



## Welcome to Growing Strong: 9 Keys to a Dynamic Faith!

We are so glad that you have made this commitment to grow in your faith. Like anything else in life, nothing good happens without a commitment and an investment. I know that this will be one investment that you'll be glad you made.

This nine-session course marks the beginning of Kawartha Community Church's Growth Process. Its purpose is to help you rethink or reconfirm some of the principles of the Christian faith needed to become the person God meant you to be. The course is divided into the following seminars:

1. Can We Trust the Bible?
2. Refocusing on Jesus. Who is He?
3. Growing Strong Through My Response to Him
4. Growing Strong Through Listening
5. Growing Strong Through His Word
6. Growing Strong Through Knowing His Spirit
7. Growing Strong Through Prayer
8. Growing Strong Through Giving
9. Growing Strong Through Temptation

With each seminar, we have included a weekly devotional guide to help you deepen your understanding of the biblical principles as you continue to develop the habit of a daily time with God.

Thanks once again for making this commitment. I know that God is going to bless your life because of it.

Gratefully Yours,  
**Scott**  
Lead Pastor, Kawartha Community Church

## Growing Strong – Session 1 Can We Trust The Bible?

### Challenging the Reliability of the Bible.

According to the Bible, we must come to terms with the fact that we are born with evil in our lives and unable to cleanse ourselves. It also teaches that the only way to have an eternal relationship with God is to take care of our problem with sin. The only way to do that is by accepting the fact that Jesus Christ died so that we may receive cleansing. Eventually, this becomes a truth that a Christian is willing to accept and thus enjoy the hope of having an eternal salvation and a relationship with the Father. But if we were going to be truthful about our inner most thoughts we would have to admit that other teachings of the Bible are not as easy to accept.

The Bible claims that all scripture is God breathed, 2 Timothy 3:16. But is it? All of it? Stories such as that of Jonah being swallowed by a whale; or a talking donkey helping God carry out his message; people being brought back from the dead, did all these events really happen? Or are they mere stories used for a divine purpose?

We all have doubts! The fact is that when it comes to the Bible, often, unfortunately, there are as many Christians as non-Christians doubting the validity of the scriptures. In this study, we want to help you eliminate as many of these doubts as possible. We also want to give you the tools to help others come to trust the reliability of the scriptures.

### What History Says?

There are tests used by modern day historians to determine if a piece of written history is accurate or not. Here are some of these tests:

### Archaeological Test

There has never been an archaeological finding that controverts what is written in the Bible. For example, The Dead Sea scrolls, which were found in 1947, turned out to be 800 to 1000 years older than any other manuscript found previously. After careful evaluation of these, it has been concluded that "the general reader and student of the Bible may be satisfied to know that nothing in all this changes our understanding of the religious teachings of the Bible." (Millar Burrows, The Dead Sea Scrolls)

## The Bibliographical Test

How many copies do we have of the original manuscript, and how much later are they dated after the original? The greater the number of original writings, the more credible the piece tends to be. Also, the work is more believable if it is written close to the date in which the events happened.

### Examples:

**Aristotle** – of his writings (poetics), we find them originally written at about 343 B.C. and yet the earliest copy we have is dated A.D. 1100, nearly a 1,400 year gap. And only 5 manuscripts are in existence. Still, nobody questions whether the texts we use are a faithful reproduction of what he actually wrote.

**Caesar** – composed his history of the Gallic wars between 58-50 B.C., and yet the earliest copy we have is dated 1,000 years after his death. Only 9-10 copies now exist.

**The New Testament** – It is almost embarrassing in contrast. After the early papyrus manuscripts were discovered, an abundance of others came to light. We have manuscripts dating just 3 generations after the actual life of Jesus, only 40-60 years after the Apostles wrote them. And not 5 or 9 copies exist, but 24,363 manuscripts are in existence today. And the New Testament that we read today is the exact same message that was recorded back in the first century A.D. by the Apostles, clearly showing the accuracy of the New Testament message we possess today.

**Note:** Some have said that somewhere along the way man has made changes to the Bible, perhaps inadvertently, and thus what we read today cannot possibly be the same as the original manuscripts. However, let us look at some of the ways in which God has protected His Word throughout time.

The Scribes, the people in charge of copying the Holy Scriptures, had a method of doing so that would baffle the most advanced quality control process of any time in history.

- The scribes were considered to have been “called” by God for the sole purpose of copying His Word.
- They were so concerned about accuracy that they counted all of the verses and even the letters of the various books. At the end, if the number of letters did not add up, they would go back to correct it or begin all over.

- Each scroll had to have a specific number of lines per inch with a certain margin on each side.
- The distance between each letter had to be the same on every scroll, and even the scroll had to be a perfect width, length, color and skin from a perfect animal.
- The scroll was copied letter for letter and not word for word.
- They wrote from right to left, and the writing had to end up perfectly on the scroll or the entire scroll would be discarded.

## Other Evidence Supporting the Bible:

### The Internal Evidence for the Accuracy of the Bible

Now that we see the accuracy of the recorded message of the New Testament, this next test is concerned with the credibility of the Bible. Were the messengers firsthand witnesses and are they trustworthy? *At least 23 times* the New Testament writers recorded that they were eyewitnesses. More importantly, they often proclaimed the fact of Jesus Christ and His resurrection to hostile listeners who could have and would have stopped their terrible rumor, if it had been false...but they didn't. See Acts 6:8 to 7:59. They spoke of Christ's resurrection as a fact, as common knowledge, which you must not ever do if there is even a faint chance of your being wrong. They wrote about *actual people, places, things and times* that all would have been silenced immediately by the position if any of it were false. Not only did their message last through the first century, but it's still around twenty centuries later. Also, if the message were false, it would seem unlikely for each of the original Apostles to die for what they knew to be a lie, but 11 of the 12 Apostles died a martyr's death preaching that Jesus was the Son of God. Many were tortured before they died.

### The External Evidence Supporting the Accuracy of the Bible

This topic pertains with to whether other historical material confirms or denies the internal evidence found in the manuscripts. There are at least 21 widely accepted documents found by archaeologists outside the books of the Bible, which all confirm the message of the New Testament.

### Extra Biblical Writings

Writings outside of the New Testament have captured all but 11 verses of the entire New Testament. They quote 232 times the writings of the gospels and the epistles. In other words, we could reproduce all but 11 verses of the New Testament by what ancient writers quoted who were not writers of actual scripture. And the message is still the same even today.

### The Uniqueness of the Bible

1. Written over a 1600 year span.
2. Written over 60 generations.
3. Written by over 40 authors from all walks of life, from kings to fishermen, doctors to poets.
4. Written on 3 continents, Asia, Africa, and Europe.
5. Written in different places, dungeons, palaces, wilderness, prisons, while traveling.
6. Written in three languages, Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.
7. Its subject matter includes hundreds of controversial subjects written with harmony and continuity from Genesis to Revelation. There is one unfolding story, God's redemption of man. The Bible upholds itself from cover to cover.

