 11:30 commentary ... http://www.letgodbetrue.com/proverbs/commentaries/11_30.php.
 7. Why preach the gospel at all? ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/why-preach-the-gospel.pdf>.
 8. Why no invitations ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/why-no-invitation.pdf>.
 9. Being a tree of life to others ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/trees-of-life.pdf>.
 10. Church evangelism outlines from 1987 ... [not in e-format at this time.](#)
- J. How can we be better soul winners in the only two ways God expects us to win souls?
1. You should save souls in your family, in your church, and others by providence.
 2. The Spirit made it clear spouses can be won without the word (I Co 7:16; I Pe 3:1).
 3. If you have time with persons questioning things, make them think for a change.
 4. It is your job to observe and look for those with consciences or the fear of God.
 5. Identify a hot button – social issues, prophecy, death, Bible version – to exploit it.
 6. The kind of fish you get is due to the bait – politics, Christ, finances, gospel, etc.
 7. The regenerate elect want Christ, for that is what the Spirit teaches them inside.
 8. Enthusiasm sells; Christians should visibly show real passion for Christ and truth.
 9. Your life should adorn the doctrine and make it obvious as the winning religion.
 10. Your conduct is of great importance to avoid hypocrisy and let your light shine.
 11. Your life may be the only Bible some persons will ever read, so make it accurate.
 12. Are you in holiness, passion, confidence, happiness, and zeal a salesman for truth?
 13. Invite family or friends to visit services; you know the formats (I Cor 14:24-25); most will not like our apostolic, simple worship, but God's elect will be intrigued.
 14. Services should be sober, edifying, enthusiastic, with families, and warm greeters.
 15. Combine much scripture, great singing, fellowship, and praying in each service.
 16. Our love of each other should be palpable without pretensions (John 13:34-35).
 17. Avoid any disturbance as much as possible in assemblies to make them pleasant.
 18. You must know enough to teach others the truth (Heb 5:12-14; Prov 22:17-21).
 19. You should be ready in manner and content to answer men (Col 4:6; I Pe 3:14-16).
 20. Use anything at your disposal – like an “unknown God” or a minor Greek poet!

21. Find common ground when you can, like Stephen and Paul by the O.T. with Jews.
22. Limit your matter to the gospel of Christ after introduction (I Cor 2:1-5; Heb 13:9).
23. You can pretend to hold a view you do not, without lying of course (I Co 9:19-23).
24. Consider the importance of friendliness and hospitality, which are commandments.
25. Thinking fishing – where there are fish, right bait, do not frighten, and patience.
26. It will be hard work and only a few will respond to be consistent with our gospel.
27. We do pray for contacts far and near, and we want to increase this powerful means.
28. Paul prayed for Israel (Rom 10:1), so we should pray for the known and unknown.
29. Let us never be like Jonah, who in our love of the truth might despise unbelievers.
30. Crush your liberty if it might hinder truth – their conscience rules (I Cor 10:24-31).
31. You have detailed outlines and many other helps online for most Bible questions.
32. Remember our small-pill evangelism outline and table for suggestions to start.
33. Where do you fail? No desire? No prayer? No good example? No good effort?
34. No better friends in Bible, Jonathan and David. Are you a Jonathan (I Sam 23:16)?
35. When rebuffed by your efforts, easily look elsewhere (Luke 9:51-56; Acts 13:46).
36. There are differences to make among sinners and their methods (Jude 1:22-23).
37. Replace comfort zone with His loving zone! Do not claim Him, yet neglect others.
38. What soul will you pray for today? And labor for today? Which soul tomorrow?
39. We wrote commentaries on Solomon's proverbs to obtain attention for the gospel.
40. We have business cards to introduce our Proverbs ministry that is a small-pill tool.
41. We have a church brochure to give out that briefly introduces our doctrine/practice.
42. Church programs could include Valpak, radio program, advertised seminars, etc.
43. Write an electronic family newsletter to extended family declaring Christ and truth.
44. Use social media, soberly and wisely, to passionately present Jesus and His gospel.

#12: Place for Revival

- A. Everything around you and in you seeks to lull you into the spiritual sleep of death.
 1. The devil, the world, and your flesh cannot have you passionate about Jesus Christ.
 2. If you were taken to Calvary's hill and tree today, you would hate your lethargy.
 3. If your glorified King were to appear to you right now, you would hate your sleep.
 4. We cannot and must not allow carnal Christians comfort, joy, or acceptance here.
 5. Is there any subject less liked by most churches than this one of *Higher Ground*?
 6. Christians default to lethargy, slothfulness, forgetfulness, distraction, routine, ruts.
 7. All believers often need personal revival and restoration to full love and obedience.
 8. Anything less than passionate first love with full hearts is not nearly good enough.
 9. Anything less than an exceeding magnificent life is far too little (I Chr 22:5; 29:1).
 10. Reviving first love is a crucial duty (Rev 2:4-5), so we must remember, repent, and do the first works, in the same way marital romance and passion must be restored.
 11. Abounding iniquity (it is here!) causes the love of many to wax cold (Matt 24:12).
 12. Prosperity rather than persecution (it is here!) seduces our souls to earthly matters.

