

Precious Promises for Relationships



50

Illustrated Bible Promises with Matching Songs, Stories,
and Devotionals to Help You Get along with Others

Lori Dooley





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Matching Songs, Stories and Devotionals
to Help You Get along with Others

By
Lori Dooley

This book belongs to:

From:

**To my three precious daughters,
Hannah, Haley, and Heidi
the motivation and inspiration behind this book.**

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**Some stories in this book may contain names that have been altered in order to maintain
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INTRODUCTION

One afternoon my nine-year-old daughter came up to me in tears. She and her sister had been in a dispute. It was the usual—her sister had provoked her and she had reacted in anger. As we took a walk together, she shared with me that she wished her sister was more kind and never provoked her.

I said to her, “Yes, your sister should change and be more kind. But if she suddenly becomes always kind, you will have lost the chance to grow from this experience and have true victory. For the rest of your life, there will always be people that do unkind things to you. You cannot change them. You can only choose to have victory over your reactions to them. God is allowing you to have this trial so that you can learn to experience sweet peace even when someone wrongs you.”

I then shared with her some of the promises we can claim in our relationships. I also shared with her times when God has given me victory when I was wronged. I told her about when God worked such a miracle on my heart that the person who offended me actually wanted to change.

Later that evening, my daughter came to me again, but this time she wore a smile and her face radiated with joy.

“Mommy, I forgave my sister and when she was unkind it didn’t bother me. I am so happy. I feel like nothing she says can hurt me.”

This purpose of this book is to give children and parents freedom from the strained relationships so rampant in our society. Much of the heartache and trials that people face are a result of tension and division in relationships. This

book offers powerful promises from God that give the tools to get along with others and also deal with being treated unkindly.

For each chapter, first there is a short devotional explaining the topic of the chapter. Then a story to demonstrate the topic and make it practical for life. Finally, each category or chapter contains five Bible Scripture passages. Many of the Bible passages are a combination of verses because the corresponding Scripture song combines them. I have done my best to choose the most relevant Scriptures and not to repeat any verses in more than one category. In most cases, I have chosen to match the layout and wording of the verses with the corresponding Scripture song.

You will notice some of the Scripture passages are quite long. This is because I believe even young children are fully capable of memorizing longer passages. Even as a toddler, my daughter learned to sing along with all of them.



I look back and think how differently my life and relationships would have played out if I had memorized all these promises as a child or youth. I pray that the beautiful images with Scripture, stories and devotionals on each topic will be a blessing to you. May they draw you closer to God and equip you and your family to have healthy relationships.

Lori Dooley





**This book has Scripture songs
that match the verses!**



1. Download the scripture songs to your computer or phone
2. As you turn each Scripture page play the corresponding scripture song.



Installation Instructions

For Instructions on how to
download the Scripture songs or
how to install them via usb card
(included with this book)
scan the qr code or visit:

little-branches.com/scripture-song-instructions/



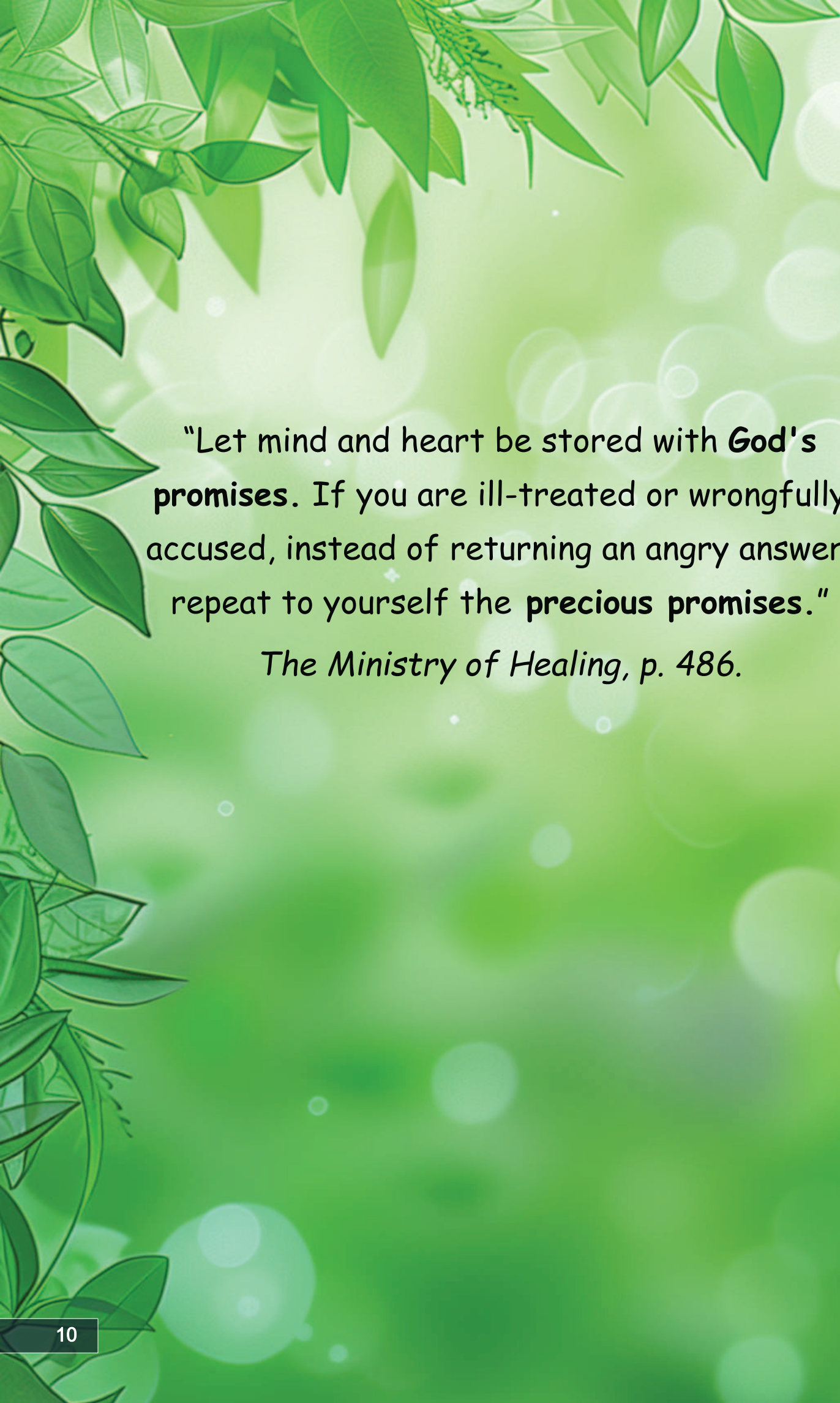
**These songs are available for
download on our website:
little-branches.com**



**We need your feedback! Please leave us an honest review at
little-branches.com or
Amazon.com**

**Special thanks to the following musicians for contributing Scripture songs
or helping with the production of songs.
This project would not be possible without you!**

Ainy Evelyn Stephens-Shoute (theadventmessage.org)
Christian Paul (Giveglory2him.org)
Laura Williams (laurawilliamsmusic.com)
Schubert and Yolanda Palmer (LOVE ME - Ready Scripture Songs Youtube)
Gary and Alexandra Hullquist (7thfriends.com)
Brackin and Lindsay Kirkland (soundslikereign.com)
Bill Striegel (KJV Scripture Songs Facebook Group)
Sabrina Hew (musicverse.org)
Jade Kneebone (Scripture for Kids Youtube)
Stephen Nasby (The N Crew Youtube)
Earl Martin (mysteryministries.net)
Harrow family (singtheword.com)
Fountainview Academy Singers (Fountainview Academy Youtube)
Paul and Carolyn Rayne family (thehomeplace.org)
Ron and Patti Vaillant (biblemusic.com)
Emily van Rhin (Emily van Rijn Youtube)
Karen Stoeckert (Keeptheword.org)
Jolly and Madsen families (atriumoflight.com)
Derrol Sawyer (mosessong.org)
Tom and Alane Waters family (rionline.org)
Derek and Bodil Morris, Ashley Hold (trilogyscriptureresources.com)
Braedan and Alise Entermann (Word and Song with Sandra Entermann Youtube)
Victoria-Joy Creighton (The Hope Factor Youtube)
Zaida Torres (Zaida Torres Youtube)
Janet Evert (Young Disciple Youtube)
Zana Reichen (zanareichen.com)
Tyler family (Sounds of Scripture Youtube)
Mihaela Williams (mihaelawilliams.com)
Ruth Davis (Ruth Davis Youtube)
Jack Marti (Jack Marti Youtube)
Hannah and Haley Dooley (Little Branches Youtube)
Karen Hudson (Jonathan Hudson Youtube)
Gloria Thorne (blueskymusic.net)
Linda McCabe
Shemaiah Carter
Malachi and Chelsea Speidel
Natalie, Olivia, and Seth Sherbondy
Joshua and Emily Suarez Mizner
Audrey Weatherest
Judy Evenson
Jenn and Amber Harris
Wayne Hooper



"Let mind and heart be stored with **God's promises**. If you are ill-treated or wrongfully accused, instead of returning an angry answer, repeat to yourself the **precious promises**."

The Ministry of Healing, p. 486.

Ideas for Using this Book

Personal Devotions. Because this book attaches memory verses to specific photos, even non-reading children can see the photos and remember the Scriptures that go with them. The beautiful nature scenes also help turn the minds to the great Creator.

Family Worship. The whole family can enjoy reading the stories and devotionals together and singing the songs. Be creative and come up with ideas to make it fun. I have made up life scenarios and had the children give me a promise that they could use to help them with that situation. Also, you could hum or sing the melodies and have the children guess the verse. You could describe the picture and have the child guess the verse.

Discipline. When your child needs correction you can point them to the beautiful photos and verses. Using Scripture will have more power with young children as you can show them the picture and discuss it with them rather than simply quoting it. It will give you a tool to “overcome evil with good” (Romans 12:21). Books three and four in the Precious Promises Book Series contains topics very applicable for discipline issues.

Home school. This book is an excellent Bible curriculum as it will give your child a very good foundation in salvation. The Scriptures and songs will be with your child the rest of their life and equip them to be able to help others understand salvation.

Classroom. This can be used as a Bible curriculum in a classroom setting.

1. Loving Others

Popular culture tells us that we need to have good looks, talent, money, and nice things to be successful in life. But Jesus taught that the most important quality for us to have is love — love for God and love for others. In fact, the Bible says that “God *is* love” (1 John 4:8), and that His entire law can be fulfilled by loving others (Romans 13:8).