Clearly, the evidence provided up to this point is intriguing to say the least. However, it is also not complete. There is much more information available to help us come to a conclusion of whether or not we will choose the Bible to be God's very own manual book, love letter, for my life.

If you have not been able to come to terms with its reliability and authority it would be wise to ascertain your reason why.

### Are Your Doubts Due To?

#### A) Factual Reasons?

There is just not enough evidence for you? Well remember that even God is willing to accept that. See John 20:24-27. If you are sincere about your search, God in His great mercy and grace will grant you the eyes to see and the mind to understand that indeed His Word is absolutely reliable and true.

#### B) Volitional Reasons?

Be careful. Your difficulty in accepting the word may just be due to the fact that you know that it requires genuine change from you. Remember

that our affinity to sin can and does keep us from seriously looking into what God has to say to us. For this there is no amount of evidence that will ever convince us. We have been convinced already!

#### C) Emotional Reasons?

For some of us, our past has been an emotional roller coaster that continues to prevent us from getting a strong grip on what the Bible has to teach us. If you find yourself in this category, take heart. Even great men or women of the faith have had their own similar struggles. But if anything is true, it is the fact that one of the very purposes for why God gave us His word was to bring comfort to the afflicted. His message was designed to put to death and liberate us from our past. J.B. Phillips wrote:

“What happened to me as progressed, was that the figure of Jesus emerged more and more clearly, and in a way unexpectedly. Of course, I had a deep respect indeed a great reverence for the conventional Jesus Christ whom the church worshipped. But I was not at all prepared for the unconventional man revealed in these terse Gospels: this was no puppet hero built out of the imaginations of adoring followers. This man Jesus, so briefly described, rang true, sometimes alarmingly true. I began to see why the religious establishment of those days wanted to get rid of him at all costs. He was sudden death to pride, pomposity and pretense.”

J.B. Phillips was a London pastor more commonly known as the man who paraphrased the Bible. These words he wrote in his book Ring of Truth as he described himself with his doubts and his search for the truth.

If the Bible has any impact on you at all cling to these verses:  
Matthew 7:7-8; Luke 1:3-4.

### Daily Devotionals

Read the following passages and answer the following questions:

1. What does it tell me about God? His character?
2. What does it tell you about his purpose for his word in our lives today?

Monday: 2 Timothy. 3:14-17

Tuesday: Romans 10:14-17

Wednesday: Psalm 33

Thursday: John 17:6-8; 17

Friday: 1 Peter 2:1-3

Saturday: Revelation 22:18-19

#### For Further Study:

The Dead Sea Scrolls by, Millar Burrows, New York: Viking, 1958

History and Christianity, by John Warwick Montgomery, Minneapolis: Bethany, 1964

Seven Reasons Why You Can Trust the Bible, by E. Lutzer, Moody Press, 1998

## *Growing Strong – Session 2* **Refocusing On Jesus, Who Is He?**

Even before Jesus was resurrected from the dead people were asking the question, who is He?

- Religious leaders asked....Luke 5:17-21
- Civic leaders asked....Luke 9:7-9
- People in his hometown...Mark 6:1-3
- Even his own disciples questioned...Mark 4:35-41

In reality the debate about who Jesus really was continues to be the reason for division among families and peoples across the world, which was something He predicted, would happen. Luke 12:51-53.

We hope that by now you have made the choice of accepting the Bible as God's inerrant word. We will now use the Bible to explain some descriptions of who Jesus really was. More importantly, however, is that you will begin to get a deeper appreciation of WHO HE IS TODAY and WHO HE WANTS TO BE in your life. We also hope that through this study you will find reason to be more intimate with Him and continue to grow in the knowledge of Him.

### **Who Does The Bible Say He Is?**

#### **Some Examples:**

##### **1. Jesus Was God In A Human Body.**

John 1:1 describes Him as God: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the word was God.

Luke 2:7 described Him as a real baby, diapers and all. *“And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in clothes, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.”*

God reveals one of the greatest miracles ever to take place, which was the incarnation of the God who is in the flesh of man. His description in Mathew and Luke showed the genealogy through which Jesus the man belonged to.

In the gospel of John, the description was a lot shorter. It only included one fact; the same Jesus was God himself! See also Phil. 2:6-8.

Q: How can Jesus' humanity help me live today?

## 2. Jesus is Life

John 11:25 says: *"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies."*

Not only is He life itself, Jesus is also the giver of life. *"I have come that they may have life, and have it abundantly."* John 10:10.

For the believer this truth should become not just the hope of eternal life the Bible talks about, but also the hope of an abundant and fruitful life here on earth. In the Greek language, the word *abundantly* used in John 10:10 speaks of the Shepherd's desire to lavish His sheep with *"superabundant"* life. Herman Ridderbos expands on this by saying that *"it is the Good Shepherd's desire and pleasure to give his sheep not just enough but plenty, a characteristic also depicted in Psalm 23 and Ezekiel 34."*

Jesus said to them, *"I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst."* John 6:35

*"These have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that in believing you may have life in His name."* John 10:31

In contrast, *this abundant life*, both presently here on earth and eternal life, is not found in the toils of this world. Then He said to them, *"Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance*

*does his life consist of his possessions."* Luke 12:15. Therefore, the *abundant life* is not measured by our societal position or possessions, nor is it measured by our achievements. The only true source of life is found in the intimate and personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Q: What is our perception of the "abundant life" vs. God's perception?

Q: Come up with some bible references that teach us how to achieve the "abundant life" as He perceives it?

## 3. Jesus is our Redemption

Isaiah 1:18 is an invitation that the God of the universe has been making to mankind since the fall, *"Come now, let us reason together" says the Lord. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool."*

God has been doing everything in His power so that no one has to pay the price for their sins and to make us white as snow. He is even taking His time and waiting for us to receive His redeeming blessing: *"The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish but everyone to come to repentance."* 2 Peter 3:8-9.

But He has not just waited for us to accept the fact that He is right about us being sinful and deserving of eternal death. No, He has even provided the way out for us. At Calvary over 2000 years ago, Jesus, God in the flesh, paid the ultimate price, the ultimate punishment that man deserves. He paid it for us. Jesus Christ was crucified so that instead of us getting what we deserve for being sinners (not just committing sins) we would become white as snow, pure and righteous.

Isaiah 53:5 *"But he [Jesus] was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed."*

Psalm 103:3-4 “Who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion.”

Ephesians 1:7-8 “In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace that he lavished on us with all his wisdom and understanding.”

Despite the fact that the Bible has an incredible abundance of “good teachings” to help us live better lives, it is His *Redemption*, the work that He has done for us, which is the main essence of this great book.

**Q: What is the difference between what we do with our sins and what these passages teach God does with them?**

#### 4. Jesus Is Lord.

Acts 10:36... Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.

Jesus is the ruler, controller, chief of all creation. After all He himself was creator of all, John 1:3 “Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.”

He is Lord and administrator of all power. Colossians 2:9-10 “For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority.”

He is Lord of the so-called “gods”, “lords”. See 1 Corinthians 8:5-6, also 2 Thessalonians 2:8 “And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming.”