- B. A church should be a place for revival, rather than a comfortable refuge for mere rest.
1. **Revive.** To return or come back to life; to regain vital activity, after being dead; to live again. To resume courage or strength; to recover from depression.
 2. For Bible examples of the word, consider Judges 15:19; I Kgs 17:22; II Kgs 13:21.
 3. Jesus and His gospel are too important and life too short to be comfortably content.
 4. Jesus examines all churches to compare them to first love *and* to see if they are hot.
 5. Rather than mannequins in pews, we want to be mighty men of valor with passion.
 6. The sanctuary of God brought revival to great men (Ps 73:17; 27:4; 63:1-2; 68:24).
 7. We want the power of God present to heal sincere saints seeking Him (Luke 5:17).
 8. Assumptions of faith must be clear, requiring a decision (I Kgs 18:21; Re 3:15-16).
 9. Assembly content must be wisely chosen for goals of conversion (I Cor 14:21-26).
 10. We should pray that each opportunity to assemble will be blessed for soul revival.
- C. Revival is taught in both testaments, and we should understand its nature and value.
1. It is spiritual awakening, quickening, resurrection, conviction for greater service.
 2. If hearing about Joseph revived Jacob, what about us hearing of Christ (Ge 45:27).
 3. God waits for us to fully repent, so He can pour out blessings on us (Job 33:27-30).
 4. We want spiritual refreshment to lift our hearts and minds into joy (Ps 85:6; 51:8).
 5. Though He chastens and tries, He also revives and raises up (Hosea 6:1-3; 14:1-9).
 6. Though we are in the perilous times of the last days, He can revive us (Hab 3:2).
 7. We want pressure and encouragement to consider our ways (Hag 1:5,7; 2:15,18).
 8. Jesus revived from death, and His resurrection changed the world (Romans 14:9).
 9. Paul told regenerated Ephesians to wake from sleep and rise from death (Ep 5:14).
 10. Conviction is a blessing; we should pray for it, prepare for it, seek it, and expect it.
- D. We never intend that emotional, superficial, sensual-driven excitement of the flesh.
1. Your foot tapping to a lively campfire song is not even second cousin to revival.
 2. A syncopated beat and sufficient amplification will make any think it is a revival.
 3. Crowd psychology as practiced at modern mega churches, is not spiritual revival.
 4. Let fools mock our efforts and reverent worship – we can have revival (Neh 4:1-6).
 5. We want a revival in passion (as in marriage), but it must be right, sincere, true.
- E. How can we do our part to make our assemblies and church life conducive to revival?
1. We start with prayer for revival, for without Him we can do nothing (John 15:5).
 2. We need His power for revival (Eze 11:19-21; 36:26-27; Hag 1:14; II Ti 2:24-26).
 3. Praying for personal revival is scriptural (Ps 119:25,37,40,88,93,107,149,156,159).
 4. There are other examples of prayer for quickening (Psalm 71:20; 80:18; 143:11).
 5. It is scriptural to pray for God to direct hearts (I Kgs 8:57-58; Ps 51:10; 119:36).
 6. Each member should *pray* in advance for each assembly, for others, for yourself.
 7. Church preparatory prayers by the men or public prayers with all should include it.
 8. Each should *prepare* for Sunday to have good ground ready for Spirit and word.
 9. Attendance must be punctual and *participation* passionate, publicly and privately.
 10. We do not wait for passion from God; it is a choice to do first works ... fervently!
 11. Church services should often be *uncomfortable* as they convict and condemn sin.
 12. There must be pressing – *instant preaching* in all seasons (II Tim 4:2; Titus 2:15).

13. Our apostle assumed that churches said *Amen* (I Cor 14:16; Neh 8:6; Deut 27:15).
14. We must come with a humble and contrite spirit for His great blessing (Is 57:15).
15. Self-examination, confession, and repentance are necessary and should be regular.
16. We must be honest and severe before God, comparing love and zeal to other times.
17. Let us emphasize repentance, for it is necessary for revival (Hosea 14:1-3 cp 4-7).
18. Let us emphasize full repentance in light of God's great forgiveness (Jer 31:18-20).
19. We get God back by drawing nigh in sober, sorrowful, repentance (James 4:7-10).
20. Is knowledge or conviction greater? Crave the latter; be discontent with the former.
21. We cannot play by letting services become predictable, ritualistic, or perfunctory.
22. Exalt *friends*, power of two, one another duty (Ec 4:9-12; He 3:12-13; I Sa 23:16).
23. *Exhort* one another, positively and personally, without obvious cause or criticism.
24. *Praise* is good for yourself (Ps 63:3-5; 135:3; 147:1) and others (Ps 34:1-3; 40:3).
25. *Music* is powerful; we do not mean amplified music; think Saul (Ep 5:19; Ja 5:13).
26. *Unconfessed sin* is the greatest enemy of revival; there must be public confession.
27. *Worldly inputs* must be corrected (Matt 6:24; Eph 4:27,30; Jas 4:4; I Jn 2:15-17).
28. Revival requires God's words, so they must be emphasized (Luke 4:4; Ps 119:54).
29. *Serving others* for Christ will pull you out of yourself and downward selfishness.
30. We must remember the warning of coming together for the worse (I Cor 11:17).
31. Contrary to current church trends, our goals are God's *priorities over programs*.
32. Jesus Christ should be central and preeminent for restored fellowship (Rev 3:20).
33. Let us pray, labor, and conspire for exposing the secrets of all hearts (I Cor 14:25).
34. *Bring someone* to church with you and you will care more about these suggestions.
35. Everyone present, early, loving each other, full of prayer for Spirit revival ... wow!

#13: Reverent Worship

- A. God is infinitely holy and higher than all men, and we want to give Him His just due.
 1. He warned Moses and Joshua about being on holy ground (Ex 3:5; Joshua 5:15).
 2. When He showed His glory to Moses, He only revealed back parts (Ex 33:22-23).
 3. We worship Jehovah, and we should worship in such a way to disgrace other gods.
 4. The God of heaven, our God of the New Testament, is not the man upstairs at all.
 5. If anything, we owe greater reverence in the N.T. (Heb 2:1-4; 10:26-31; 12:25-26).
- B. Most of the Christian world (over 95%) has no regard for reverent worship any more.
 1. They intentionally call it casual worship to avoid traditional reverence of church.
 2. They boast about coming as you are, though successful men never do it elsewhere.
 3. They attend dressed like they are going to a picnic or will go shopping afterwards.
 4. The pulpit is used for jokes, stories, foolish talking, boasting, gamesmanship, etc.
 5. The music is little or nothing more than a rock concert often with longhaired fems.
 6. They crave numbers and take any; they forget a strait gate, narrow way, and few.
 7. They forget Paul warned of them for not enduring sound doctrine (II Tim 4:1-4).
 8. Our children are ignorant of what goes on elsewhere or trends in church history.
- C. The Bible is plain and simple enough for us to know that this is an important matter.
 1. Remember what Jehovah did to Nadab and Abihu and why (Leviticus 10:1-7).