Since the Bible speaks so highly of love, it is important to understand what true love is. There is a type of love portrayed by the world and in most human relationships that really is not love at all —but is in fact selfishness. It is a love

The most important quality for us to have is love — love for God and love for others.

that says, “I love what you do for *me*, or I love how you make *me* feel.” This type of love may cause a person to do many wonderful things for someone, but at the root of it all is the selfishness of expecting to gain something in return. The Bible says that even “sinners also love those that love them” (Luke 6:34). You may have noticed that it is easy to love the people who are kind to you and do good things for you, but it is not so easy to love those who are unloving or unkind. However, “the love that gives kindness to only a few is not love, but selfishness.”¹

The love that Christ demonstrated to us is far different than any worldly love. “While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). Christ gave His life for us when we were unloving, unrighteous, and full of sin. There was nothing about us that deserved His love toward us or the sacrifice of His life. Yet He demonstrated love in everything He did. “His life was one of constant self-sacrifice. He had no home in this world except as the kindness of friends provided for Him as a wayfarer. He came to live in our behalf the life of the poorest and to walk and work among the needy and the suffering.”²

Through His words and actions, Christ continually communicated the message, “love one another, as I have loved you” (John 15:12). To love as Christ loved is to love all people, even those who are unloving, unkind, and undeserving. Jesus even said, “love your enemies” (Matthew 5:44). “To love as Christ loved means to manifest unselfishness at all times and in all places, by kind words and pleasant looks.”³ The Bible describes genuine love in this way,



“Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth” (1 Corinthians 13:4-6 NKJV).

The foundation of the gospel is love. But how is it possible to have unselfish love for all people at all times? Well, humanly speaking it is completely impossible. “We can never come into possession of this spirit by *trying* to love others.”⁴ Since love is one of our basic needs, we cannot produce it inside of ourselves to give to others. We must get it from God, the only source of true love. “When self is merged in Christ, love [will spring] forth spontaneously.”⁵ “His love received, will make us, in like manner, kind and tender, not merely toward those who please us, but to the most faulty and erring and sinful.”⁶ When we are full of Christ’s love, we can give it to others without any expectations of receiving something back.

When we are full of Christ’s love, we can give it to others without any expectations of receiving something back.

Think about the people that God has put in your life. It is normal for you to want each of them to treat you with respect, kindness, and love. But each one is completely incapable of giving unselfish love in their own strength. This understanding should give you a sense of compassion and pity for them when they fail to meet your need for love. They *can’t* love you or anyone else without Christ’s help. Parents, friends, and spouses must each receive love from God in order to give it. But unfortunately, many are empty of genuine love because they have not come to Christ, the Fountain of Living Water, to receive from Him.

Instead of looking to other people to fill your need for love, go to Jesus now and dwell on His great love for you. Ask Him to fill you so full of His love that you can *give* love to others instead of expecting or demanding it from them. Instead of hoping and wishing those around you were easier to love, less annoying, more kind, etc., ask God to work a miracle in your heart so you can love each one just like they are right now. Then as they see a glimpse of God’s love in you, their hearts will likely be turned to Jesus, the only one who can really help them be more loving.

LOVING OTHERS

Love Your Enemies

Elijah grew up in a remote village in Africa. When he was a young man, one of his fellow villagers, a small African man, betrayed the entire village by directing slave traders to their territory. Soon Elijah and all the other young men from his village were put in chains and loaded onto ships headed to America. Soon he was sold and forced to be a slave.

He soon forgot the faces of the white men who had captured him, but resentment burned in his heart toward the African man who had betrayed him and his village for money. Since he could never take revenge on his betrayer who was back in Africa, he took his resentment out on his master, whose small frame reminded him of his betrayer. Elijah grumbled constantly, and did the least amount of work he could. He was so full of rebellion and hatred that his master was afraid of him.

Elijah met some slaves who did not seem to be resentful of their condition. These slaves told Elijah about God's love and demonstrated it in their lives. Soon Elijah fell in love with Jesus. He began to see every person as a precious soul in need of Jesus. The resentment and hatred were replaced by love and a desire to do good to others.

After Elijah's experience with Jesus, he became helpful to his master, cheerfully and faithfully fulfilling every duty asked of him. Soon his master trusted him with more and more until he was in charge of almost every aspect of the plantation.

One day his master was headed to town to purchase more slaves. He brought Elijah along and told him to pick out whoever he wanted. Elijah picked several men. Then he came to a thin, stooped over old man. Elijah studied him a moment then indicated he wanted to purchase him. When the master questioned his decision, Elijah insisted on picking the old man. The slave dealer overheard their conversation and quickly offered to add the old man to their order for free.

Back at the plantation, Elijah gave the old man a spot in his own hut and fed him from his own portion of food. One day the master saw Elijah leaving his work

in the fields frequently and returning to his hut. Then he would go back to the fields and work as hard as he could to make up for lost time. Curious, he followed Elijah to figure out what was going on. He found him sponging the face of the deathly ill old man who was moaning on his bed. Anger filled the master as he snapped, "This man is not a slave, he is useless! I told you not to get him!"

Elijah pleadingly replied, "Yes master, but he is an old, sick man and needs my help. I will be back in the fields as soon as I cool his face."

The master then questioned Elijah, "Who is this man? He must be your father for you to care for him so tenderly.

"No" Elijah replied.

Then is he your uncle or your brother?

"No" said Elijah.

"He must be a friend then?"

"No master, he is not my friend. This man is my enemy."

"Your what?" replied the confused master.

Elijah explained, "This is the man who betrayed me many years ago and sold me into slavery. He was my worst enemy. But God's book says to "love our enemies."⁷

The speechless master walked away.

Elijah had experienced the power of God's love, strong enough to help us love even those who are unkind and undeserving.



LOVING OTHERS



151. John 13:34-35

³⁴A new commandment
I give unto you,
that ye love one another;
as I have loved you,
that ye also love one another.

³⁵By this shall all men know
that ye are my disciples.

152. John 15:13

¹³Greater love hath no man than this,
that a man lay down his life
for his friends.



LOVING OTHERS



153. Romans 13:8 Galatians 5:14-15

⁸Owe no man anything,
but to love one another:
for he that loveth another
hath fulfilled the law.

¹⁴For all the law is fulfilled in one
word, even in this;
Thou shalt love thy neighbour
as thyself.

¹⁵But if ye bite and devour
one another,
take heed that ye be
not consumed
one of another.

154. 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 (NKJV)

⁴Love suffers long and is kind;
love does not envy;
love does not parade itself,
is not puffed up;

⁵Does not behave rudely,
does not seek its own,
is not provoked,
thinks no evil;

⁶Does not rejoice in iniquity,
but rejoices in the truth;

⁷Bears all things,
believes all things,
hopes all things,
endures all things.

⁸Love never fails.



LOVING OTHERS

155. 1 John 4:7-8

⁷Beloved, let us love one another:
for love is of God;
and every one that loveth
is born of God,
and knoweth God.

⁸He that loveth not
knoweth not God;
for God is love.



LOVING OTHERS

2. Selfishness/Pride

When a baby is born, it is not capable of serving others, doing kind deeds, or even showing love to anyone. In fact, a baby is only concerned about getting its needs met, with no care or consideration for its parent's feelings or energy level. A baby doesn't even seem to appreciate anything their parents do for them no matter how much they sacrifice. While this behavior is perfectly normal and acceptable for a baby, God desires each child to grow and be able to serve and help relieve the suffering of others. But many people remain selfish beyond babyhood, living only for themselves. All of their thoughts, words, and actions are focused on benefiting their own desires with little thought or care for others.

At the root of selfishness is pride, or the feeling of self-importance. Pride is promoted as a good quality in society today. The message we hear all around us is "Be proud," "Follow your heart," "Do whatever it takes to make yourself happy," "Love yourself first." But God in contrast hates pride (Proverbs 6:16-17). "There is nothing so offensive to God or so dangerous to the human soul as pride and self-sufficiency."¹ Having pride hinders our relationship with God because it causes us to feel no need of Him as our Savior.

While pride and selfishness are all about exalting self, Jesus, our example, did the very opposite. Though He was equal with God and had the highest position, He humbled himself and became a servant. He left the beauty and glory of heaven to come as a servant to mankind and die a cruel death (Philippians 2:7-8). "He "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28). He invites us to follow His example in self-denial. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23).

If pride and selfishness were put aside, most relationship problems would be resolved in a few short minutes.

Many relationships are damaged, and families torn apart because of pride and selfishness. In fact, if pride and selfishness were put aside, most relationship problems would be resolved in a few short minutes. Each person would try to hear what others have to say and try to help them and seek their good. No one would be quick to defend self or hold grudges. Cherished opinions and self-interest would be removed. Instead of arguing about who should have the best,

they each would be insisting that the other go first, have the best place, or make the final decision about something. Many times, if just one person will show humility and unselfishness, the other will also be inspired to be kind and humble.

Naturally, the human heart is very proud and selfish. We may not even recognize that we have a problem because we are just doing what comes naturally — living for self. We may even do many good things for others.

**Only God can give
you a new heart with
pure unselfish motives.**

However, if our inward motivation is to get something in return, it is a selfish motive. While it might seem that feeling bad about ourselves, or having a pity party would be the opposite of pride, it is most certainly a form of pride. True humility and self-sacrifice involves turning one's thoughts away from self. Instead of thinking about yourself and talking about yourself, talk of Jesus. Let the words of your heart be, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Galatians 2:20).

If you recognize that your life is centered on self, and you want to change, it is not enough to just decide to be humble and selfless. The battle with self is the "greatest battle that was ever fought."² Only God can give you a new heart with pure unselfish motives. It is only when you come to the realization that you are helpless and weak and can do nothing good on your own, that God can help you. Then as you submit yourself to Him, He will give you true humility and self-sacrificing love for others.



SELFISHNESS/PRIDE

A Life Well Spent

Adoniram Judson was born in 1788 in Massachusetts to a devout pastor and his wife. His parents soon noticed that Judson was incredibly smart and talented. By age three he could read chapters out of the Bible. While his father was hoping he would grow up and be a minister like himself, Judson thought that he was so brilliant that he couldn't imagine using his talents in such a dull calling as the ministry. He imagined himself becoming like Alexander the Great, or other famous men he admired.

When he went off to college, he met another very gifted young man named Ernest who was exceptionally clever and witty. They became good friends, and because of Ernest's influence, Judson became a proud atheist, denying the existence of God.

After college, Judson set out on a tour, travelling through several states on horseback. He lived a wild, reckless life thinking only of himself and doing whatever he wanted to make himself happy. One night during his travels, he stopped at an inn. The innkeeper apologized to him and explained that the only available room was next to a moaning, dying man. Unbothered by the situation, Judson willingly agreed to take the room.

As he lay in bed that night, he was unable to sleep. The walls were thin and the man next to him continued to groan in agony and despair. Judson thought to himself "The poor fellow is evidently dying in terror. I suppose I should go to his assistance, but what could I say that would help him?" Then Judson felt shame for even thinking such a humble thought. What would his witty, brilliant friend Ernest think if he knew of his weakness? Judson finally pulled the blankets over his head and tried to sleep. Eventually, the moaning ceased, and all was quiet.

The next morning he learned from the innkeeper that the man had died. When he asked who the man was, the innkeeper replied, "a graduate of Providence College, a young fellow named Ernest." Overwhelmed with emotion, Judson could not believe that it had been his friend who had led him away from God. For the first time in his life, Judson realized that he had a great need. He went home and begged his parents to help him know God.

One day Judson went to the woods and fell on his knees and prayed, "More than all else, I long to please Thee, my Lord. What wilt Thou have me to do?" He heard the response, "Go to the uttermost parts and preach the gospel of My love."³ Judson rose up, determined to go overseas and share Jesus.