Everything that our imagination can conceive, everything that man has made, everything, Jesus is Lord of.

**Q: What is your understanding of Lordship and how does it influence your daily relationship with the Father?**

#### *Other Examples:*

He is your <u>Comfort</u>	Rev.7:17, Jerem.31:13, Ps.43:18
He is your <u>Strength</u>	Isa.40:21-31, Ps.29:11, 2Cor.12:9, Ps.73:26
He is your <u>Peace</u>	Isa.26:3, Phi.4:6-7, Ps.85:8, Ps.119:165
He is your <u>Hope</u>	Jer.29:11, Lam.3:21-22, Prov.24:4
He is your <u>Love</u>	Jer.31:3, Isa.54:10, Eph.2:45, Ps.145:8

And the list goes on and on. Unfortunately for us, because of neglect, ignorance or other reasons, Jesus has become but a mere part of history.

During the following week, take time to review any or all of the descriptions above. Ask God to remind you how he has been that to you in the past and to help you remember that He still wants to be these things to you today or when you need him to be.

#### Refocusing Exercises

In our efforts to “**grow strong**” in our faith, we must learn to imitate what Jesus taught and modeled. The next series of exercises are designed to help us learn to focus on what He focused on.

1. Read Mark 1:12-13.  
What are the different things Jesus could have focused on?
2. Read Mark 1:14-15 and Luke 4:1-13  
Based on these passages, what do you think his focus was on?

3. Go Back to Mark 1:12-13. In your mind, find a seat next to Jesus somewhere in the wilderness. Take a look at all that is mentioned in these passages. Meditate on that for a while. What thoughts and feelings do you think you would experience?

4. Take time now to look at your own “wilderness”, what do you find yourself focusing on? (What “wild animal, temptation, hunger, or demon)

5. Read Luke 1:45. What has he revealed to you that you need to believe, or be believing again?

6. Ask Jesus to help you refocus on Him and to teach you to focus on the things he focused on.

## GROWING STRONG THROUGH MY RESPONSE TO HIM

By now, our hope is that we have given you enough information to rethink any doubts you may have about the validity of the scriptures. We also hope that the description of who Jesus is has become less theoretical and more personal to you.

Last session showed us that among the many descriptions of Jesus; a foundational truth to grasp was that he too was the one with an unshakable focus on the Father's will. Indeed Jesus was, and is, our example of how to truly "seek first his kingdom and his righteousness" Mat. 6:33.

In this study we will focus our attention on our response to Him and his work. Again, our intention is to imitate him and respond to the father as he did. Therefore our discussion will be geared towards determining what the ESSENTIAL responses are that please the Father and help us grow in our faith.

### POSSIBLE RESPONSES

Confession	Receiving	Rejecting
Obedying	Repenting	Having Faith
Listening	Believing	Baptism
Church Attendance	Reading God's Word	Praying
Growing	Evangelizing	Others

### Exercise #1.

1. From the list above, and other responses that you and your group may come up with, categorize the responses in two groups: SEEDS vs. FRUIT

2. From your list of "seeds", arrange them in order of priority.

3. Explain your reason(s) for 1 and 2.

### Example:

#### The fruit that comes from the SEED OF CONFESSION.

The Word of God tells us that there is no way to enter His kingdom unless we accept Christ's sacrifice. Our instruction is that we must CONFESS with our mouth that "Jesus Christ is Lord," and Believe in our hearts that he was raised from the dead, we will be saved. See Romans 10:9-10. Once we do this then the fruit becomes:

#### A. Forgiven. Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 1:14

*What does God do with our sins?*

1. As far as the east is from the west so far has He removed our transgressions from us. Psalm 103:12
2. Makes our scarlet sins white as snow. Isaiah 1:18
3. Puts them behind His back. Isaiah 38:17
4. Abundantly pardons. Isaiah 55:7
5. I will remember your sins no more. Hebrews 8:12

#### B. Adopted into God's Family. By adoption we mean that God has received us into His family and has given us all the privileges of being His children.

Romans 9:4  
Romans 8:15  
Galatians 4:5  
Ephesians 1:5

Keep in mind that adopted children are wanted children. We are now children of the King and all He has is ours!

- C. Justified.** Justification means that God accepts me “*Just-If-I’d never sinned.*” It is a legal term showing God as judge and we, the sinners before Him. However, Christ pays our penalty and we are pardoned, justified. We can be pardoned because the claims of justice have been met by Christ on the cross.
- D. We Are New Creations.** 2Cor.5:17 Through Christ work, his finished work, God no longer sees us as people who are incomplete. He sees us as brand new works of art, perfect in his sight.
- E. We Have Become Rich.** Eph. 1:3. Mr. Yates was a man who, during the great depression, was down to his last pennies. One day some investors approached him and asked if they could dig for oil in his property for they believed that his land was a rich land. Having nothing to lose, Mr. Yates allowed them to dig and soon he realized that he had been rich all along. In the same manner, God has blessed his children in more ways then we can understand.
- F. We Have Been Given His Spirit.** Eph. 1:13-14. One of the greatest gifts he has given us is his very own Spirit. His Spirit is our guide to knowing how to live in His kingdom and to remind us of the many blessings given to us.

There are many other blessings that automatically become ours once we enter into relationship with Him. Some others will come to pass at a later time.

1. What does it tell me about Jesus? His character or His purpose?
2. How does it ask me to respond? Or how can I apply it to my life today?

Monday: John 10:22-30

Tuesday: 2Cor. 5:21 and Rom. 5:17

Wednesday: 2Cor. 5:17

Thursday: 1John 5:11-13

## Daily Devotionals

Read the following passages and answer the following questions:

*Growing Strong – Session 4*  
**Knowing God’s Word**

So far our course has taken us in a journey describing the infallibility of God’s word. It has also given us some insight as to who Jesus is and perhaps more importantly, it has now brought us to realization that we have options as to how to respond to who he is and what he has done.

Among the many possible responses offered to us, such as repentance, confession, and others, faith is one that has many believers struggling with the true meaning of the word. In our last class, we offered the following definition:

**Faith: It is the obedient response to something God reveals.**

In this lesson we want to begin to unfold how God reveals his will and how he confirms it.

**Exercise 1.**

1. How does God talk to people?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. How can we confirm what he has said/revealed?

Perhaps one of the disciplines of the Christian faith that has become a great struggle to many is the time alone with God used to familiarize ourselves

Friday: John 14:25-26

Saturday: Eph. 1:3-9

with who he is and what he loves. Hopefully this study will give us some insight on the why's, how's of knowing his word.

## Why Have a Quiet Time?

### 1. Jesus Did

Luke 5:15-16 *“The report went around concerning Him all the more; and great multitudes came together to hear, and be healed by Him of their infirmities. So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed.”*

If we search the Bible we will not find the term *quiet time*, however there is no doubt that Jesus found this habit to be invaluable to accomplish His job while here on earth. As busy as He was, as sought after, as dedicated to many *good things*, the Lord always *made* the time to rejuvenate His spirit and His relationship with the Father.