2. God hates lightness and ministers promoting it (Jer 23:32; Zeph 3:4; Is 56:10-12; 30:8-14; Jer 6:13-17; 8:10-11; 14:13-15; 23:14-17; Lam 2:14; II Cor 1:17).
 3. You better be more ready to hear and learn than think about speaking (Eccl 5:1-7).
 4. For many examples of compromise ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/contemporary-christianity.pdf>.
 5. Jesus Christ expects instant preaching ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/instant-preaching.pdf>.
- D. Yes, we believe that appropriate attire is appropriate along with appropriate decorum.
1. When Jacob met God, he had specific rules for bathing and attire (Genesis 35:1-5).
 2. When Israel met God, He had rules for washing clothes and sex (Ex 19:10,14-15).
 3. Isn't it interesting that we have an idiom in America of wearing our *Sunday best*?
 4. Successful men dress up for interviews, speeches, honors, authority. Why not God?
 5. We do not wear tuxedos or fancy hats or anything smacking of a show in the flesh.
 6. We do not suggest changes to visitors, as they will get the point if they continue.
- E. There are a few ways by which we can be solidly established in reverent worship.
1. Our God is a great king demanding the best, like any earthly ruler (Mal 1:14,8).
 2. Our God is a consuming fire; worship must be reverent with fear (Heb 12:28-29).
 3. God demands, even over His Spirit's gifts, decency and order (I Cor 14:32-40).
 4. Paul assumed that husbands and wives would fast and avoid sex (I Cor 7:1-5).
 5. Drawing nigh to God involves work that most have never considered (Jas 4:7-10).
 6. If you do not see it, trust your pastor representing God (Heb 13:7; Ezek 44:23-24).
- F. What must we maintain, what can we improve, and what must we avoid to be solemn?
1. We have started well, but we cannot question, resent, compromise, or get creative.
 2. Keep 'thee' and 'thou' in our Bibles, songs, prayers for its accuracy and reverence.
 3. Keep our Bibles, songs, prayers gender specific – God and angels are only male.
 4. We dress up to honor God, be sober, seek old paths, different from Saturday, etc.
 5. We have quiet time before services for reverence and truth (Ps 46:10; Hab 2:20).
 6. We disdain *Happy Birthday*, patriotic songs, and other carnal, foolish distractions.
 7. We disdain a *Sunday School* mentality and environment created in most churches.
 8. We deny *Junior Church* where children play; we have integrated worship for them.
 9. We want a place of revival (#12); it is best served by a place of reverence as well.
 10. We cannot allow church to be merely a Bible study without significant reverence.
 11. Infants and little children do not benefit and cause distraction unless well trained.
 12. If you are sick and cannot control coughing, stay at home and cough to yourself.
 13. Get rid of personal habits like yawning, smacking lips, clicking pens, and so forth.
 14. If you have to play with your children to occupy them, leave them in the nursery.
 15. Never come late. God sees this clearly as offensive, for you would not to others.
 16. If you cannot get up for God, pick a church with two services and aim for the first.
 17. Sober *Amens* done solemnly and at the right times certainly lend to reverence.
 18. The song service is not a necessary evil or separate from worship like the PB's; it should be executed with solemn excitement and focused participation with prayer.
 19. Singing is a clear command, but we should do it soberly, reverently, and joyfully.

#14: Church Attendance

- A. Church attendance is for God's glory, the profit of others, your profit, and little else.
1. It is not a first-day habit like going to the farmer's market on Saturday mornings.
 2. God is glorified by service to Him, and church services are worship in His temple.
 3. Church services are to consider, exhort, fellowship others (Heb 10:23-25; 3:12-13).
 4. Church services are in your benefit by preaching, singing, praying, fellowship, etc.
 5. Full attendance encourages pastors, for sure, like parents with all children present.
- B. There are many examples in scripture to convict you to the importance of attendance.
1. David lifted its importance to the top of his priorities in a great verse (Psalm 27:4).
 2. He would rather be a doorkeeper in God's house than to live anywhere (Ps 84:10).
 3. David emphasized the church because of his brethren worshipping there (Ps 122).
- C. Because David was often away from Jerusalem, he longed for it (Psalm 42:4; 63:1-2).
1. Since it is the temple of God now, we should want it to be exceeding magnificent.
 2. The Jerusalem Church got together daily, so relax about only twice a week here.
- D. Attendance is not a Christian liberty, so there should be a good excuse (Heb 10:25).
1. It is apostolic tradition, regardless of how many call it legalism, Pharisaism, etc.
 2. Current SBC statistics show a disregard for both assemblies and church discipline.
 3. Of course we are merciful in the spirit of scripture (Ps 21:3; Hos 6:6; Matt 12:7).
 4. On the other hand, a hand you should never forget, God's kingdom trumps all.
 5. When you make a marginal decision to skip, you show no zeal, discourage the church, discourage the pastor, slight the Lord, starve yourself, and hurt children.
 6. Marginal church attendance is one clue for a carnal Christian or strange child.
 7. How can anyone seek God's kingdom first but marginalize attendance (Matt 6:33)?
 8. It is not a matter of convenience – it is one of conviction, choice, love, and zeal.
- E. What can we do better to show God our seriousness regarding attending His worship?
1. Attendance is not to keep membership, due to our excluding those not attending.
 2. Attendance is not for family, since it is for others; you had 160+ hours with family.
 3. Attendance is to worship God, learn by His teacher, and build up God's kingdom.
 4. Wednesday night assemblies are as important and binding as any Sunday services.
 5. Plan vacations around Sunday services if possible to show Him and others zeal.
 6. *Pray* and *prepare* before being *punctual* and *participatory* – these show your zeal.
 7. Be on time and stay after enough to encourage others by your presence and words.
 8. Never forget the *body life* you should promote and prosper by your contribution.
 9. Those that come in, sit down, talk with fam, and such like are not real members.
 10. When you miss, our visitors quickly learn whether many, most, or all are present.
 11. If you need assignments every Sunday to pursue others, then write them down.
 12. Train excitement, importance, and duties at home by weekly inculcation of glory.