The pride and selfishness that had so long ruled Judson's life were now replaced by humility and self-sacrifice. When God directed him to go overseas to Burma, he obeyed the calling even though he knew he would possibly be sacrificing his life. Also, before he left for Burma, Judson wanted to marry Ann, a young woman he'd met, and bring her with him. He wrote the following words in a letter to her father asking permission to marry her:

I have now to ask whether you can consent to part with your daughter early next spring, to see her no more in this world? Whether you can consent to her departure to a heathen land, and her subjection to the hardships and sufferings of a missionary life? Whether you can consent to her exposure to the dangers of the ocean; to the fatal influence of the southern climate of India; to every kind of want and distress; to degradation, insult, persecution, and perhaps a violent death?

Can you consent to all this, for the sake of Him who left His heavenly home and died for her and for you; for the sake of perishing... souls; for the sake of Zion and the glory of God? Can you consent to all this, in hope of soon meeting your daughter in the world of glory, with a crown of righteousness brightened by the acclamation of praise which shall resound to her Saviour from heathens saved, through her means, from eternal woe and despair?"⁴

Ann's father agreed and the letter was like a prophecy that came true. Ann died in the mission field and Judson experienced trials too horrible for words. But because of Judson's humility and self-sacrifice, he translated the Bible into Burmese, and as a result, today there are 2.5 million Christians living there.

156. Proverbs 22:4

⁴By humility
and the fear of the Lord
are riches, and honour, and life.



SELFISHNESS/PRIDE



157. Jeremiah 9:23-24

²³Let not the wise man
glory in his wisdom,
neither let the mighty man
glory in his might,
let not the rich man
glory in his riches:

²⁴But let him that glorieth
glory in this,
that he understandeth
and knoweth me,
that I am the Lord which exercise
lovingkindness, judgment, and
righteousness, in the earth:
for in these things I delight,
saith the Lord.



158. Matthew 20:26-28

²⁶Whosoever will be
great among you,
let him be your minister;

²⁷And whosoever will be
chief among you,
let him be your servant:

²⁸Even as the Son of man
came not to be ministered unto,
but to minister,
and to give His life
a ransom for many.

**159. 1 Corinthians 4:7
James 1:17; Proverbs 16:18
John 3:27**

⁷For who maketh thee
to differ from another?
and what hast thou that thou
didst not receive?
now if thou didst receive it,
why dost thou glory,
as if thou hadst not received it?

¹⁷Every good gift and
every perfect gift is from above,
and cometh down
from the Father of lights,
with whom is no variableness,
neither shadow of turning.

¹⁸Pride goeth before destruction,
and an haughty spirit before a fall.

²⁷A man can receive nothing,
except it be given
him from heaven.



SELFISHNESS/PRIDE

160. Philippians 2:5-8

⁵Let this mind be in you,
which was also in Christ Jesus:

⁶Who, being in the form of God,
thought it not robbery
to be equal with God:

⁷But made Himself of no reputation,
and took upon Him
the form of a servant,
and was made
in the likeness of men.

⁸And being found
in fashion as a man,
He humbled himself,
and became obedient
unto death,
even the death of the cross.



SELFISHNESS/PRIDE

3. Obedience

When Christ came to Earth, He did not have His own mission or agenda. In every act of His life, He was following His father's instructions. He said, "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me" (John 6:38). His entire life was devoted to obeying His father. Obedience means to comply with a command, direction, or request of a person or law. Simply put, it means to submit to the authority of another.

As Christ's mission was to always please His father (John 8:29), we are also called to obey. Christ said, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you" (John 15:14). Many of God's blessings are promised on condition of obedience. For example, the Bible says, "Whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, *because* we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight" (1 John 3:22). "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land" (Isaiah 1:19). "For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the *doers* of the law shall be justified" (Romans 2:13).

Sometimes a person learns about the requirements of God, and then they *work at trying* to obey. But true obedience is not just outward compliance. True obedience to God comes from a loving heart with a genuine desire to do what God tells us to do. This obedience comes only from Christ. As we give ourselves to Him and abide in Him by faith, He changes our feelings, thoughts, and motives. He writes His law on our heart (Hebrews 8:10) so that we *want* to do the right things and it seems natural to obey.

True obedience is not just outward compliance.

God is superior to everyone, and we should listen to Him and obey Him over every other person. However, as we obey God, He will lead us to obey and respect many of the people in our life. God's Word says we are to obey our parents (Ephesians 6:1-3) and listen to their counsel (Proverbs 1:8). We are also commanded to "obey them that have the rule over" us (Hebrews 13:17), such as leaders, teachers, or employers. We are told to submit, or show respect to those who are older than us (1 Peter 5:5). We are instructed to submit to government authority and "higher powers" because God is the one who has given them their power (Romans 13:1). Instructions are also given for husbands to love their

wives and treat them as their own bodies. And wives are to respect and submit to their husbands (Ephesians 5:25,22).

What does obedience and respect look like? When someone in authority gives you an instruction, you should look them in the eyes. Then you should calmly and politely say "Ok" and cheerfully perform the tasks they've asked you to complete. If for some reason you object to their request or have a different

**Obedience to God
should always
come first.**

suggestion, politely ask, "May I please suggest something?" After you have given your suggestion, if the answer is "No," say "Ok" and go complete the task.

You may wonder, is it ever ok to not obey? The answer is yes! The Bible says that when the commands of men contradict the commands of God, "we ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). Peter and the other disciples were asked by the religious leaders to stop preaching and teaching about Jesus. But this contradicted Jesus' command to spread the gospel (Matthew 28:19-20). So, the disciples chose to obey God instead of the religious leaders (Acts 5). There may be times in your life when someone asks you to do something that goes against what God asks of you. Obedience to God should always come first, regardless of what your parents, teachers, or even the government law may say.

But what if God asks you to do something and you don't want to obey? Or what if you don't feel like obeying someone in authority over you? You should pray and ask God to change your heart. Say, "Lord I don't feel like doing _____ but I know I should and I'm willing to be made willing." As you give God permission to change your heart, He will implant His principles deep inside your heart and mind so that you will want to do the right thing. As you decide to only do the things that please God, He will give you wisdom, strength, and power to obey.¹

Crossing the Jordan

In 2016, Don MacLafferty was a pastor and ministry worker living in California with his family. For months, he and his wife April had been asking God how they could best serve Him.

One morning He woke at 3:00 a.m. with a deep impression that God had something to tell him. Grabbing his Bible, Don spent the next several hours praying and waiting on God to speak to him. He felt impressed to read Ecclesiastes 3 which talks about God's perfect timing for everything.

"Time for what?" Don prayed.

After a period of waiting, He heard God's still, small voice finally say, "Time for you and April to put your feet in the Jordan all the way" (See Joshua 3:10-17). During the next few minutes, Don became convinced that God was asking him to resign from his paid ministry job and serve Him as a full-time volunteer. This would make it possible for him and his family to freely follow God's calling anywhere and anytime with nothing holding them back.

The instruction God gave seemed illogical and went against all human reasoning. Don's mind was filled with doubts. "How will I provide for my family?" he wondered. God was asking him to walk away from his security, salary, and the sources he had for meeting his financial needs.

But God impressed upon his heart, "Take this step by faith in Me. Only when you step out in faith and cut yourself off from all your security will you see how I will provide for you."

Don had a choice. Would he believe and obey God's instruction? Or would he doubt and disobey? He knew that if he waited too long, doubts would crowd his mind. If he discussed his decision with others besides his wife, it would slow down his obedience. So, after breakfast, he quickly went to his ministry headquarters and submitted his resignation.

After leaving paid ministry, Don and April continued to seek the Lord's will. They prayed, "Send us anywhere you want us to go!"

They felt impressed that God was telling them to go to Alberta, Canada. This surprised them but they didn't hesitate to apply for the paperwork to move. They were told they would need to wait four or five months to get their permits.

However, while they waited, they felt an urgency that they needed to go immediately. God impressed upon them, “Go put your feet in the Jordan! Go to the border by faith!”

It seemed absurd to drive 1000 miles to the Canadian border with no paperwork. Friends discouraged them. But they sensed God saying, “Go.”

So Don and his family packed up everything they could fit in the moving truck and gave the rest away. Then they began their long journey to the Canadian border. Each day they checked their email, confident God would work a miracle and somehow allow their permits to arrive before they got to the border. But no email came.

When they arrived at the border with no permits, they asked God what they should do. Once again God said, “Put your feet in the Jordan. Go cross the border.”



SURRENDER

Don and his family drove to the border feeling like fools. When the official looked over their documentation, he asked where their permit was. Don bravely told him, “We don’t have a permit yet. We were told it would take four to five more months.”

The officer asked, “How far have you come? I hope you still have a home to return to! It is impossible for me to do anything to help you move into Canada without your permit.” Then he turned and walked away.

Don and April looked at each other, wondering why God had not parted the waters for them. Then, Don silently prayed. “God, help! Help us get across this border. We are here by faith in Your command!

As if he had heard Don’s silent prayer, the officer immediately spun around and walked back to them. “What were you hoping I would do today for your family?” He asked.

Don replied, “I don’t know if you believe in God or not, but He has called our family to move to Canada to help families mentor their children to be disciples of Jesus.”

The officer then ordered Don and his family to follow him. For the next hour the officer worked to try to find a solution. Eventually he asked another officer to help and then a third. For hours they worked on the “impossible case.”

Five hours had gone by when they heard the officer call, “MacLafferty family!” He then began stamping their passports as he said, “Welcome to Canada!”

As Don recovered from his excitement he said, “Sir, I don’t know if you believe in God, but do you mind if I thank God right here for how He used you to be a part of His miracle? ...God just did a mighty miracle through you today!”

Hesitating, the officer said, “What you don’t know is that I used to believe in God! I have become discouraged lately with God and church and gave up on both. Today I choose to believe in God again. I will go home after my shift and tell my wife what God did today that I know was impossible. We will believe in God again and make our home a place to worship Him.”²

Don and his family were in awe of what God had done for them. They all bowed their heads in prayer before waving goodbye and driving into Canada.

They had less than one-hundred dollars to spend, no home, and no job. But they knew that God was calling them to a mission field in Canada, and they were willing to obey and trust His care.

Don leads a ministry called In Discipleship which grows champions to mentor the new generations to trust, follow, and share Jesus with Holy Spirit power. For more information, go to indiscipleship.org



SURRENDER

161. Deuteronomy 11:26-28 Joshua 24:15

²⁶Behold, I set before you this day
a blessing and a curse;

²⁷A blessing, if ye [will] obey
the commandments of
the Lord your God...

²⁸And a curse,
if ye will not obey
the commandments of
the Lord your God...

¹⁵Choose you this day
whom ye will serve...
As for me and my house,
we will serve the Lord.



SURRENDER

162. Proverbs 6:20-23 (NKJV)

²⁰My son, keep your father's command,
and do not forsake
the law of your mother.

²¹Bind them continually upon your heart;
Tie them around your neck.

²²When you roam, they will lead you;
When you sleep, they will keep you;
And when you awake,
they will speak with you.

²³For the commandment is a lamp,
And the law a light.