Jesus did it for an extended period of time before He began His ministry. (Luke 4:1-13)

Jesus spent quiet time prior to great miracles or opposition, Matthew 14:23. The Lord also isolated Himself with the Father prior to His great trial and crucifixion, Matthew 26:42.

Therefore if for no other reason our discipline to have a quiet time with the Lord should be because *He did it*.

### 2. God Emphasizes It

To Joshua He said: *“Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.”* Joshua 1:8.

The Psalmist was convinced of the importance of having God's word near: *“How can a young man keep his ways pure? By living according to your word. I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.”* Psalm 119: 9-13. See also Psalm 119: 24-32

If indeed we are about our father's business and do His will here on earth, it would make sense to periodically go to Him and hear what the

wants to teach us. As we begin to know his word, we then are able to compare our thoughts, desires and emotions with what God has said.

## Preparations For A Quiet Time

### 1. Recognize Your Enemy

Because a time of devotion is something God wants, it is wise to anticipate distractions or diversions. God's emphasis on the importance of our quiet times with Him is now more important than ever. He knew that a great deal of competition for our time and mind will constantly hound us. The list of distractions is vast:

**Good Things:** Work, Family Activities, Church Work, Church Activities, Exercise, \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

All these things, though they may be good, can keep us from an intimacy with the Father and prevent us from the fellowship He intended. (See Luke 10:38-42)

**Bad Things:** Laziness, Busyness, Unconfessed Sin, Unrepentance, \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Resolve To Do It

“While still in his childhood, John Wesley resolved to dedicate an hour each morning and evening to Bible study and prayer.” (George Sweeting)  
No matter how or whatever it takes, a time must come in which we have to make a devotional time a top priority of our daily lives. A helpful thing would be to ask someone close to you to hold you accountable for your daily time with the Lord.

### 3. Set A Regular Time

This will help you get into a routine. It will also tell others close to you that this time is out of bounds for anything else.

### 4. Designate A Place

“We need to find a place for an effective and consistent encounter with God. Our internal space is notably affected by external space.” Gordon T. Smith

## HOW TO DO IT

Though there is not a “best” pattern to do your personal devotions, it is important to consider several things when spending your quiet time with the Lord.

### 1. Be Prepared To Be Changed:

Expect God to show up and to reveal things to you, things about yourself, about His plan for your day, etc.

We can begin with a time of confession, Bible reading and personal worship.

The purpose of each one should be to bring you to a point of recognizing that God should be exalted and you humbled before Him. Like John the Baptist said: “*He must increase and I must decrease.*” John 3:30 or Isaiah 6:1-5.

### 2. Have a Waiting Time:

Find strength in waiting on God (Isaiah 40:31) Settle in and focus on God, on who He is, what He has done for you, etc.

Let Him love you; Let Him search you; Let Him show you...

Persevere in allowing God to reveal anything He wants to reveal. This requires waiting. Waiting perhaps between verses you read, and/or between prayer and Bible reading. Whatever it takes, allow Him to communicate personally with you.

### 3. Confession Time:

“Unconfessed sin is a roadblock to answered prayer.” John Maxwell.

Your confession time can begin with a prayer: “*Search me, O God, and know my heart: Try me, and know my thoughts; And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way of everlasting.*” Psalm 139:23

As God brings to mind your separation from Him, in any area, confess this as a sin immediately – no one is above reproach, regardless of position or title. And remember that God is never surprised by what we have done for He already knows – after all, He is God!

**REMEMBER**, true confession is being real with God about what you are feeling, thinking, or struggling with.

### 4. Study His Word:

God has been and still is looking for true worshipers. He is looking for people who allow Him to be Lord. He is still asking the same question of long ago “*For who is he who will devote himself to be close to me?*” Jeremiah 30:21

If it doesn’t make sense for us to live on a small meal a day why should we starve ourselves from the word of God. Our devotion to His word should show Him that we are more than interested in some additional knowledge; it should prove to Him that we are amongst those who truly seek Him with all of our hearts. (Jeremiah 29:13)

## Daily Devotionals

Read the following passages and answer the following questions:

1. What attitude is being required or exhibited towards God’s word?
2. What does the passage prompt you to confess to God?

Monday: Psalm 119: 9-16

Tuesday: Joshua 1:6-8

Saturday: Luke 22:39-46

Wednesday: Mark 1:29-38

Thursday: Psalm 119:145-152

Friday: Psalm 119:97-104

## **Growing Strong in the Spirit**

The Holy Spirit  
whom Jesus also called the Spirit of Truth  
has not come into this world  
to fool around.

I would continue to oppose that kind of practice  
that would take over the work of the Holy Ghost  
and crowd Him out and retire Him.

This is the age of  
a superannuated Holy Ghost.

We have retired Him  
and said, “Thanks, we have our Bibles,  
good King James translation,  
and we really will not need You  
until the millennium!”

The Holy Spirit  
is still among us with transforming power  
for that one who hears the gospel message  
and really believes it.

The Spirit still raises the consciences of men out of the deep mud of their  
past.

He still converts.  
He still regenerates.  
He still transforms.

He still makes Christians out of dead clods.

It is tragic  
That we try to hide from Him  
In the caves and dens of the earth,  
among the trees of the garden.

It is tragic  
that men and women keep their hearts so hard that they cannot feel,  
and so deaf  
that they cannot hear.\*

\*Adapted from A.W.Towzer, *Echoes from Eden* (Harrisburg, Penn.:Christian Publications, 1981), pp36-38.

Nobody understands electricity - we know "that" it works - we've all plugged in an appliance or turned on a light. We may even understand "how" it works and be able to explain complex circuitry. But nobody can tell you "why" it works...it just does.

Trying to understand the Holy Spirit is a little like understanding electricity. We can know that the Holy Spirit does work. We have observed His actions both in the Scripture and in our lives. We can even figure out something about how He works. But "understanding" the Holy Spirit is not completely possible. Our minds are finite and He is infinite. We will always fall short of a complete understanding. However we can study and we can learn about the Holy Spirit and His work in a way that will help us live better as Christians.

### **I. WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?**

Maybe you have heard someone talk about the "Holy Ghost" and have formed some mental image of a divine sort of "Casper". The Holy Spirit is not a "Casper". Let's look at a few verses that will help us understand.

Acts 5:3-4 – The Holy Spirit is God.

John 14:16-17 “Another (Literally another of the same kind)\_\_\_\_\_

Matthew 28:19-20 – He is an integral part of the \_\_\_\_\_.

The Holy Spirit is not an "it". The Holy Spirit is a *person*. He is God in spirit form. He makes a difference in our lives.

### **II. WHY DID THE HOLY SPIRIT COME?**

John 14:17 He \_\_\_\_\_ in us.

John 14:26 He \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ us.

John 16:8 He will \_\_\_\_\_.

John 16:13 He will \_\_\_\_\_ us in truth.