#15: Grow in Service

- A. A church gets better and grows up by every joint and part contributing (Eph 4:16).
1. *Think body*, an inspired idea, with some limbs, joints, or organs not contributing.
 2. Of course, as members they are attached, but the rest must carry without any help.

3. An athlete's body has every part and joint fully developed for max performance.
 4. Being present in the body, by attending, does not do much at all for overall gain.
 5. *Think building*, an inspired idea, with some stones not supporting any other stones.
 6. Of course, as members they are on the foundation, but they do not lift the edifice.
 7. A magnificent structure has every part and joint contributing strength upward.
 8. Being present in the building, by attending, does not fill in holes and build upward.
 9. In some ways, a body or building is only as strong as its weakest link – strength it!
 10. *One another* duties of church members are pursued throughout both testaments.
 11. To learn about Bible *one another* duties ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/one-another.pdf>.
- B. Each member should have a conscious desire and make greater contribution over time.
1. God has chosen this as His form of religion, whether we are loners or social gurus.
 2. This should reflect growth in grace, growth in maturity, and growth in opportunity.
 3. Young members are starting in grace, have little maturity, and much busier lives.
 4. Membership is not a ticket to the Lord's Table; it is a part to make the body better.
 5. Membership is not what you can get from the church, but what you can give to it.
 6. Grow up to lead, rather than need, in everything from doctrine to health comfort.
 7. Grow to mentor others, or disciple them, rather than just exist to use pew space.
 8. No matter spirituality at home reading or praying, God is not impressed by monks.
 9. Since you are already in a church, how do you apply Matthew 6:33 in your life?
 10. If the world can have Big Brother, Boy Scouts, and such volunteers, what of us?
 11. It is a mentality of service that comes straight from Jesus our (Matt 20:25-28).
 12. Get over any infantile differences of opinion that sow discord among brethren.
 13. Your duty is to consider, exhort, and help others, and not family (Heb 10:23-25).
 14. If you have heard the truth, in proportion to those years you should privately teach.
 15. How old are you? Do you serve like it? Christian age = biological age + spiritual age.
 16. For more about Christian maturity ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/growing-up-in-christ.pdf>.
 17. For more of Christian maturity ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/growing-up-maturity-curve.pdf>.
 18. For more of Christian maturity ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/christian-maturity.pdf>.
- C. Most churches have a core of members that do most of the work of various kinds.
1. It is often the busiest that do the most, for they are driven and always volunteer.
 2. Withdrawal from church service is most usually a reflection of carnal hearts/minds.
 3. This is a shame, because a body or building without only partial support will fail.
 4. This is a shame, because it puts undue burden on the diligent lovers of Jesus Christ.
- D. What keeps members from being like Stephanas, Phebe, others (I Co 16:15; Ro 16:1)?
1. They think *church is like college* – enter, sit down, listen to a lecture, and go home; this is Roman Catholicism, which does not press every joint and part to action.
 2. We cannot allow our church to be *like a Bible study* without significant body life.
 3. A church should look like the *body life of the church at Jerusalem* (Acts 2:42-47).
 4. They are *too busy*, which is bad choices in their lives and/or bad time management.
 5. They know *someone else will do it*, which is a false excuse for their involvement.
 6. They do not *consider it their role*, for some reason thinking attendance is enough.
 7. They are just *too tired, lazy, or some other carnal excuse* for putting for the effort.

8. They excuse themselves *it is not my style* (whatever!), denying Christ's strength.
 9. They may want a *role they do not have*, so they refuse to leap into lowly service.
 10. They have *bad church habits* of attending, maybe giving, but doing very little else.
 11. David took on a large project (temple) at the end of his life after serving all his life.
 12. For more of purpose of the church ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/purpose-of-the-church.pdf>.
- E. How can a person contribute more to the church in specific examples and needs?
1. Every assembly is an opportunity to consider someone, comfort, encourage, etc.
 2. Ignore your family to focus on the church – the other 164 hours are for family.
 3. Encourage one, two, three, or more a week with a compliment for something good.
 4. Show hospitality of some sort every month. Why not? Others do it 2, 5, 10 times.
 5. In hospitality, friends and peers hardly count to God (Luke 14:12-14; I Cor 12:23).
 6. Attend a quiz, especially with no children quizzing, and say something to quizzers.
 7. Greet every visitor without exception with a simple, warm welcome to our church.
 8. Recall the *Amen!* Paul assumed in churches. God will not care about your comfort.
 9. Assign your children every week to seek out at least one far out of their age group.
 10. Be a cheerful participator in unofficial, informal activities or gathering of brethren.
 11. Be strict about Christian liberties and do not criticize or despise others' differences.
 12. Priorities must be consistent with God's word, not your opinions or preferences.
 13. Who are you mentoring? Most every member is older than some they could help.
 14. Several have had home meetings to listen to a sermon and then discuss applying it.
 15. Part of soul winning is to consider brethren around you and help where you can.
 16. Embrace the duties of hospitality and entertaining strangers (Rom 12:13; He 13:2).