SURRENDER



163. John 2:5

⁵Whatsoever He saith unto you,
do it.



SURRENDER

164. Ephesians 6:1-3

¹Children, obey your parents
in the Lord: for this is right.



²Honour thy father and mother;
which is the first commandment
with promise;

³That it may be well with thee,
and thou mayest live long
on the earth.



SURRENDER

165. Ephesians 6:5-6

⁵Servants, be obedient to them
that are your masters
according to the flesh,
with fear and trembling,
in singleness of your heart,
as unto Christ;

⁶Not with eyeservice,
as menpleasers;
but as the servants
of Christ,
doing the will of God
from the heart.



SURRENDER

4. Speech/Honesty

Speech is one of the greatest gifts that God has given to us. It is through our voice that we are able to share the thoughts of our heart with others. We use our voice to pray and give praise to God and tell others of His goodness. While we can use our voice to comfort and bless those around us, we can also use it to

Nearly all broken homes, destroyed relationships, and church trials can be attributed to un-Christlike speech.

hurt and wound. The words that we choose to speak determine the kind of relationships we will have with others. Once our words are spoken, it is impossible to take them back. Nearly all broken

homes, destroyed relationships, and church trials can be attributed to un-Christlike speech.

The words that we speak have a close relationship to what is in our heart. The Bible says, “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh (Matthew 12:34). While our words are determined by the things we think about, our words also influence what is in our heart. Sometimes a person speaks words that they do not really believe, but the act of speaking them has such a powerful influence that they begin to believe what they have spoken. For this reason, it is dangerous to utter doubts, or untrue words.

The words we speak each day have a much greater influence for good than many sermons.

We should not say every thought that comes into our mind. Satan can tempt us and give us certain thoughts that are not true. If we cling to these thoughts and accept them as truth, they become our own and will influence our words. Instead, we should compare our thoughts to God’s Word, the standard of all truth, and only say them if they are true. For example, let’s say you have the thought, “I’m worthless.” This thought contradicts God’s Word which says that you are of great value and God even knows the number of hairs you have on your head (Matthew 10:30-31).

The words we speak each day have a much greater influence for good than many sermons. As Christians, our words should be used to encourage and strengthen others and point them to Christ. We should speak hope and blessing

to them. When we speak kindly to others, it is as if we are speaking kindly to Jesus (Matthew 25:40). Our conversations should be full of praise to God and thankfulness for His many blessings. We should speak often of heavenly themes.

While the Bible instructs us to speak words that are edifying, or uplifting, (Ephesians 4:29) it warns us against speaking words that are pointless (Matthew 12:36). It warns us against foolish talking and jesting or joking (Ephesians 5:4).

**Our words should
always contain the truth
without a taint of
dishonesty.**

We are instructed not to speak lies or speak evil of others. We should not speak slang words or take the Lord's name in vain by using words similar to God or Jesus such as, "Gosh" or "Jeez." And we should never quote Scripture in a silly, irreverent manner. Harsh or angry words should not escape our lips. Our conversations should not dwell on cheap commonplace things or worldliness.

The Bible also has a lot to say about honest speech. Lying lips are an abomination to God (Proverbs 12:22). If one lie is told, often others are needed to cover up the first lie. Our words should always contain the truth without a taint of dishonesty, even if it brings bad consequences on ourselves. While it is not always easy to tell the truth in every situation, our friendship with Jesus and desire to please Him can help us be truthful. If a little lie slips out, ask Him to help you to be honest and make things right. He will give you the strength to tell the truth no matter what it means for your reputation.

Remember that the words you speak can be used as a mighty power for good or for evil and must be chosen with care. The Bible says we will even be judged by them (Matthew 12:37). Consider the words in your mind before you say them. Ask yourself, "Is what I'm about to say going to bring encouragement and comfort? Is it the truth? Does it point the hearer to Christ or put their mind on worldliness? Would I speak this in the presence of Jesus?"

Power of Words

When Kayla was nine-years-old she began taking piano lessons from Mrs. Siner. At first Kayla was really excited to be taking lessons. But it wasn't long before Mrs. Siner began expressing doubt in Kayla's piano playing ability. She would make comments that made Kayla feel as if she wasn't as good as the other piano students.

At the end of the year, Mrs. Siner told Kayla that she was going to be transferred to a different piano teacher — Mrs. Hays. Though Mrs. Siner gave reasons for the transfer, Kayla knew it was because Mrs. Siner didn't think she would ever be good at playing the piano and didn't want to continue teaching her. Kayla felt defeated and was ready to give up on playing the piano, but her mother insisted she continue with Mrs. Hays.

Piano lessons with Mrs. Hays were very different. Mrs. Hays told Kayla that she was doing great and gave her lots of encouragement. It wasn't long before Kayla found herself really enjoying piano and she began progressing well.

The year came to an end and all the students of both piano teachers had a recital together. Kayla performed her piano piece flawlessly. After the recital was over, Mrs. Siner came up to Kayla in complete disbelief that she had played such a difficult piece so well.

When Kayla looked back on her two years of piano with different teachers, she realized how powerful words are. One teacher spoke words of doubt and the other spoke words of confidence and encouragement. And Kayla had lived up to both of their expectations expressed through their words.

The following story also shows the power of words — but this time, the power of truthful words. Seven-year-old Taylor Munsey was playing first baseman in a baseball game. During a play, he scooped up the ball and tried to tag the runner. The umpire, Laura, thought the runner had been tagged and called him out. Without delay, Tanner ran to the umpire's side and said, "Ma'am, I didn't tag the runner."

So, the umpire reversed her call, and the runner was safe on base. After the game the coach gave him the game ball for his honesty.

Two weeks later Tanner was playing baseball again and Laura was the umpire. This time Laura called a player safe on base because she thought Tanner had missed him. Tanner looked at the umpire and returned to his position without saying a word. Laura sensed something was wrong and asked Tanner, "Did you tag the runner?"

"Yes," he replied.

Umpire Laura then called the player out. The coach on the opposite team protested, so Laura explained what had happened two weeks earlier.

"If a kid is that honest," she said, "I have to give it to him. This game is supposed to be for kids."¹

The honesty of this seven-year-old boy not only earned him the respect of his coach and umpire, but as a result, this story was published in *Sports Illustrated* magazine. This little boy's honesty has travelled the globe!



SPEECH/HONESTY

166. Proverbs 12:22 Colossians 3:9

²²Lying lips are abomination
to the LORD:
but they that deal truly
are His delight.

⁹Lie not one to another,
seeing that ye have put off
the old man with his deeds.



SPEECH/HONESTY

167. Ecclesiastes 12:1 1 Timothy 4:12 (NKJV)

¹Remember...your Creator
in the days of your youth,
[when] the difficult days come,
And the years draw near
when you say,
“I have no pleasure in them.”

¹²Let no one despise your youth,
but be an example to the believers
in word, in conduct,
in love, in spirit,
in faith, in purity.



SPEECH/HONESTY

168. Ephesians 4:29 Psalm 34:13; James 1:26

**²⁹Let no corrupt communication
proceed out of your mouth,
but that which is good
to the use of edifying,
that it may minister
grace unto the hearers.**

**¹³Keep thy tongue from evil,
and thy lips from speaking guile.**

²⁶If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.



SPEECH/HONESTY



169. Ephesians 5:2-4

²And walk in love,
as Christ also hath loved us,
and hath given Himself for us
an offering
and a sacrifice to God
for a sweetsmelling savour.

³But fornication, and all
uncleanness, or covetousness,
let it not be once named among
you, as becometh saints;

⁴Neither filthiness, nor foolish
talking, nor jesting,
which are not convenient:
but rather giving of thanks.

170. Matthew 12:34-37

³⁴Out of the abundance
of the heart the mouth speaketh.

³⁵A good man out
of the good treasure of the heart
bringeth forth good things:
and an evil man
out of the evil treasure
bringeth forth evil things.

³⁶But I say unto you,
That every idle word
that men shall speak,
they shall give account thereof
in the day of judgment.

³⁷For by thy words
thou shalt be justified,
and by thy words
thou shalt be condemned.



SPEECH/HONESTY

5. Gossip

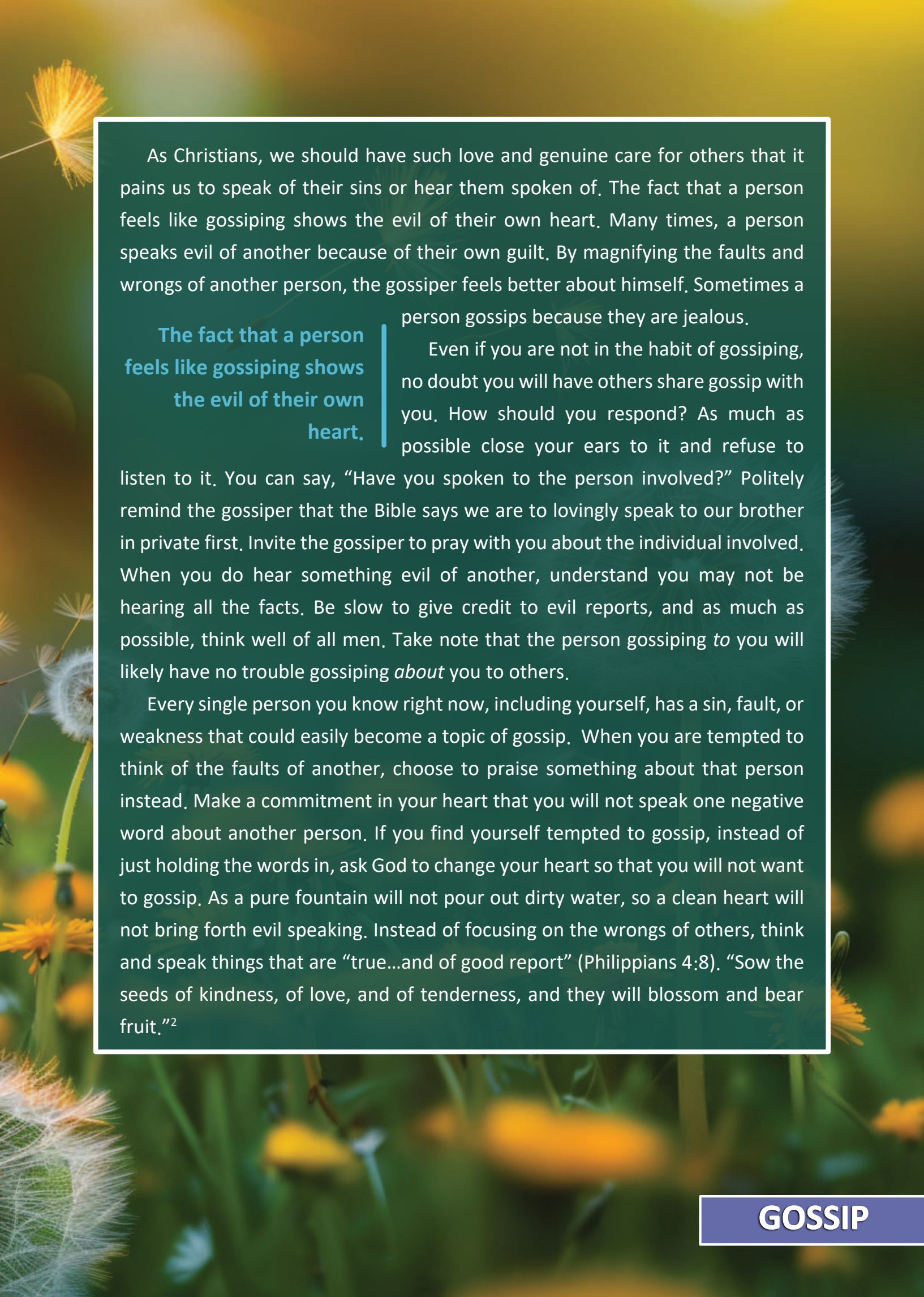
Many friendships, relationships, and marriages are damaged or destroyed by gossip. Gossip means to talk about the secrets, sins, or personal life of someone when they are not around. The gossip may or may not be true. Many times, it begins as a true piece of information, but as it gets passed from one person to another it becomes distorted. Gossip brings a double curse. Not only does it damage the reputation of the person spoken of, but the one who speaks seeds

Gossip brings a double curse.

of strife will find those seeds will bear fruit in his own life. A person who derives pleasure from hearing or spreading gossip is a miserable person and “a stranger to true happiness.”¹ Although gossiping is very common in our society today, the Bible warns us against it and says we should “speak evil of no man” (Titus 3:2).