John 16:14 He will bring \_\_\_\_\_ to Christ.  
Acts 1:8 He will give power for \_\_\_\_\_.  
Acts 15:8-9 He \_\_\_\_\_ the heart.  
Romans 8:16 He confirms to our \_\_\_\_\_ that we are Christians.  
Romans 8:26 He helps us when we \_\_\_\_\_.

### III. WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?

The Bible is full of commands to help us live in a way that pleases God. Some of those commands deal with our relationship with the Holy Spirit.

#### Two "Negative" Commands

Ephesians 4:30 "*Do not \_\_\_\_\_ the Holy Spirit of God...*" Look at the verses surrounding this verse and discover how we may do this.

I Thessalonians 5:19 "*Do not put out the Spirit's \_\_\_\_\_*"  
The issue here is trying to " \_\_\_\_\_ " God.

When we are saved, we enjoy our new walk with Christ. After a while you may begin to notice that you continue to have a struggle with sin and that this struggle is often centered on one or two key issues. You may try hard to defeat these sins but find yourself trapped again and again.

This is very frustrating, and we may wonder if we will ever be free of this frustration. There is good news. Let's look at...

#### Two "Positive" Commands

Ephesians 5:18 "*Be \_\_\_\_\_ with the Spirit*"

#### *Our Part.*

Romans 12:1 \_\_\_\_\_.

I John 1:9 \_\_\_\_\_.

#### *God's Part.*

I Thessalonians 5:24 \_\_\_\_\_.

Acts 1:8 \_\_\_\_\_.

Galatians 5:25 "*Since we live by the Spirit, let us \_\_\_\_\_*  
\_\_\_\_\_ *with the Spirit.*"

This verse deals primarily with obedience. If we keep doing what God wants us to, we will stay in His will and enjoy natural growth as a Christian. If we fail to continue to follow His will, we will fall behind and experience disappointment and frustration.

We don't understand everything about the Holy Spirit of God, but we know that He is at work in our lives to help us be all that we can be.

## Daily Devotionals

Read the following passages and answer the following questions:

1. *What does it tell me about Jesus? His character or His purpose?*
2. *How does it ask me to respond? How can I apply it to my life today?*

Monday: John 3:3-8

Tuesday: John 14:14-17, 25-26

Wednesday: John 16:7-9, 13-15

Thursday: Acts 2:1-11

Friday: Acts 8:26-39

Saturday: Ephesians 3:16-21

## *Growing Strong – Session 5* **Growing Through Prayer**

For any relationship to become meaningful there must be constant communication. Prayer is one of the ways we can communicate with Christ.

Prayer is not only asking what we wish of God but, offering what He wishes of us. Even though some praying comes naturally to a new Christian, we still must learn the discipline of effective praying. In this lesson we will focus our attention on **Principals of Effective Prayer** and we will also include one example of a form of

### EXERCISE:

What is Prayer?

What is Needed for Prayer?

## I. PRESCRIPTIONS FOR PRAYER

### A. Forgiveness for others

*"For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your Heavenly Father will forgive you."* Matthew 6:14

*"But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in Heaven forgive your sins."* Mark 11:26

### B. Others praying with you

*"Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree on anything you ask for, it will be done for you by My Father in Heaven."* Matthew 18:19

### C. Believe God will answer your prayer

*"Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours."* Mark 11:24

### D. Perseverance in prayer

*"And will not God bring about justice for His chosen ones, who cry out to Him day and night? Will He keep putting them off?"* Luke 18:7

### E. Abiding in Christ

*"If you remain in Me and My Words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you."* John 15:7

Notice the two conditions:

1. We must keep in fellowship with Christ all the time before He will answer our prayers.
2. We must know His Word and be obedient to it before He will answer our prayers.

## F. Giving God Glory

"And I will do whatever you ask in My Name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask Me for anything in My Name, and I will do it." John 14:13-14. Constantly measure your requests by asking, "If God answered my prayer, would it bring Him glory?"

Remember the reason Kawartha Community Church came to be:

*"They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor."*

Isaiah 61:3

## G. Continuing in Prayer

"Pray continually." 1 Thessalonians 5:17

"And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints." Ephesians 6:18

According to these verses, we can continually be in an attitude of prayer when we're at work, when we're driving the car, or when we're making dinner for our families. It is during these times of constant attitude of prayer that God will seem especially close to us.

## H. Right Living

"The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective."  
James 5:16

Righteous people have powerful prayers, and holy living is a condition that must be met before prayers will be answered.

## I. Obedience

"[We] receive from Him anything we ask, because we obey His commands and do what pleases Him." 1 John 3:22

## J. Complete Commitment

"You will seek Me and find Me when you seek Me with all your heart."  
Jeremiah 29:13

## II. PROBLEMS IN PRAYER

### A. Sin in our lives

"If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened." Psalm 66:18. If we are committing known sins in our lives or continue to willingly sin, this verse tells us God will not listen to our prayers. (The one exception: God will always listen to a prayer of confession.)

### B. Walking against light

"Then they will call to me but I will not answer; they will look for me but will not find me. Since they hated knowledge and did not choose to fear the Lord, since they would not accept advice and spurned my rebuke." Proverbs 1:28-30

God says here that He will not answer prayers of those who have heard where they were at fault and refused to repent and ask forgiveness.

### C. Rebellion against God's Messengers

"When I called, they did not listen; so when they called, I would not listen," says the Lord Almighty." Zechariah 7:13

Zechariah had been God's prophet, preaching a message to the people from God. But the people had refused to obey God's prophet, so God said He would not hear them when they prayed.

### D. Doubt

"But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord."

James 1:6-7

"And without faith it is impossible to please God..." Hebrews 11:6

"But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us." "If you can?" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for him who believes." Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, "I do believe; help me

## A FORM OF PRAYER:

### PRAYER:

Adoration  
Confession  
Thanksgiving  
Supplication

"I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer without anger or disputing." 1 Timothy 2:8

### Act 1: ADORATION

Adoration is praising God for who He is and for what He is. This is the appropriate way to enter His presence.

Psalm 48:1a - "Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise."

Adoration reminds us whom we're addressing. Look at the example of Psalm 100:

*Shout with joy to the LORD, O earth! Worship the LORD with gladness. Come before him, singing with joy. Acknowledge that the LORD is God! He made us, and we are his. We are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving; go into his courts with praise. Give thanks to him and bless his name. For the LORD is good. His unfailing love continues forever, and his faithfulness continues to each generation.*

When you pray:

- a) Praise God for who He is in Himself
- b) Praise God for what He has done for you personally.

### Act 2: CONFESSION

When we see the holiness of God – we see our own imperfection – we see our sin. Sin is specific – never general, therefore our confession needs to be specific. Sin is often done in private – but its effects are public – therefore the Bible says in James 5:16:

*"Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective."*

Proverbs 28:13 says, "He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy."

When you pray:

- a) Look at Jesus' face, ask Him, "what needs to change?"
- b) Ask God for forgiveness for whatever area of your life that is less than 'Christ-like'.
- c) If the area of sin has affected another person, make plans to humbly ask forgiveness from that person.