#16: Liberal Giving

- A. While we hardly speak or write about giving, it is an important part of God's worship.
1. We reject offertories, so you are spared pressure between 100 to 150 times yearly.
 2. We do not have campaigns, telethons, challenges, or other money-grubbing efforts.
 3. We do need a new building, but we do not beg or threaten faith-promise offerings.
 4. Early American Baptist churches sent deacons to check members' annual giving.
 5. We do not require a tithe formally ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/bible/practical/tithing.php>.
- B. America is the richest nation ever, but the average conservative Christian gives 3%.
1. This 3% giving has been true in American churches for over 40 years as of 2015.
 2. Of little value, Americans spend 2x charitable giving for entertainment and pets.
 3. And all this in spite of the most obnoxious, pressing ministers likely seen on earth.
 4. Dropping a \$20 or three or five of them in the plate is nonsense with a \$100k job.
 5. You can never be short on cash flow for giving, because giving is first use of cash!
- C. We follow the Bible regarding giving, seeking to avoid ditches on any side by men.
1. The Bible *says* much about giving (Pr 3:9-10; Mal 3:8-12; II Co 9:7-11; Gal 6:6-7).
 2. The Bible *shows* much about giving (Gen 14:20; 28:22; Ac 4:34-37; I Cor 16:1-2).
 3. You shall give an account to God for your giving (Rom 14:10-11; II Cor 5:9-11).
 4. He will declare how much you partook of others' generosity while holding back.
 5. When we get a new building, He will mark your use of it without paying for it.

6. It is sinful folly to say you cannot afford it; you rob God, and you deny economics.
- D. The Bible *praises and promises liberality* (Pr 11:24-26; 22:9; Eccl 11:1-6; Isaiah 32:8; Mal 3:8-12; Luke 6:38; 21:1-4; II Cor 8:1-5; 9:6; Gal 6:6-10).
1. God knows when He attaches promises (Ep 6:2-3); He promises much for giving.
 2. His promises go on to mark liberal giving and how He can easily out give anyone.
 3. We appreciate the story of R.G. LeTourneau who played no games with but a tithe.
 4. All the evidence is that David gave far more than a tithe for Solomon's temple.
 5. And the widow woman giving two mites gave all her living to God (Luke 21:1-2).
 6. For those confused ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/practical/bible-economics/sermon.php>.
 7. More for those confused ... http://www.letgodbetrue.com/proverbs/commentaries/03_09.php.
- E. What can we do to be liberal in a way that pleases God and lines up with scripture?
1. Start by being a liberal giver yourself – past basic duty; make it hurt; then some.
 2. Make sure you are always a cheerful giver, as the two are related (II Cor 9:6-7).
 3. Let us be a delightful land He promised His church for liberal giving (Mal 3:12).
 4. If there is little to give, you must be too lazy to work and/or too soft to not spend it.
 5. Every child should be raised to think of giving a tenth off the top before anything.
 6. Entertaining and showing hospitality by the church should be done to Christ, which means we give and provide the best we reasonably can without foolish waste.
 7. Sending gifts to other ministers and churches should be done very liberally to Him.
 8. Math and budgets may confuse giving, for God operates above them (Pr 11:24-26).
 9. Math and budgets may corrupt giving, because God said to ignore (Deut 15:7-11).
 10. Math and budgets may deny faith, because LeTourneau/widow giving is above it.
 11. Jesus will say we gave unto Him when giving to others, so do it with our might.
 12. Fatted calf feasts and such liberality is good (Neh 8:8-12; Deut 14:26; Jude 1:12).
 13. Church frugality is for buildings and such; liberality for charity, gospel, ministers.
 14. It is not wrong for liberal givers to be disclosed for their example (Acts 4:36-37).
 15. The idea of holding back giving to preserve your finances is entirely upside down.

#17: Self-Examination

- A. Self-examination is a crucial character trait for both individuals and their churches.
1. It was a big part of David's excellence before God (Psalm 26:1-5; 139:23-24).
 2. Paul required it of the church at Corinth of their standing with God (II Cor 13:5-6).
 3. Part of personal devotions must be self-examination in the light of God's word.
 4. We can never be afraid of examining doctrine or practice or rethinking anything, however we do not do so lightly or weakly, because change requires a tsunami.
- B. Consider how the seven churches of Asia were confronted, warned, and exhorted.
1. A church can lose its candlestick by losing its love, so we must remember (Re 2:5).
 2. No matter how successful, we must have fellowship with Christ (Rev 3:14-20).
 3. We can never think we have a corner on truth or are infallible in any sense of it.
 4. Since we do not have an epistle to us, we must measure ourselves by all epistles.
- C. Our church can never be content with how we have run three laps in a four-lap race.
1. This perspective drove dear Paul, who forgot those things behind (Phil 3:12-14).

2. We get rid of weights by priorities and sins by confessing/forsaking (Heb 12:1-3).
3. We now have an outline and sermon series of how we must run the fourth lap.
4. In days or years to come, this church must keep God's spiritual priorities for it.