Many times, the topic of gossip centers around someone’s sins. Often the gossipers feel they have a really good reason to gossip because the person they want to talk about has done something very bad. But the Bible gives specific instructions for what to do when someone has sinned. First, we are to go alone and speak directly to that person about the sin (Matthew 18:15). Instead of condemning them, we are to have a very humble, loving spirit (Galatians 6:1). We should have an attitude of pity and understanding, realizing that we also have made many mistakes in our life. We should speak hope to them and point them to Jesus as the one who can help with their problem. If their sin is against us personally, we should calmly and kindly tell them of their wrong. Many times, a person will be moved by seeing our kindness and humility and they will be led to repentance.

If the person is not willing to make a change after speaking with them alone, then the Bible instructs us to go get one or two other people to bring with us to speak with them (Matthew 18:16). Then we should try again to humbly appeal to them. If they still refuse to listen, then the Bible says to take it before the church. If they still don’t repent, then let them alone and treat them as a “pagan or a tax collector” (Matthew 18:17). In other words, treat them as an acquaintance rather than a friend or brother.



As Christians, we should have such love and genuine care for others that it pains us to speak of their sins or hear them spoken of. The fact that a person feels like gossiping shows the evil of their own heart. Many times, a person speaks evil of another because of their own guilt. By magnifying the faults and wrongs of another person, the gossip feels better about himself. Sometimes a

The fact that a person feels like gossiping shows the evil of their own heart.

person gossips because they are jealous.

Even if you are not in the habit of gossiping, no doubt you will have others share gossip with you. How should you respond? As much as possible close your ears to it and refuse to listen to it. You can say, “Have you spoken to the person involved?” Politely remind the gossip that the Bible says we are to lovingly speak to our brother in private first. Invite the gossip to pray with you about the individual involved. When you do hear something evil of another, understand you may not be hearing all the facts. Be slow to give credit to evil reports, and as much as possible, think well of all men. Take note that the person gossiping *to* you will likely have no trouble gossiping *about* you to others.

Every single person you know right now, including yourself, has a sin, fault, or weakness that could easily become a topic of gossip. When you are tempted to think of the faults of another, choose to praise something about that person instead. Make a commitment in your heart that you will not speak one negative word about another person. If you find yourself tempted to gossip, instead of just holding the words in, ask God to change your heart so that you will not want to gossip. As a pure fountain will not pour out dirty water, so a clean heart will not bring forth evil speaking. Instead of focusing on the wrongs of others, think and speak things that are “true...and of good report” (Philippians 4:8). “Sow the seeds of kindness, of love, and of tenderness, and they will blossom and bear fruit.”²

From Gossip to Praise

Paula was an older woman who liked to talk. She talked a lot. She talked when she went to the grocery store, she talked at church, birthday parties, and everywhere she went. When she was at home alone she would get on her phone to talk. Her favorite topic was criticizing other people. She had something negative to say about everyone. But she had a way of saying it that made her seem like a very spiritual person.

Sometimes Paula came across really juicy information that she felt was extremely important to share. For example, one time she took a train to go and visit her family. While she was on the train, Paula got up to use the restroom. And as she walked down the aisle she noticed someone she knew — Nancy. Nancy had just finished school and had been hired by the local Christian school to be a teacher the following year. Paula smiled and waved as she passed by but had to take a second look because she saw that Nancy was holding an alcoholic drink! But instead of talking with Nancy about the incident first, Paula felt it was her duty to report it to the school principal immediately. And so, she did. Then the following week Nancy received a letter stating they no longer wanted her as a teacher because they did not want to hire someone who drank alcohol.

Paula felt justified in reporting Nancy to the school. She believed that she had spared the school from hiring an alcohol-drinking teacher. But Paula didn't realize there was another side to the story. You see, Nancy had been sitting on the train looking out the window when a train worker came by with drinks. The woman next to her got a bottle of beer. Then turning to Nancy she said, "Please hold this while I get out my money." Nancy reluctantly took it, wondering to herself why anyone would want to drink that stuff. She was thankful when the woman took it back. After she got off the train, she forgot all about the incident until she received her letter in the mail.

Paula's bad habit of gossiping increased over the years and she gained a reputation for being the town gossip. No one was excluded from her gossip. While she might share gossip with someone and treat them as if they were her friend, the next week she would likely be found gossiping about that person too.

As a result, people learned Paula could not be trusted and she didn't have many friends.

But then something happened that changed her life. She attended a seminar about Jesus. Paula experienced the power of Jesus in a new way, and she gave her heart completely to Him. She experienced a peace and joy she had never known. Afterward, she talked as much as ever, but the things she talked about were very different. Now she had something good to say about everyone! She praised the good intentions of the people she knew. Everywhere she went she gave compliments. She began to overlook the negative points people had and hunt for things she could praise.

Years later Paula died. Her funeral was packed. The whole church and much of the town was there. Everyone seemed to like her and had such good things to say about her. Many had no idea that she used to be a gossip. Her funeral was very inspiring and many commented that they wanted to be like her.

What will you be remembered for? Will people remember that you gave them juicy details about the sins and problems of others? Or will people remember you for your kind, uplifting words of faith and love?



GOSSIP



**171. Proverbs 17:9
Titus 3:2; 1 Peter 2:17
Proverbs 18:8**

⁹He that covereth a transgression
seeketh love;
but he that repeateth a matter
spareth...friends.

²Speak evil of no man,

¹⁷Honour all men.

⁸The words of a talebearer
are as wounds,
and they go down
into the innermost
parts of the belly.

172. Proverbs 18:21
Psalm 35:28
Psalm 141:3

²¹Death and life are in the
power of the tongue:

²⁸And my tongue shall speak of thy
righteousness and of thy praise all
the day long.



³Set a watch, O Lord,
before my mouth;
keep the door of my lips.



GOSSIP



173. Matthew 18:15-16

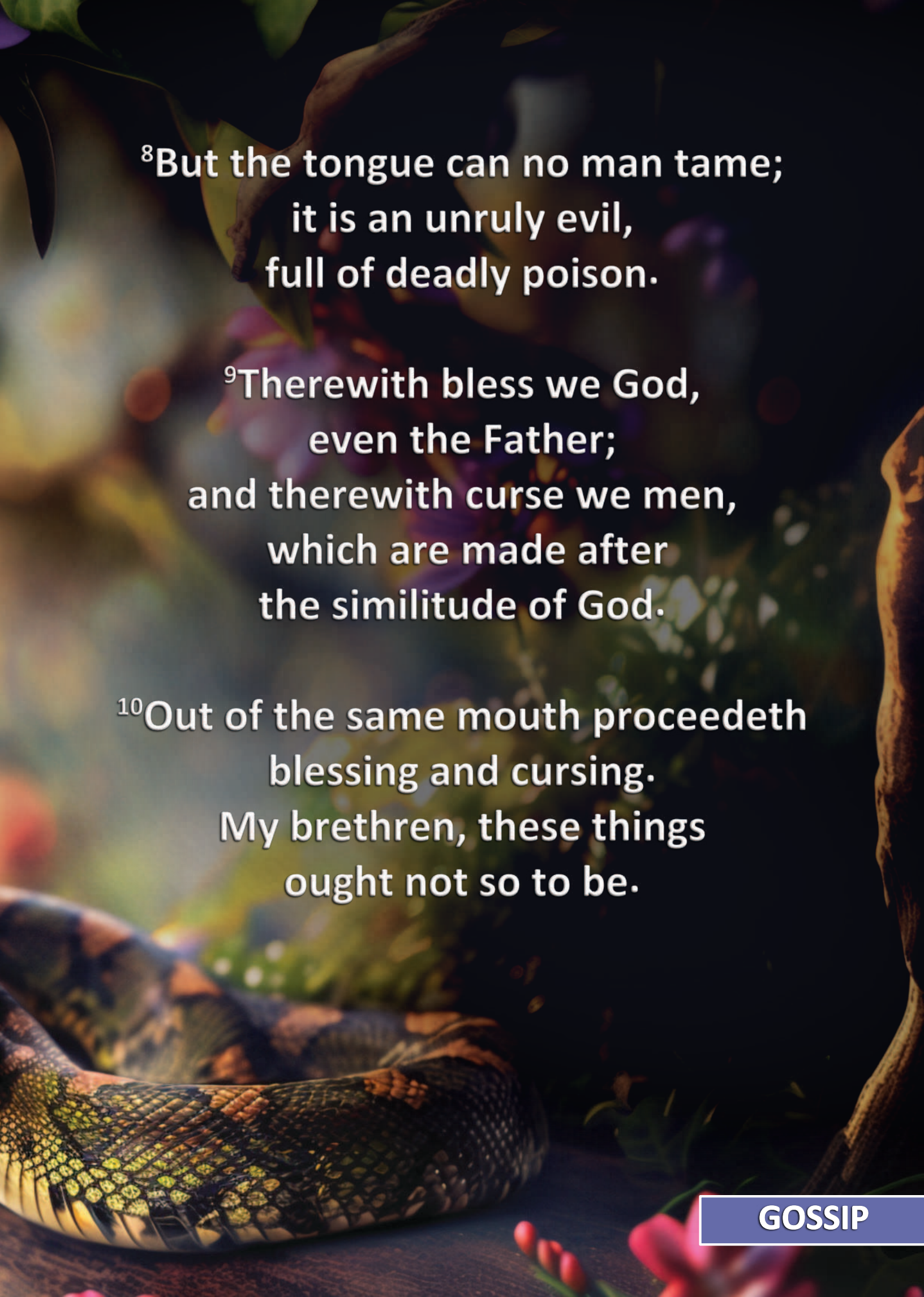
¹⁵If thy brother
shall trespass against thee,
go and tell him his fault
between thee and him alone:
if he shall hear thee,
thou has gained thy brother.