### Act 3: THANKSGIVING

1 John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." AND SO WE ARE THANKFUL!

Note: There is an important distinction between feeling grateful & expressing gratitude:

- a) In Luke 17, Jesus healed 10 lepers –all felt grateful – only one expressed gratitude.
- b) Expressing Gratitude does 2 things:
  - i) Reminds us who is the source of every good thing.
  - ii) Pleases God that His children appreciate His gifts.

When you pray:

- a) Thank God for the spiritual blessings you have received.
- b) Remember to thank Him for the physical blessings that we often take for granted.

#### Act 4: *SUPPLICATION* (Requests)

When we have thankful hearts, we are ready to make requests in faith. Many Christians make personal requests for comfort or security – that’s okay – but our prayer-life should not stay at that level. Look at the New Testament example in Acts 4:23-24, 29-31:

*“As soon as they were freed, Peter and John found the other believers and told them what the leading priests and elders had said. Then all the believers were united as they lifted their voices in prayer: ... And now, O Lord, hear their threats, and give your servants great boldness in their preaching. Send your healing power; may miraculous signs and wonders be done through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” After this prayer, the building where they were meeting shook, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. And they preached God’s message with boldness.”*

These early believers were living out Jesus’ teaching when He instructed His disciples to *“Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things (comfort and security) will be given to you as well.”* Matthew 6:33

When you pray:

a) PETITION: Ask God in faith to take care of your needs.

*“If you remain in Me and My Words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given to you.”* John 15:7

b) INTERCESSION: Ask God to use your life this day for His eternal purposes.

*“I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession, and thanksgiving be made for everyone.”* 1

Timothy 2:1

1. What does it tell me about Jesus? His character or His purpose?
2. How does it ask me to respond? How can I apply it to my life today?

Monday: 1 Chronicles 16:11

Tuesday: 2 Chronicles 7:14

Wednesday: Matthew 26:41

Thursday: Luke 18:1-8

### Daily Devotionals

Read the following passages and answer the following questions:

*Growing Strong – Session 6*  
**Growing Through Listening**

Friday: Luke 18:9-12

Love must express and communicate itself.  
That's its nature.  
When people love one another, they start telling  
Everything that's happened to them,  
Every detail of their daily life, they "Reveal" themselves  
To each other, unbosom themselves  
And exchange confidences.  
God hasn't ceased being Revelation any more  
Than He's ceased being Love.  
He enjoys expressing Himself.  
Since He's Love, He must give Himself,  
Share His secrets, communicate with us  
And reveal Himself to anyone  
Who wants to listen. \*

Saturday: Luke 18:13-14

\* Louis Eberly, *Alive Now!* (Nashville, Tenn.), a 64 -page magazine published six times yearly by the United Methodist Church.

Other studies: John 16:24  
John 17:1-26

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Last lesson we discussed prayer. Specifically, we focused more on our dialogue with God, and in this lesson we will discuss some of the elements of listening to his voice. As with other topics, this is one that can become very complicated by reviewing a wide variety of information and insights from different sources. In this lesson Howe ever, we want to focus only on some fundamental principles that can enhance our capability of hearing God's voice more clearly.

**Exercise:**

1. What are some of the frustrations associated with "Listening to God's Voice"?

2. What is the big deal about “listening” if I am already going to church, ministering to people, and even leading people to Christ?

#### Some Principles to Consider:

1. **God wants me to be in relationship with Him.** John 10:14 says, “I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and they know me, just as my Father knows me and I know the Father...” Resting, focusing and frequently meditating on this fundamental principle that the Father actually wants to be in a close relationship with him should give us the confidence of knowing that **HE will** help us to recognize his voice.
2. **Being His children allows us to know his voice.** John 10:27 “My sheep recognize my voice; I know them, and they follow me.” Having entered into that relationship has given us **the right and privilege** of knowing his voice.
3. **He wants us to be able to hear Him more than we want it.** Because he is loving and patient, he meets us where we are. He doesn’t expect us to decipher some sort of incomprehensible language. Instead, he speaks to us, makes available to us, only that which we are able to understand. John 16:12 says, “Oh there is much more that I want to tell you, but you can’t bear it now.” David understood this concept when he wrote; “I do not concern myself with matters to great or awesome for me” Psalm 131:1.

4. **Listening improves with obedience.** One common trait seen throughout the scriptures is that as people chose to obey God, they seemed to hear his voice more frequently, or discern correctly that which the Father wanted of them. The bible gives a clear warning about ignoring his revelation today. Read Hebrews 3:7-19.

5. **Choosing to listen to him is greatly rewarded by the Father.** Listening has to become a priority that we chose. Mary was commended by Jesus when she opted to sit at his feet rather than to serve as Martha chose to do. “...My dear Martha you are so upset over all these details! There is really one thing worth being concern about. Mary has discovered it-and I won’t take it away from her.” Luke 10:41-42. Read from vs. 38-42.

6. **Being at the right place and at the right time helps.** Listening to him becomes a lot easier when we are focusing on what he likes to focus on. Read Isaiah 58 and Phil. 4:8.

7. **Being able to listen is sometimes a prayer away.** God, give me ears to hear! The Lord does invite us to ask Him Jeremiah 33:3 says, “Ask me and I will tell you remarkable secrets about what is going to happen here.” The Lord is the same today. He wants to reveal secrets to us today about us, about him, about his sheep and how we can minister to them, etc. The Lord said “Ask and you shall receive...” and he promised that our Father “would not give us a stone when we asked for bread” see John 7:7-11. Let the reader then begin to ask for the “bread of hearing” that he may be filled with the voice of the Lord.

8. **Listening is a discipline.** “...He rewards those who sincerely seek Him.” Heb. 11:6. Listening does not come easy. There are many things competing for our attention, even “good things”. Thus a heart that is finely tuned to the voice of God is one that pays a price to get there. His grace wants us all to get there but the enemy, the world, and the flesh would rather we focus on anything else but Him.

Tuesday: Heb. 11:6

Wednesday: Philippians 4:8

Thursday: Mat. 6:33

## Daily Devotionals

Read the following passages and answer the following questions:

1. *What does it tell me about God's desire for me? Or,*
2. *How does it ask me to respond? How can I apply it to my life today?*

Monday: Heb. 3:7-19

Friday: Luke 10:38-42

Saturday: Mat. 7:7-11

## *Growing Strong – Session 7* **Growing Through Giving**

Daniel Webster once wrote, "The greatest thought that ever entered my mind is the fact of my responsibility to God."

We all have a responsibility to God. One word used to describe it is STEWARDSHIP. A steward is someone who is given the responsibility of properly handling what belongs to someone else. Psalm 24:1 tell us, "*The earth is the Lord's and everything in it.*" What does that say about the things you own? Who do they really belong to? 1 Corinthians 4:2 says, "*Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.*" Since everything belongs to God and you have been given the opportunity to use it, what responsibility do you have?

We'll look at the issue of how we can be good stewards of God's money (which is the first thing we think about when we think of stewardship, isn't it?). But before we do that, let's consider other areas in which stewardship applies.