#18: Righteous Relationships

- A. Wrong relationships bring God's curse and judgment, so they must be maintained.
- B. The great ministry of John was to unite *fathers and children* (Mal 4:5-6; Luke 1:17).
 1. Bible Christianity puts parental honor very high (Deu 27:16; Ep 6:2-3; I Tim 5:8).
 2. It also exalts child training (Deut 6:7; Ps 34:11; Prov 22:6,15; Joel 1:3; Eph 6:4).
 3. Perilous times of the last days include child rebellion (II Tim 3:1-5; Isaiah 3:1-26).
 4. Even a father-in-law is important, as illustrated by Moses to Jethro (Ex 18:1-12).
- C. God warns that *cool marriages* offend Him or tempt (Mal 2:13; I Pet 3:7; I Cor 7:5).
 1. Bad marriages can be a cause of blasphemy, so teach (I Tim 5:11-15; Titus 2:3-5).
 2. God included the Song of Solomon in the divine library for reminders in romance.
- D. We also extend this duty to *job relationships, civil government, and church brothers*.
 1. The Bible carefully defines the rules for those under authority and those holding it.
 2. The Bible is strict about fearing God and civil rulers as His ministers of good to us.
 3. For much more about relationships ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/righteous-relationships.pdf>
 4. For listing the variety of relationships ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/relationships-chart.pdf>
- E. What can we do to make sure our relationships are what they should be in His sight?
 1. God always addresses those under authority first and most, and this is His wisdom.
 2. Take the time to review the relationships chart linked above to consider all duties.
 3. Remember that these matters are God's commandments, not merely suggestions.
 4. Do not think you please God by anything while you have languishing relationships.
 5. In general, pride causes all conflicts and contention, so be humble (Prov 13:10).
 6. God loves peacemakers, so you must be good at peace, often by admitting faults.
 7. We must start at home and work outward, perfecting primary relationships first.
 8. Learn to despise emotions, feelings, selfishness, or thoughts contrary to scripture.
 9. Instead of viewing relationships for what you can get, use them for giving instead.
 10. Hate self-righteousness, for you will blame everyone else and not see your faults.

#19: Forgiveness and Mercy

- A. Forgiveness and mercy are sweet sacrifices to God and help sinful men live together.
 1. God delights in mercy, and He wants His children to love mercy (Micah 7:18; 6:8).
 2. A church is made of sinful men with only one thing in common – God and truth.
 3. To function smoothly and endure, they must show great tolerance one to another.
 4. Most organizations or societies have other commonalities or mutual dependencies.
 5. Many churches hardly need it, since members mainly just attend a lecture together.
- B. Bitterness is the result of unresolved offences, which must be eliminated in holy men.
 1. Based on God's forgiveness, all bitterness and related sins are wrong (Ep 4:31-32).
 2. Be not deceived: bitter envying and strife are earthly and devilish (James 3:14-16).

- C. Consider and remember how forgiveness of others relates to God's forgiveness of us.
 1. We are to forgive others as God through Christ forgave us (Col 3:13; Luke 6:36).
 2. We are to forgive others in order for God to forgive us (Matt 6:12,14-15; Lu 6:37).
 3. God forgave you 10,000 talents, and you only forgive 100 pence (Matt 18:21-35).
- D. A church's spiritual health and defense depends on forgiveness and mercy to others.
 1. Paul warned that Christians could consume one another without love (Ga 5:13-15).
 2. Anger and not forgiving gives the devil an advantage (II Cor 2:10-11; Ep 4:26-27).
- E. What can a church do to minimize this threat to the long-term vitality of the church?
 1. Let every member be glorious and overlook the transgressions of others (Pr 19:11).
 2. Remember that every mote you see and worry about, God will judge your beams.
 3. Fighting for what you call principle or rebuking others is often self-righteous pride.
 4. Must you have an apology to forgive another? Has God forgiven you without one?
 5. The severity you use on others for their little offences will come back to bite you.
 6. Love is not easily provoked, believes, hopes, bears, and endures all things, and etc.
 7. Brotherly love should be preached and promoted on a regular and frequent basis.

#20: Peace and Unity

- A. Our God is the God of peace, and He expects His children to live together in peace.
 1. If we say we love God, we must by extension love His children (I Jn 4:20-21; 5:1).
 2. True affection for God's house includes prayer and work for peace (Ps 122:1-9).
 3. All honest parents know how precious it is to have all children in peace and unity.
 4. God inspired a Psalm through David about how good and pleasant it is (Ps 133).
 5. Worship of God without any divisions is our goal and work (Rom 15:5-6; Ep 4:3).
 6. When Paul taught duties to ministers, he called members to peace (I Thes 5:12-13).
- B. A divided kingdom, or church, cannot stand; it is an axiom of society (Lu 11:17-18).
 1. Even the devils have enough sense and common goals to preserve kingdom unity.
 2. The prophet argued that two cannot walk together unless in agreement (Amos 3:3).
 3. Carnal divisions at Corinth disgusted their founding pastor (I Cor 1:10-13; 3:1-4).
 4. A church is to be compacted together by all drawing together (Ps 122:3; Eph 4:16).
 5. Unacceptable differences only occur due to pride, so look for it in you (Pr 13:10).
- C. What can we do to improve and secure the long-term peace and unity of the church?
 1. Any backbiters or those sowing discord should be shut down (Pr 25:23; 6:16-19).
 2. We want to be proficient experts and often practice back-kissing, not backbiting.
 3. Even implying differences must be shut down and directed to resolve it personally.
 4. Be peacemakers by detecting dissension and resolving it (Jas 3:17-18; Matt 5:9).
 5. Often examine yourself to reconcile with any you have offended (Matt 5:23-25).
 6. If you do not have grace or glory, confront others about offences (Matt 18:17-19).
 7. All should rejoice or weep with members accordingly (Rom 12:15; I Cor 12:26).
 8. We do not surmise evilly, to think evil about others' actions (I Cor 13:5; I Ti 6:4).
 9. We reject criticism or debate about matters of Christian liberty (Romans 14:1,17).
 10. When we pray for the peace of Jerusalem, we pray for our peace here (Ps 122:6-9).