¹⁶But if he will not hear thee,
then take with thee
one or two more,
that in the mouth of
two or three witnesses
every word may be established.

174. James 3:2,7-10

²If any man offend not in word,
the same is a perfect man,
and able also
to bridle the whole body.

⁷For every kind of beasts,
and of birds,
and of serpents,
and of things in the sea,
is tamed,
and hath been tamed of mankind:



⁸But the tongue can no man tame;
it is an unruly evil,
full of deadly poison.

⁹Therewith bless we God,
even the Father;
and therewith curse we men,
which are made after
the similitude of God.

¹⁰Out of the same mouth proceedeth
blessing and cursing.
My brethren, these things
ought not so to be.

175. James 4:11

¹¹Speak not evil
one of another, brethren,
He that speaketh evil of his brother,
and judgeth his brother,
speaketh evil of the law,
and judgeth the law:
but if thou judge the law,
thou art not a doer of the law,
but a judge.



GOSSIP

6. Hospitality/Service

Our world is filled with people who are poor and suffering. Millions live in extreme poverty and 9 percent of the world lives on less than \$2 per day. As Christians, we are to help relieve the suffering of others and do what we can to help meet their needs. God says, “Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land (Deuteronomy 15:11). We are also instructed to be “lover[s] of hospitality” (Titus 1:8). Hospitality means to be friendly and welcoming to people, and maybe even giving them food or feeding them in our homes.

God views our acts of kindness toward others as though they were done directly to Him. Jesus said, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matthew 25:40). And sometimes the people we are kind to may in fact be angels in disguise. The Bible says, “Be

God views our acts of kindness toward others as though they were done directly to Him.

not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares” (Hebrews 13:2). This verse is referring to Abraham and Lot. A few travelling men passed by each of their houses. Though they did not ask for any kindness, both Abraham and Lot invited them into their homes, fed them and cared for them. Afterward they found out that the men were heavenly angels (Genesis 18-19). Even today when we are kind to the poor and suffering, we can know that unseen angels are there.

Sometimes you may feel that you have nothing to give someone or no resources to help anyone. Or you may fear not having enough for yourself if you share. The widow of Zarephath also had this concern. She was down to her last handful of flour and a few drops of oil. But the prophet Elijah instructed her to feed him first. As she obeyed, her jar of oil and barrel of flour were replenished and did not run out for a long time (1 Kings 17:12-15). We do not need to worry that our kindness to others will bring us to poverty. In fact, the Bible promises that those who bless others will be greatly blessed. To those who help the poor God says, “the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto.” “Thou shalt lend unto many nations, but thou shalt not

borrow; and thou shalt reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over thee" (Deuteronomy 15:10, 6). When we give to the poor or help the suffering, it is as if we are lending and giving to the Lord, and He himself will repay us (Proverbs 19:17).

As Christians, we should be wise with our money, and consider helping those who don't have much. While some people live in poverty due to their poor choices, a large portion are poor because of unpreventable, unfortunate circumstances. We should save our extra pennies and dollars to give to the poor and needy. By denying ourselves of the things we don't really need, we can have resources to help others. We should dress inexpensively and pass up buying unnecessary items. Giving our time and money to help the poor or host strangers is like putting our treasure in heaven. God will repay us with rich blessings and with treasure that can never be taken away.

While it is not possible for you to help every suffering person in our world, ask God to show you who you can help. Use the talents and resources that God has given you to bless the people God puts in your life. If an opportunity comes to be kind to a stranger, do what you can to brighten their life and relieve their burdens.

When we give to the poor or help the suffering, it is as if we are lending and giving to the Lord.



HOSPITALITY/SERVICE

The Eleventh Commandment

Walter and his wife Clara were busy preparing their house for a special guest to arrive — a new pastor for their church. Phones and modern transportation, didn't exist at that time, so they had no idea when he would arrive.

The couple wanted the new pastor to have a warm welcome, so Walter made a nice fire and helped get the home ready. Clara cooked a lot of food and made sure everything in the home was just as it should be.

When Walter went to the back of the house to get wood for the fire, he saw a man walking by. He was dirty and his clothing was ragged. The man asked Walter about how far it was to the next town. Walter told him it was three miles. The man, who appeared very tired and cold, asked permission to warm himself for a few minutes.

Walter very reluctantly allowed him into the kitchen. Clara glared at the dirty man, wishing he had not come at such an inconvenient time. She was so busy trying to make everything ready for the new pastor who would be arriving any time, since he was scheduled to preach the next day at church.

Clara coldly gave the man a chair by the fire where the bread she had prepared for the preacher was baking. After the stranger warmed himself, he got ready to leave. However, to Clara's dismay, he asked if he could have a little something to eat before he left.

Walter and Clara discussed briefly what to do with this intruder. Finally, they decided to give him some cold meat and bread. They made sure to hint that he needed to hurry and leave soon since he still had a long three miles to go before dark.

By the time the stranger finished eating, it was starting to get late and the weather was very bad. After thanking Walter and Clara for their hospitality, the stranger asked if he could stay the night with them.

Clara was trying to hide her anger as she thought of where this intruder could possibly sleep. They agreed that he could sleep on the floor since they had reserved the guest room for the pastor. After rebuking him for not just continuing his journey so he could make it in time, they told him he could stay.

Evening arrived, and it began to look less likely that the pastor would be coming that night. They went ahead and ate supper. Since it appeared very rude

to eat in front of the stranger, they invited him to join them. After supper they had evening worship.

Walter and Clara were very proud of their six-year-old son Charlie and took the opportunity to show off some of the things he knew. After singing a hymn accurately, Clara proudly asked him to repeat the commandments.

Just before he began, the stranger said, “Now, how many commandments are there? I think there are eleven, aren’t there?”

Walter and Clara were disgusted with the stranger’s lack of Bible knowledge. They quickly pulled out their Bibles and showed him that there were only ten commandments.

The stranger still insisted that there were eleven. Walter and Clara then scolded, lectured, and ridiculed the man who seemed unconvinced that there were only ten. Finally, bedtime came, and they went to bed.

Early the next morning the stranger left on his journey. The pastor still had not arrived so the family headed to church, hoping he would be there.

At church, the service began but everyone was disappointed that the pastor had not arrived yet. At one point, Walter looked towards the back of the church and was shocked to see the stranger who had been at their home come through the door. Not seeing a place to sit, the stranger walked right on stage and sat down.

Embarrassed, Walter followed him and told him to get off the stage. But the stranger insisted that it was comfortable there and refused to move.

Walter stepped away to find help to force the man off the stage. But at the same time, the stranger stepped up to the podium and began to lead the church in a song. Then he led the congregation in prayer.

By then everyone realized that he was the new pastor. As he stood up to preach, he quoted John 13:34, “A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.”

Walter and Clara slumped down low in their seats as they realized this was the eleventh commandment. And they had miserably failed to fulfill it in their home toward the stranger who was to be their new pastor.¹



176. Proverbs 3:27-28 Proverbs 11:25

²⁷Withhold not good from them
to whom it is due,
when it is in the power
of thine hand to do it.

²⁸Say not unto thy neighbour,
Go, and come again,
and tomorrow I will give;
when thou hast it by thee.

²⁵The liberal soul shall be made fat:
and he that watereth shall be
watered also himself.

**177. Proverbs 19:17
Deuteronomy 15:11
Luke 3:11**

**¹⁷He that hath pity
upon the poor
lendeth unto the LORD;
and that which he hath given
will he pay him again.**

**¹¹Open thine hand wide
unto thy brother,
to thy poor, and to thy needy,
in thy land.**

¹¹He that hath two coats,
let him impart to him that hath none;
and he that hath meat,
let him do likewise.



HOSPITALITY/SERVICE

178. Matthew 25:34-36,40

³⁴Come, ye blessed of my Father,
inherit the kingdom
prepared for you from the
foundation of the world.

³⁵For I was an hungred,
and ye gave me meat:
I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink:
I was a stranger, and ye took me in.

³⁶Naked, and ye clothed me:
I was sick, and ye visited me:
I was in prison,
and ye came unto me.

⁴⁰As ye have done it unto one
of the least of these my brethren,
ye have done it unto me.



HOSPITALITY/SERVICE

179. Hebrews 13:2

²Be not forgetful to entertain
strangers:
for thereby some
have entertained angels
unawares.





HOSPITALITY/SERVICE

180. 1 John 3:16-18

¹⁶Hereby perceive we
the love of God,
because He laid down
His life for us:
and we ought to lay down
our lives for the brethren.

¹⁸My little children,
let us not love in word,
neither in tongue;
but in deed and in truth.

¹⁷But whoso hath this world's good,
and seeth his brother have need,
and shutteth up his bowels
of compassion from him,
how dwelleth
the love of God in him?



HOSPITALITY/SERVICE

7. Getting Along

A little more than eight billion people live in our world today. In your lifetime, you will likely encounter 80,000 of them, get to know 600 of them, and come to know about 20 in a very personal manner. The Bible says we should try to get along with all of them: “If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men” (Romans 12:18). Though no two people are exactly alike, there are some basic principles of humanity that will help you get along with and live at peace with anyone you meet.¹ These principles work in your home among family members, among friends, and even among strangers.