### THE STEWARDSHIP OF TIME AND OPPORTUNITY

Matthew 25:14-30 is a parable that Jesus told about stewardship. Remember that a parable is an illustration from life that teaches a lesson. It is often symbolic. As you read this Scripture, remember that the talents the Master gave were symbols of opportunity.

v. 15 - How did the Master decide who received the most opportunity?

How do I react with God's choices for distributing talents?

v. 16-18 - What did the three men do with their talents?

v. 19, 20, 22 - What happened to the talents of the man who tried to do something with them?

v. 21, 23 - How did the Master respond to them?

What does this tell you about God's response to obedience and faithfulness?

v. 25 - Why did the third man do nothing with his talent?

What are some things that keep us from using God's opportunities?

v. 26-30 - With which of the men was the Master angry?

*Application:* Jesus is concerned that you USE whatever opportunities you have in life no matter how seemingly insignificant they may be. This includes our TIME and our ABILITIES.

Remember, Jesus is not concerned with how TALENTED you are, but with the attitude with which you use the TALENTS he's given you.

## THE STEWARDSHIP OF OUR WORDS

Matthew 12:36 "But I tell you that men will have to give an account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken."

Jesus is indicating the importance of our words. So often we think what we say is not as important as what we do. Jesus is saying that what we say and what we do both matter, not only now, but also on the Day of Judgment. (If the question is raised, this doesn't rule out jokes, etc. Jesus used humor. It was said to point out the importance of what we say.)

## THE STEWARDSHIP OF MONEY

A. *The Old Testament Standard* is the \_\_\_\_\_.

Abraham paid a tithe in Genesis 14:19-20

Jacob paid God his tithe in Genesis 28:20-22

The Israelites were commanded to bring their tithes and other offerings to God (Deuteronomy 12:6).

God told his people that they were "robbing" Him when they failed to bring the tithes and the offerings to the place of worship in Malachi 3:8-12.

*What is a tithe?* It is \_\_\_\_\_% of income. (In fact, devout Jews tithed 10% of everything they had every year, including things like animals and spices.)

Let's look more closely at Malachi 3:10.

"Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse [church], that there may be food in my house. Test me in this", says the Lord, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it."

Note the *command*: The \_\_\_\_\_ tithe.

Note the *destination*: The \_\_\_\_\_.

Note the *challenge*: \_\_\_\_\_ me and see.

Note the *promise*: So much \_\_\_\_\_.

*What did Jesus say about the tithe?* In Matthew 23:23 Jesus says that we should tithe as well as show mercy, justice and faithfulness.

Exercise:

1. What do we know about how God wants us to manage our money?
  
2. Using the answers above, come up with one or two ways to describe how we are able to meet God's expectations.
  
3. What does this exercise tell you about your focus, perhaps the world's focus, on how we see money and the management of it?

1. Read Psalm 24:1, Genesis 1, and Colossians 1:15-17

What do these tell us about the origin of all things and who they belong to?

2. Read Philippians 2:5-7 and John 3:30

What attitude is noted here and how may this pertain to the issue of money?

### B. *A New Testament Example*

2 Corinthians 9:6 says, "Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

Note: There are \_\_\_\_\_ to liberal givers.

Note: Liberal giving is a \_\_\_\_\_.

Note: \_\_\_\_\_ giving pleases God.

2 Corinthians 8:1-9 gives us a challenging example of giving.

A. What does v. 2 say about their *economic conditions*?

B. What does v. 3 say about their *giving patterns*?

C. What does v. 4 say about their *attitude toward giving*?

A. v.5 tells us a little about why they did this.  
What was *their motivation*?

E. v. 7 tells us that liberal giving is just as important as any other spiritual behavior or commitment. It also says we are supposed to excel in the grace of giving. *What implications does this have?*

F v. 9 shows us the perfect example of liberal giving:  
Jesus gave everything for us!  
How should this *change our perspective* on giving?

#### Exercise:

What two things (or more) can you **remember** and how can you use these to become a better steward of all God entrusts you with?

Write a sentence or two that can help you remember the role of **obedience** in becoming a better steward.

How does **waiting** play a role in stewardship?

Read the following passages and answer the following questions:

1. *What does it tell me about God? His character or His purpose?*
2. *How does it ask me to respond? How can I apply it to my life today?*

Monday: Psalm 24

Tuesday: Matthew 25:14-30

Wednesday: Mathew 12:33-37

Thursday: Deuteronomy 12:6

## Daily Devotionals

## *Growing Strong – Session 9*

# How To Resist Temptation

### INTRODUCTION:

Now that you are a Christian, you must realize that you are at war with Satan (Ephesians 6:12). He has schemes devised to try to defeat you. But a Christian can overcome these temptations through Christ! However, in order to win, we must be alert to the tactics of our foe. In this lesson we will study three basic themes concerning the Devil, which will acquaint us with him and his tactics, thus helping us to be ready to resist Satan and temptation.

1. The *description* of Satan
2. The *devices* of Satan
3. The *defeat* of Satan

### I. THE DESCRIPTION OF SATAN:

In order to get a better perspective of the nature of our enemy, we will look at how the Bible describes him. He is described by the following:

#### A. The Accuser - Revelation 12:10

The Devil never tells us the good we do or our proper attitudes. He is only good at kicking us while we are down. In the garden he accuses God of being unfair. (Genesis 3:4, 5) In the conflict seen in Job, he accuses Job before God, saying, "*He (Job) will surely curse You to Your face.*" (Job 1:11). He is continually trying to give us a false sense of guilt by his accusations, but God is even greater than our hearts and knows our hearts - even when we do not! (1 John 3:18-20)

#### B. Adversary \_\_\_\_\_ - Roaring Lion - 1 Peter 5:8

The Devil's purpose is to destroy us and damn us! John 10:10 speaks of him as "*the thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.*" Luke 22:31 reveals, "*Satan has asked to sift you as wheat.*" 1 Peter 5:8 says the Devil wants to devour us, like a lion does its prey. He shows no mercy! His real nature is carnivorous and serpent-like.

Friday: Malachi 3:6-12

Saturday: 2 Corinthians 8:1-9

### C. The Ruler of This World - John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11

The word 'Ruler' emphasizes Satan's control over the political systems of this earth (See Daniel 10:13 which describes an unseen warfare.) Along this same theme, Satan is called the prince of the power of the air motivating the way disobedient people act. (Ephesians 2:1,2)

### D. The god of This World - 2 Corinthians 4:4

As '*god of this world*', Satan is blinding the eyes of those who do not wish to know the truth of the Gospel. However, he cannot blind us if we sincerely want to see. "*You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.*" Jeremiah 29:13

### E. Liar and murderer - John 8:44

Satan murders us physically, mentally, and spiritually. His greatest delight is to see a child born into God's family disobey his Father. To convince us to disobey, he must lie. He lied to Eve in the Garden, (Genesis 3:4 - "*You will not surely die.*") and has been lying since then.