#21: Hospitality and Entertainment

- A. Ministers and members are to be given to hospitality (Ro 12:13; I Pet 4:9; I Tim 3:2).
1. This is not merely an option or suggestion, but rather a commanded duty of God.
 2. Gatherings should usually have a spiritual agenda or goal to make them valuable.
 3. For a church to be like the apostolic church, there must be lots of it (Acts 2:42-47).
 4. If you have young children, and they are not well trained, you hinder invitations.
 5. Charitable hospitality brings benefits (Matt 10:40-42; 25:31-46; I Tim 6:17-19).
 6. Hospitality to saints replaces dangerous friends/family and helps redeem the time.
- B. Ministers and members should also love to entertain strangers (Heb 13:2; I Tim 5:10).
1. Abram had the great pleasure of entertaining the angels of the LORD (Gen 18:1-8).
 2. Remember the long list of hosts given in Romans 16 that Paul honored (Ro 16:23).
 3. They had no room in the inn for Joseph and Mary; we can easily do much better.
 5. Charitable entertainment brings benefits (Matt 10:40-42; 25:31-46; I Tim 6:17-19).
 6. Christians should be the greatest domestics or servants, like Jesus Christ served us.
- C. For more about entertaining ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/entertaining-strangers.pdf>.
- D. What can we do as a church to improve in these two Christian traits of great churches?
1. Saturday night devotions are used by many as a good time to invite another family.
 2. Remember Solomon's rule of wisdom to not overstay an invitation (Prov 25:17).
 3. Rather than make the fare complex or expensive, make it simple for more often.
 4. Friends you have based on less than God, Christ, and truth are dangerous and vain.
 5. Look out the less comely church members to bestow greater honor (I Cor 12:23).
 6. Do not let hospitality or entertainment center on no-work friends (Luke 14:12-14).
 7. Do you desire good words on Judgment Day? Then take good care of the least!
 8. When at work on the job, remember to work hard to have more to give (Eph 4:28).
 9. It is precious to hear church members buy houses suitable for entertaining brethren.
 10. Part of your budget should include monies for hospitality and entertainment. Yes!
 11. If you need conversational help, then invite some along that are good at talking.
 12. Conversation is helped by sincere questions – most like talking about themselves.
 13. Remember the body life of a church of building spiritual intimacy with brethren.

#22: Doctrinal Steadfastness

- A. God graciously revealed much truth to us, but we must hold it fast without changing.
1. Having truth and leaving it brings greater judgment, not greater privilege. Beware!
 2. Most churches are changing as prophesied to match the world (II Tim 3:1 – 4:4).
 3. There will be more and more pressure by the world and its churches to change.
 4. Our position on moral issues will look less and less acceptable, tolerant, right, etc.
 5. Consider Israel ... foreign nations and their religions continually corrupted them.
- B. An important measure of a disciple is to continue in His word (John 8:31; Rev 2:25).
- C. God calls for continuance many times (Col 1:23; Heb 3:6,14; II Pet 2:20-22; 3:17).
- D. Let us remember our call for a tsunami of Bible evidence before we change anything.
1. God is able to show us errors very powerfully, as He has before e.g. footwashing.
 2. A tsunami of evidence must be thoroughly convincing and answer all objections.

3. If the church at Rome had held this rule, it might still be a Christian church today.
- E. We will ask God to show us changes we need to make, and He can make them plain.
1. Elihu wisely explained to Job, “That which I see not teach thou me:” (Job 34:32).
 2. We must pray for God to cleanse us from secret faults, as David did (Psalm 19:12).
 3. We must pray for God to show us wondrous things out of His law (Psalm 119:18).

#23: Expository Preaching

- A. Both kinds of preaching are scriptural and valuable for the perfection of a NT church.
1. *Expository* preaching teaches phrase by phrase or word by word through a book.
 2. *Topical* preaching takes from all over the Bible to fully develop a spiritual subject.
 3. Some have created a false requirement that all preaching should be expository.
 4. Some do not want to be confined by a book so they only preach topical messages.
 5. We fear Charles Spurgeon and his like with one text to get started are hardly either.
- B. Nehemiah 8:8 is a good pattern of expository preaching, reading and explaining a text.
1. The clear method was to read distinctly from God’s word and give the meaning.
 2. Such a method of teaching conveyed understanding in a reverent and simple way.
 3. If this method were followed more often, it would force pastors back to scripture.
 4. A great preaching service ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/exposition/preaching-service/sermon.php>.
- C. Hebrews 1 is a good example of topical preaching, pulling from at least seven places.
1. There are many topics that benefit by doing this e.g. marriage, work ethic, Holy Spirit, limited atonement, David’s heart, the sabbath, child training, prophecy, etc.
 2. Since the Bible is not written like a handbook or systematic theology, it must be studied this way to fully develop any one subject and avoid internal contradictions.
- D. The benefits of expository preaching are good to remember why this trait is included.
1. The development of connections is more the mind of God than the mind of man.
 2. It helps those who read the Bible but are not adept at analyzing a text for its sense.
 3. It builds experience in the Holy Spirit’s combination of words for declaring truth.
 4. It leaves a body of teaching that can be accessed by and for explanation of a text.

#24: Help your Pastor

- A. The spiritual health of a church partly depends on the pastor and his role as shepherd.
1. Before interaction of members in Eph 4:16, Paul described ministers in 4:11-15.
 2. Bad leaders bring bad consequences as in marriage, family, business, and nations.
 3. It is an exception, not a rule, that those under leaders will rise higher than leaders.
 4. The happier a pastor spiritually, the greater church profit (Heb 13:17; Phil 2:16).
 5. Rejecting a pastor in his role is the same as rejecting God (Matt 10:40; I Sam 8:7).
 6. The consequences of rejecting Moses were very painful (Num 12:1-15; 16:1-48).
- B. There are a variety of things that the Bible teaches churches to do for their pastors.
1. *Financial support* to encourage is only one (I Cor 9:7-14; Gal 6:6; II Chron 31:4).
 2. *Protecting his time* so he can spend it better for everyone (I Ti 4:13-15; Pr 25:17).
 3. *Pray for him*; if Paul sought prayer, how much more ordinary men (Eph 6:19-20).
 4. *Be at peace*, for there is hardly anything that disturbs him more (I Thess 5:12-13).