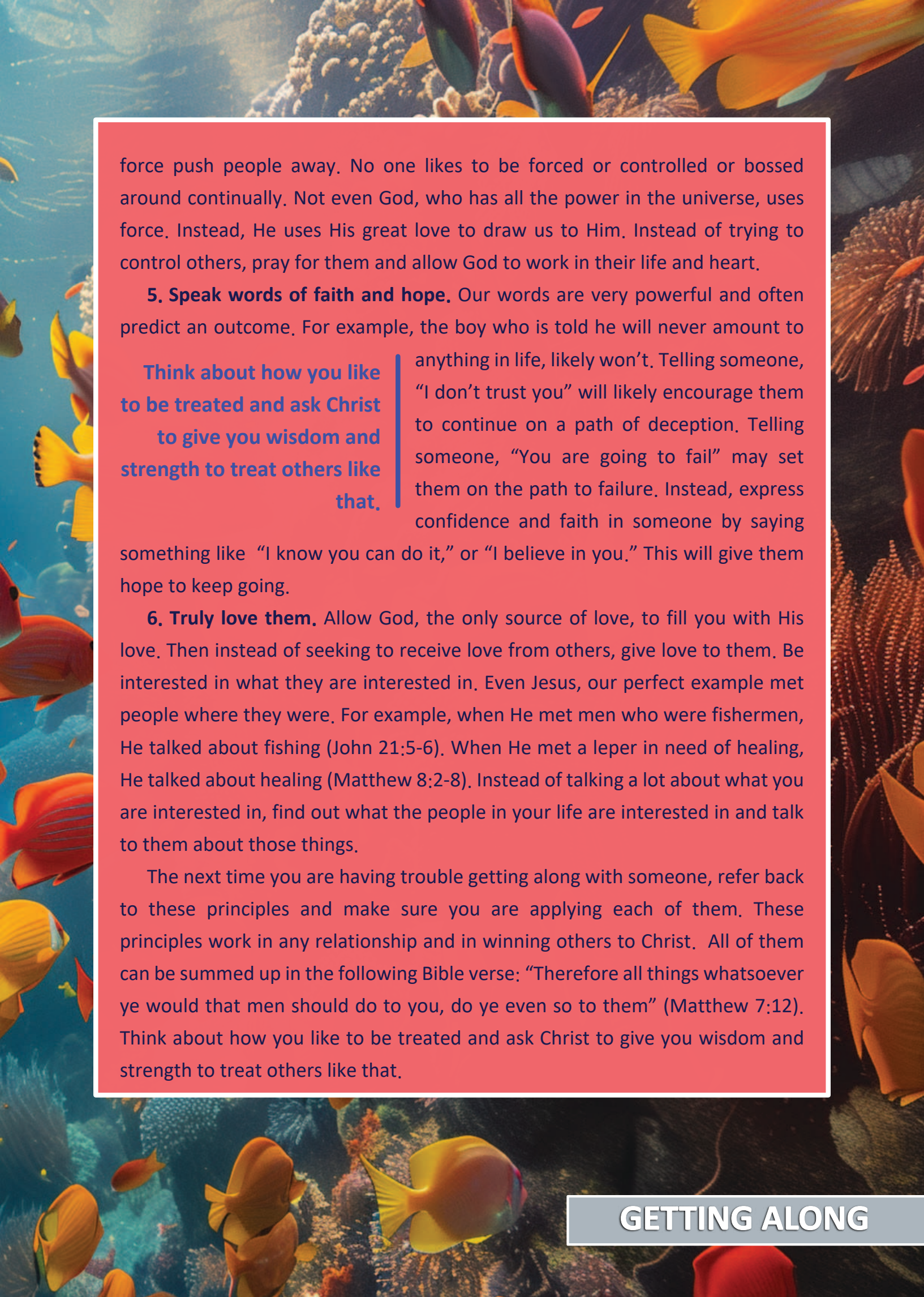
1. Take Jesus with you. Christ knows every person and He will give us wisdom about how to reach hearts and get along with each person we meet. He may impress us to call someone at a certain time or even tell us to share exactly the right words of comfort that someone needs to hear.

2. Be happy. One of the most attractive powers on earth is a joyful Christian. Everyone wants to be happy. If you walk around with a gloomy look and frequently complain and murmur, no one will want to be around you. But a positive, joyful attitude, and a loving and lovable nature will attract people to you. They will want to be in your presence. Only Jesus can give you this type of joy as you ask Him to help you.

Christ knows every person and He will give us wisdom about how to reach hearts and get along with each person we meet.

3. Have a humble spirit. The Bible says we should consider others better than ourselves (Philippians 2:3). Instead of having an attitude of superiority, which will drive people away, we should treat them as if they are more important than us. If we make a mistake, we should be quick to apologize and admit our wrongdoing. If someone else makes a mistake, we can let them know we have made many more. Christ, our example, was so meek and humble that even the worst of sinners felt at ease in His presence. He never nagged or put people down.

4. Give people freedom of choice. While it is natural for us to want others to share our values and enthusiasm and agree with us, methods of control and



force push people away. No one likes to be forced or controlled or bossed around continually. Not even God, who has all the power in the universe, uses force. Instead, He uses His great love to draw us to Him. Instead of trying to control others, pray for them and allow God to work in their life and heart.

5. Speak words of faith and hope. Our words are very powerful and often predict an outcome. For example, the boy who is told he will never amount to

Think about how you like to be treated and ask Christ to give you wisdom and strength to treat others like that.

anything in life, likely won't. Telling someone, "I don't trust you" will likely encourage them to continue on a path of deception. Telling someone, "You are going to fail" may set them on the path to failure. Instead, express confidence and faith in someone by saying

something like "I know you can do it," or "I believe in you." This will give them hope to keep going.

6. Truly love them. Allow God, the only source of love, to fill you with His love. Then instead of seeking to receive love from others, give love to them. Be interested in what they are interested in. Even Jesus, our perfect example met people where they were. For example, when He met men who were fishermen, He talked about fishing (John 21:5-6). When He met a leper in need of healing, He talked about healing (Matthew 8:2-8). Instead of talking a lot about what you are interested in, find out what the people in your life are interested in and talk to them about those things.

The next time you are having trouble getting along with someone, refer back to these principles and make sure you are applying each of them. These principles work in any relationship and in winning others to Christ. All of them can be summed up in the following Bible verse: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them" (Matthew 7:12). Think about how you like to be treated and ask Christ to give you wisdom and strength to treat others like that.

Won Back to Christ

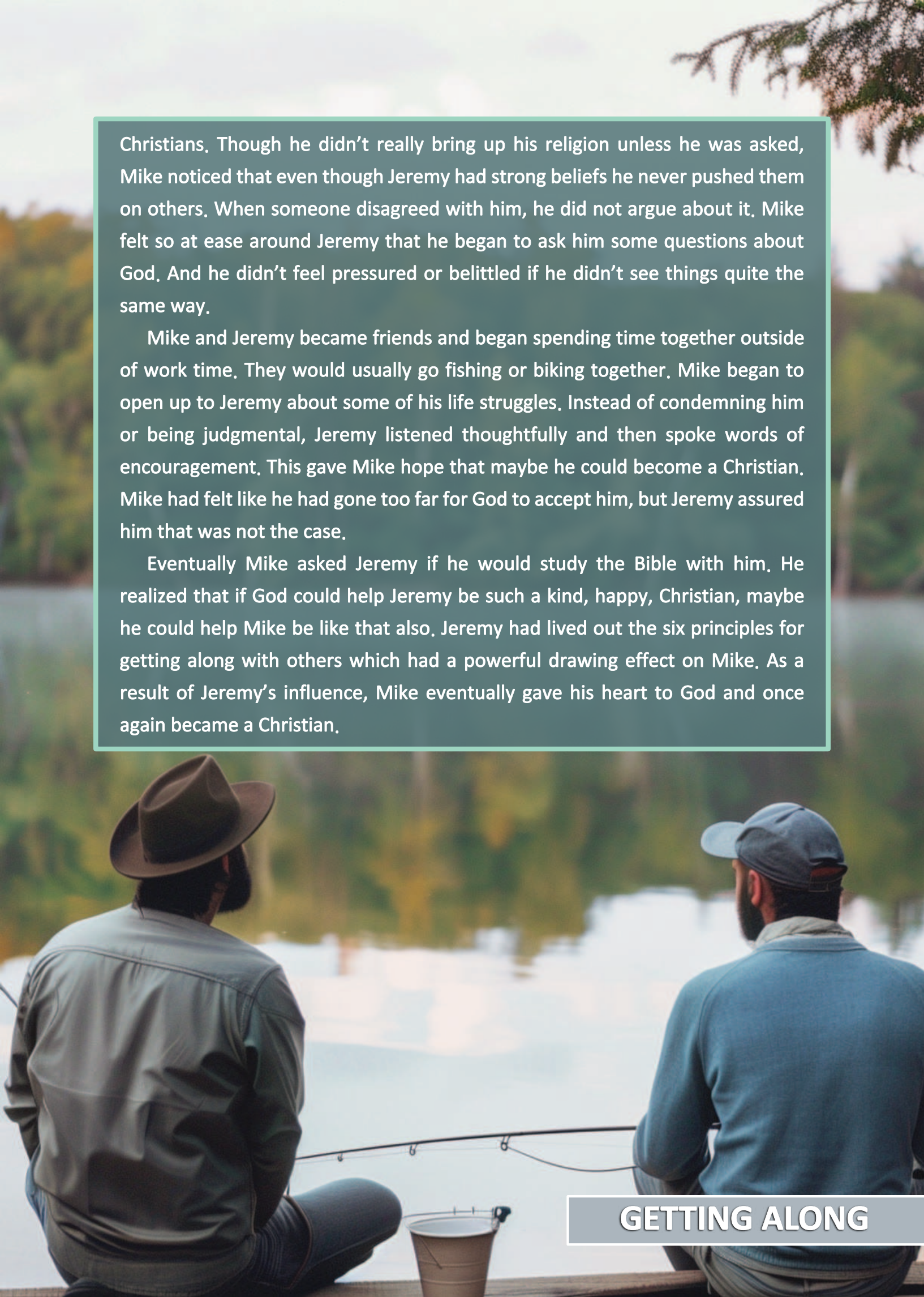
Mike was raised in a Christian home, but when he grew up, he left behind the religious values he had been taught. He became so busy with his job and his hobbies that he rarely thought about God or the Bible. However, something began to change when he got a new supervisor at his job. His name was Jeremy and he was different from any Christian Mike had ever met.

Jeremy always seemed so happy. Mike was really surprised to learn that Jeremy was a Christian because he had never seen such a happy Christian. In fact, one of the main reasons he wanted nothing to do with religion was because of the solemn, sad, faces of the Christians he knew. Their lives gave no reason for him to think that Christianity had any answers to his problems. While these sad Christians gave him many rules to follow, the commercials, billboards, and media portrayed such freedom and happiness in sinful activities. So, Mike had been more drawn to the world than religion.

But Jeremy had a joy about him that didn't seem to be upset by circumstances. He always wore a smile. When things went wrong at work, Mike's old supervisor would have complained and cursed, but Jeremy just said, "Praise the Lord." Mike decided he wanted to be around Jeremy as much as possible because he seemed to have such a peace about him. And Mike wanted to have peace and joy too.

Mike noticed that even though Jeremy was the supervisor, he did not rudely boss everyone around like his old supervisor. Instead, he treated everyone with respect. For example, one day Mike made a big mistake. He had mixed up his work schedule and accidentally showed up two hours late for work. This made things very inconvenient for Jeremy and the other workers. However, Mike was really surprised by Jeremy's compassionate reaction. He kindly listened to Mike's apology and said, "You've been such a good worker, I'm sure you didn't mean to. I've done the same thing a few times myself, so I can't be too hard on you." This left a deep impression on Mike.

Mike was also surprised to see that he and Jeremy could discuss religion without arguing, something he hadn't experienced before with other devout

A photograph of two men sitting on a wooden dock, fishing in a calm lake. The man on the left is wearing a brown hat and a dark jacket, while the man on the right is wearing a blue cap and a blue sweater. They are both facing away from the camera, looking out at the water. The background is a soft-focus view of the lake and distant trees under a hazy sky. A teal-colored text box is overlaid on the upper portion of the image.

Christians. Though he didn't really bring up his religion unless he was asked, Mike noticed that even though Jeremy had strong beliefs he never pushed them on others. When someone disagreed with him, he did not argue about it. Mike felt so at ease around Jeremy that he began to ask him some questions about God. And he didn't feel pressured or belittled if he didn't see things quite the same way.

Mike and Jeremy became friends and began spending time together outside of work time. They would usually go fishing or biking together. Mike began to open up to Jeremy about some of his life struggles. Instead of condemning him or being judgmental, Jeremy listened thoughtfully and then spoke words of encouragement. This gave Mike hope that maybe he could become a Christian. Mike had felt like he had gone too far for God to accept him, but Jeremy assured him that was not the case.