### F. An Angel of light - 2 Corinthians 11:14

Satan is horribly beautiful. One of his favorite tricks is to get people to believe in a mythical character with a long tail, two horns, and a pitchfork. He is too smart to come to us in such a way. Instead, he makes sin attractive. He baits the hook so that we cannot see the end result of straying thoughts and actions. In fact, Satan's most clever tool is to make people believe that he does not exist. With this tactic, he controls many unwary victims passionately denying his very existence. Job 2:2 shows a picture of the devil "*roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it.*"

### G. The Tempter - 1 Thessalonians 3:5

The Devil tempts us. He entices us. He baits us to do evil in order to destroy us.

## II. SATAN'S DEVICES

There are various methods which Satan uses to fulfill his purposes. The Bible mentions the following methods:

### A. Doubt \_\_\_\_\_

- 1) In Matthew 4:3,6 the word '*if*' is used. Satan tries to get us to doubt our relationship with God. His favorite tool is to get us to put an overemphasis on feeling to the neglect of faith.
- 2) In Genesis 3:1 Satan got Eve to doubt God's loving character, "*Did God really say...?*"

### B. Division \_\_\_\_\_

See Acts 20:30; Romans 16:17,18; I Corinthians 1:10; 3:3; 11:18

One of Satan's most effective weapons is the '*wedge*'. If he can get a great church to be divided on petty issues, he has succeeded.

The Corinthians divided over their preacher (Paul, Apollos, Peter). How happy Satan must have been. This is one of his favorite tools.

### C. Discouragement \_\_\_\_\_

Satan has discouraged some of God's most promising servants. If the Devil can get us discouraged, we'll never take the steps of faith God has asked us to take. For a study of discouragement see:

1. Joshua - Joshua 7:7
2. David - I Samuel 20:1-6
3. Elijah - I Kings 19:10
4. Jonah - Jonah 4:3
5. Peter - Matthew 26:75; Luke 22:62
6. John the Baptist - Luke 7:19,20

### D. Diversion \_\_\_\_\_

A favorite scheme of Satan is to get our minds diverted to the following:

1. Position - Matthew 20:21
2. Pleasure - Luke 8:14
3. Possessions - Luke 12:15, 21
4. Popularity - John 12:43
5. People - Hebrews 12:1-3

### E. Deception \_\_\_\_\_

"...Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light."  
2 Corinthians 11:14

The old saying, "Everything that glitters is not gold," is still true.  
Dr. William Arnett names four methods of Satan's deception:

1. *The unconverted*

- a. Rely on your \_\_\_\_\_ "I'm sincere in what I believe."  
Proverbs 14:12
- b. Rely on your \_\_\_\_\_ righteousness "I'm as good as anyone in the church." Matthew 5:20
- c. Rely on your good works "I give to the church, etc." Ephesians 2:8,9

2. *The religious 'professor'*

- a. Rely on \_\_\_\_\_ John 3:3
- b. Rely on good \_\_\_\_\_ Galatians 2:16
- c. Rely on \_\_\_\_\_ Acts 2:38; repentance comes first

3. *The believer*

- a. Over-emphasis on \_\_\_\_\_ Acts 8:35,37,39 "...told him the good news about Jesus (FACT) ...I believe (FAITH) ...went on his way rejoicing (FEELING)." Romans 1:17
- b. Over-emphasis on \_\_\_\_\_ (Pharisee-ism)
- c. To do the right thing in an \_\_\_\_\_ spirit

F. *Delay* \_\_\_\_\_

1. To the unsaved - Proverbs 27:1; Isaiah 55:6
2. To the saved - "I will hasten and not delay to obey your commands." Psalm 119:59, 60 The Devil will tell us to delay working and witnessing. (See 2 Corinthians 6:1-2 to understand God's perspective)

G. *Dead issues* \_\_\_\_\_

Satan is a grave digger. Another of his favorite tools is to bring us the forgiven sins of the past. But God forgets our past.

1. "As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us." Psalm 103:12
2. "...white as snow..." Isaiah 1:18
3. "...You have put all my sins behind Your back." Isaiah 38:17
4. An abundant pardon. Isaiah 55:7
5. "You will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea." Micah 7:19
6. "...and will remember their sins no more." Hebrews 8:12

H. *Driving* \_\_\_\_\_

The Good Shepherd leads. Satan drives. If he cannot get us to live in sin, he will try to swing the pendulum to the opposite extreme - fanaticism. He will drive us to do fanatical things--but to be a Christian is to be normal in Him.

I. *Denial* \_\_\_\_\_

The Devil's most clever 'wile' (trick) is to deny that he exists--but Satan is an evil personality. Satan is not simply the personification of evil influences in the heart, for he tempted Christ, in whose heart no evil thought could ever have arisen.

J. *Disqualification* - Matthew 4:1-11

If all of the first nine methods do not work, then Satan will try to disqualify us from a life of service. 1 Corinthians 9:27

He tried to disqualify Jesus by tempting Him to:

1. Put the physical before the spiritual.
2. Take a short cut to get the crowds (to bypass the cross).
3. To compromise by kneeling to worship the Devil.

Satan is a terrible foe, but there is a way to defeat him.

III. THE DEFEAT OF THE DEVIL

"So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it." 1 Corinthians 10:12-13

#### A. Remember You Are Vulnerable

1. Temptation is inevitable  
"When you are tempted," not "If you are tempted."
2. Overconfidence is dangerous  
"So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!" 1 Corinthians 10:12

#### B. Recognize Satan's traps early

1. There are no new temptations.
2. \_\_\_\_\_

#### C. Realize God's promises

1. He is faithful.
2. He knows what you are going through  
Hebrews 2:17-18; Hebrews 4:15-16

#### D. Refuse to minimize temptation.

1. Face the temptation squarely.
  - a. Recognize the source of temptation: \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Recognize the results of giving in: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Fill your mind with God's Word Psalm 119:9, 11.
3. Focus on the cross.
4. Force yourself away from tempting situations.
5. Forge new habits.
6. Find a friend to help.

Alcoholics Anonymous has a friend or counselor you can call when you're tempted to have a drink. Treat temptation to sin the same way.

7. Fulfill your purpose as a Christian.
  - a. Praise God.
  - b. Production - begin to serve the Lord.
  - c. Prayer
    - 1) For yourself.
    - 2) For others.

#### E. Return to faith

If you do sin, don't let Satan destroy you. He will try to tell you that you've blown it too badly to ever be used by God again. Return to God in confession, with a repentant heart, and receive His forgiveness and restoration. 1 John 1:9, Psalm 51:1-17

## Daily Devotionals

Read the following passages and answer the following questions:

1. *What does it tell me about Jesus? His character or His purpose?*
2. *How does it ask me to respond? How can I apply it to my life today?*

Monday: 1 Corinthians 10:11-13

Tuesday: 1 Peter 5:5-11

Wednesday: James 4:4-10

Thursday: James 1:12-15

Friday: 2 Peter 2: 4-11

Saturday: Proverbs 14:27; 13:14; 6:27-28