5. *Member duties* relieve him of doing what you should do (I Thes 5:14; Matt 18:15).
 6. *Defend him* from those not truly capable of understanding his office (I Cor 4:1-4).
 7. *Magnify his office* so that he does not have to and others will submit (Rom 11:13).
 8. *Know your pastor* in appreciating his personal difficulties and goals (I Thess 5:12).
 9. *Esteem your pastor* for his work's sake, which is laboring for you (I Thess 5:13).
 10. *Obey your pastor* in his role just as you would other rulers in theirs (Heb 13:17).
 11. *Follow your pastor* cheerfully and willingly as you expect others to do (Heb 13:7).
 12. *Keep your pastor*: obedience will keep him around (Amos 8:11-12; Eze 33:30-33).
- C. This church has been outstanding in its care of its pastor from the very beginning.

#25: Love is the Greatest

- A. We cannot reject, ignore, neglect, or merely accept the importance of brotherly love.
1. Our beginnings as a church emphasized doctrine and strictness over brotherly love.
 2. But God has graciously led us and shown us the clear emphasis of the scriptures.
 3. Because of this poor start, I committed long ago to preaching it once a quarter.
 4. There is a more excellent way to serve God that is the greatest (I Co 12:31; 13:13).
 5. There is a certain identifier of the true disciples of Jesus Christ (John 13:34-35).
 6. Consider the ladder of godly graces from faith to two entries for love (II Pet 1:5-8).
 7. Love never compromises righteousness or truth, but it gladly does everything else!
- B. Our religion is two commandments – but both are love – of God and of our brethren.
1. We should do good to all men, but we do better for the brethren of faith (Gal 6:10).
 2. Faith that works by love is the only religious faith or rite pleasing to God (Gal 5:6).
 3. The greatest single sentence about brotherly love is clearly I Corinthians 13:4-7.
 4. Love of others is one of the main or only ways to show our love of God and Christ.
 5. Love of others is one of the main or only ways to show ourselves the sons of God.
 6. Love of others is one of the main or only ways to show we are disciples of Christ.
- C. Each local church is built up by the love each member has for every other member.
1. David sought the good and peace of Jerusalem for his brethren's sake (Psalm 122).
 2. Paul taught that a local church requires every part doing its part in love (Eph 4:16).
 3. Love is a choice first and feeling second; you should never wait for feelings first.
- D. For much more about brotherly love and its importance and benefits, see these links.
1. Love is the greatest by any measure ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/love-is-the-greatest.pdf>.
 2. The definition of love in I Cor 13:4-7 ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/definition-of-love.pdf>.
 3. Members one-another duties ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/bible/church/one-another/sermon.php>.
- E. What can we do to put brotherly love into practice better than we ever have before?
1. Love is the sacrificial desire and service to please and profit others for Jesus Christ.
 2. The highest definition of love is serving others to perfect them for Christ's coming.
 3. Building up to that ultimate goal is both negative and positive aspects of affection.
 4. Remember the negative aspects that overlook, forgive, or endure others' offences.
 5. By this part of love, we can cover a multitude of sins (I Pet 4:8; Prov 10:12; 17:9).
 6. Remember the positive aspects that think the best and seek the best in kindness.
 7. We can start by admitting that if it is not brethren, then it is not true brotherly love.

8. The purpose of the church is more than hearing a preacher (He 3:12-13; 10:23-25).
9. You cannot forget the body life of the church and lovingly care for each part/stone.
10. Do not let your family crowd out the family of God – keep His children your goal.

Conclusion:

1. The value is not the preaching, the hearing, or the outline ... but rather our application of the traits.
2. We do not want to give Jesus Christ an average church, but the best one we can build by His grace.
3. The blessings of 35 years are past. We must forget things behind and press ahead for God’s prize.
4. Will we as a church hear what the Spirit says to the churches and make necessary personal changes?
5. Other traits could have been included that have been preached in the past. Consider the following:

Walking with God	Not By Bread Alone	Keepers of Kingdom	Great Music	Zeal (Nathan)
Knowing God	Bible Cannot Profit	Patriarchy	Work Ethic	Thanksgiving (Jim)
Knowing Scripture	Public Leadership	Kingdom Duties	Financial Concerns	Growing Up
Patience with joy	Christian Ethics	Hearts of David	Exceeding Magnifical	Christian Liberty

For Further Study:

1. The sermon outline, “Building Up Yourselfes” ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/building-up-yourselfes.pdf>.
2. The sermon outline, “What Is a Great Church?” ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/what-is-a-great-church.pdf>.
3. The sermon outline, “What Is a Church?” ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/what-is-a-church-ppt.pdf>.
4. The sermon outline, “Exceeding Magnifical,” ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/church/exceeding-magnifical/sermon.php>.
5. The sermon outline, “Which Every Joint Supplies,” ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/every-joint.pdf>.
6. The sermon outline, “One Another Duties,” ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/one-another.pdf>.
7. The sermon outline, “Where Is Your Tent?” ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/where-is-your-tent.pdf>.
8. The sermon outline, “Running Your Race,” ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/running-your-race.pdf>.
9. The sermon outline, “Greatness in God’s Sight,” ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/greatness-in-the-sight-of-god.pdf>.
10. The sermon outline, “Traits of Great Men,” ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/traits-of-great-men.pdf>.
11. The sermon outline, “Spiritual Champions,” ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/spiritual-champions.pdf>.
12. The sermon outline, “Greatness by a Great Cause,” ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/greatness-by-a-great-cause.pdf>.