Eventually Mike asked Jeremy if he would study the Bible with him. He realized that if God could help Jeremy be such a kind, happy, Christian, maybe he could help Mike be like that also. Jeremy had lived out the six principles for getting along with others which had a powerful drawing effect on Mike. As a result of Jeremy's influence, Mike eventually gave his heart to God and once again became a Christian.

GETTING ALONG



181. Matthew 7:12

¹²Therefore all things
whatsoever ye would that
men should do to you,
do ye even so to them.

182. Romans 2:1 Matthew 7:1-3

¹Thou art inexcusable, O man,
whosoever thou art that judgest:
for wherein thou judgest another,
thou condemnest thyself;
for thou that judgest doest the
same things.

¹Judge not, that ye be not judged.

²For with what judgment ye judge,
ye shall be judged:

³And why beholdest thou the mote
that is in thy brother's eye,
but considerest not the beam
that is in thine own eye?



GETTING ALONG



183. Romans 12:10

¹⁰Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another.



184. Ephesians 4:31-32

³¹Let all bitterness, and wrath,
and anger, and clamour,
and evil speaking,
be put away from you,
with all malice:

³²And be ye kind one to another,
tenderhearted,
forgiving one another,
even as God
for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

185. Philippians 2:3-4

³In lowliness of mind let each
esteem other better than
themselves.

⁴Look not every man
on his own things,
but every man also
on the things of others.



GETTING ALONG

8. Hurt Feelings/Offended

While we should seek to be at peace with others and try to get along with everyone, we will all experience times when people speak rudely to us or treat us unkindly. But we do not need to let these experiences disturb our peace or upset us. Through the power of Christ, it is possible to be patient, kind, and even cheerful when someone treats us harshly. When Christ was on earth, He lived in

Through the power of Christ, it is possible to be patient, kind, and even cheerful when someone treats us harshly.

perfect peace despite the constant conflict of enemies continually pursuing Him. Nothing on earth could disturb His peace and oneness with His Father. And He says to us "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you (John 14:27).

The greatest enemy to our peace is the love of self. "While self is all alive, we stand ready continually to guard it from mortification and insult; but when we are dead, and our life is hid with Christ in God, we shall not take neglects or slights to heart. We shall be deaf to reproach and blind to scorn and insult."¹ The victory over self is more precious than any other victory. For when self is dead, we will not allow our mind to dwell on the wrongs done to us. "We should not allow our feelings to be easily wounded. We are to live, not to guard our feelings or our reputation, but to save souls...Whatever others may think of us or do to us, it need not disturb our oneness with Christ."²

We can take comfort in the fact that God can even use the cruelty of others for good. For example, Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery and lied to their father. As a result of their sin against him, Joseph suffered years of slavery and imprisonment before the king eventually made him one of the highest rulers in Egypt (Genesis 37-50). Years later, the brothers were reunited with Joseph, but they feared he would take revenge on them. Joseph assured them, "ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive" (Genesis 50:20). Joseph understood that God had allowed his brothers' cruelty towards

The greatest enemy to our peace is the love of self.

him because He had a higher purpose in mind. God will also take the abuses committed against us and use them for good. He may have a higher purpose in mind, or He may be using them to help develop our character.

When someone is harsh or unkind, as Christians we should never retaliate or be unkind in return. Christ our example, was abused, insulted, and tortured, yet “when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:” (1 Peter 2:23). God says, “Vengeance is mine; I will repay” (Romans 12:19). “We are to let God judge others and deal with their sins. We would better suffer wrongfully a hundred times than wound the soul by a spirit of retaliation, or by giving vent to wrath.”³ “If you are ill-treated or wrongfully accused, instead of returning an angry

Instead of returning an angry answer, repeat to yourself the precious promises.

answer, repeat to yourself the precious promises.”⁴

Do you wonder how you can possibly maintain peace and love when someone is rude or unkind? Christ is the only one who can give you the ability to return love for hatred, and good for evil. “Those who take Christ at His word and surrender their souls to His keeping, their lives to His ordering, will find peace and quietude. Nothing of the world can make them sad when Jesus makes them glad by His presence.”⁵



HURT FEELINGS

Set Free by the Truth

Jewel was a sweet little, redheaded girl who grew up in a family with her sisters Shirley and Barbara. Shirley had a very jealous nature and liked to have all of her parent's attention focused on her. She always wanted the best and was unhappy seeing Jewel have anything nice. Shirley was a very bossy big sister who continually told Jewel how hopeless she was. Whenever she got angry, she rolled her tongue over, put her teeth on it, and ran after Jewel making terrible sounds. If she managed to catch Jewel, she would hit and thump her. Barbara would also pick on Jewel as well and tell her she was ugly. Jewel loved to sing, but Barbara always told her to keep quiet because she said, "You can't sing like I can." Little Jewel wanted very much to be friends with Shirley and Barbara, but they were so mean and nasty to their little sister.

Eventually after being told so many negative things about herself, Jewel began to believe their lies, and when she was old enough, she moved to a very big city that was a long way away from her sisters. However, she continued to believe what they used to tell her. All the way down in the archives of her mind the folders marked, "hopeless", "useless", "ugly", and "bad singer" stayed with her and made her feel sad. She secretly hoped that her sisters were wrong, but she felt so alone in the big city and no matter how hard she tried, she couldn't stop herself from thinking about what they had said. All the hurtful memories made her feel sadder and sadder until one day she felt so bad that she could not get out of bed. She did not even want to live anymore!

Everything changed for Jewel after providential circumstances led her to discover Jesus' love for her. He helped her see the truth. Suddenly she was free from her despair and she wore a smile again. She had not been so happy for a very long time. Jesus filled Jewel with Himself and brought her so much joy she thought she was going to burst! Jesus told Jewel He had a wonderful plan for her life and that she had many talents, gifts, and abilities. He made her realize how beautiful she was from the inside out, and He sent a handsome man named John for her to marry. After that, Jewel couldn't stop singing. She eventually joined a choir, and she was even asked to sing special music at her church.

Healing came for Jewel when she realized that her sisters' lies were just that—lies. They were not true. Instead, she started believing what God had to say about her in the Bible. And when she did, the truth set Jewel free.⁶



HURT FEELINGS

186. Genesis 50:20

²⁰Ye thought evil against me;
but God meant it unto good.




HURT FEELINGS

187. Psalm 28:7

⁷The Lord is my strength
and my shield;
my heart trusted in Him,
and I am helped:





Therefore my heart
greatly rejoiceth;
and with my song
will I praise Him.

HURT FEELINGS



188. Psalm 62:5-6 (NKJV)

⁵My soul, wait silently
for God alone,
For my expectation is from Him.

⁶He only is my rock and my
salvation;
He is my defense;
I shall not be moved.



189. Galatians 2:20

²⁰I am crucified with Christ:
nevertheless I live;
yet not I,
but Christ liveth in me:
and the life which I now live
in the flesh
I live by the faith
of the Son of God,
who loved me,
and gave Himself for me.

190. Colossians 3:1-5

¹If ye then be risen with Christ,
seek those things which are above,
where Christ sitteth
on the right hand of God.

²Set your affection on things above,
not on things on the earth.

³For ye are dead,
and your life is hid
with Christ in God.

⁴When Christ, who is our life,
shall appear,
then shall ye also appear
With Him in glory.



⁵Mortify therefore your members
which are upon the earth.

HURT FEELINGS

9. Forgiveness/Revenge

When someone deeply wrongs us, it can seem completely natural and acceptable to get back at them and give them what they deserve. But the Bible teaches us that we are to forgive those who sin against us. To forgive means to let go of any resentment or anger and give up any plans for revenge.

To forgive means to let go of any resentment or anger and give up any plans for revenge.

Jesus told a story that demonstrates what forgiveness is all about. A king had a servant who owed him a very large amount of money. The servant did not have money to pay for his debt, so he fell on his knees and begged for mercy. The king had compassion on the servant and forgave all his debt. But then that same servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a very small amount of money and demanded that he be paid. This servant also fell at his feet and begged for mercy. But instead of receiving mercy, he was cast into prison. When the king found out, he cast the first servant into prison also (Matthew 18:23-34).

Each of us owes a great amount of debt for the sins we have committed. Christ (the king) had compassion for us and forgave our debts. He paid for them on the cross with His death. When people wrong us, no matter how terrible it is, it is small in comparison to the debt Christ paid for each of us. Jesus was making the point that we should forgive others for their small debts when we have been so freely forgiven for our large debt. The Bible says, "If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another" (1 John 4:11). Christ says, "freely ye have received, freely give" (Matthew 10:8). "The ground of all forgiveness is found in the unmerited love of God, but by our attitude toward others we show whether we have made that love our own."¹ When we refuse to forgive, we are passing up our own hope of forgiveness. Christ says, "With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged" (Matthew 7:2).

Many people struggle to forgive those who have wronged them because they feel that forgiving them would be letting the offender off the hook or saying their sin is "okay." But our forgiving others does not make any sin okay. Sin should be called out and plainly laid out before the offender. The Bible says, "If

thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him” (Luke 17:3). Forgiving someone who has offended you does not set the offender free, but it sets you free from anger and bitterness.

The reason we don’t need to take revenge on our enemies is because the revenge has already been taken out on Christ. “Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His.”² Jesus suffered and took the punishment, not just for our sins, but for our enemies and abusers also. So, whatever we do to get revenge on someone, we are actually doing to Christ!

Do we need to wait until someone asks for our forgiveness before we forgive? Jesus has the answer and gave us an example to follow. As He hung on the cross, in the midst of His torture and abuse, He said, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34). He forgave His murderers even before they had any thought of remorse. We should not feel that we are justified in holding on to unforgiveness because our offender has not said, “I’m sorry” or confessed their wrong. If they do confess but we feel their words are not genuine and they don’t really mean it, we should forgive anyway. We have not been given the right to judge their motives. Even if they keep sinning against us, we should continue to forgive them as often as God forgives us. While it is right for them to confess their wrongdoing, we are not the judge of them. We are to have compassion on them anyway.

If someone has wronged you, ask God to open your eyes to the great love that He has shown you so you can put your offender’s sin in true perspective. Ask God to help you see your offender as He sees them. Decide in your heart to forgive. If feelings of bitterness return, rebuke the thoughts and speak the truth—that you have forgiven them, and Christ has taken the punishment for your offender.

The reason we don’t need to take revenge on our enemies is because the revenge has already been taken out on Christ.

Forgiveness is a Choice

Corrie ten Boom lived in the Netherlands during World War II. When the German Nazis began persecuting Jewish people, Corrie and her family secretly hid many of them and saved about 800 Jewish lives over the span of the war.

Unfortunately, Corrie's family was betrayed, and someone told the Nazis that they were hiding Jews. Corrie and her sister Betsie, were taken to a prison camp where they endured tremendous suffering. Unfortunately, Betsie died there, but thankfully ten months later Corrie was released.

After the war, Corrie set up a house to help those who had been in concentration camps. She found that those who were able to forgive their tormentors, no matter how bad their scars were, were able to re-enter society and rebuild their lives. But "those who nursed their bitterness remained invalids."

Corrie chose to forgive the men who had treated her so harshly in prison. But one day her faith was severely tested. She was speaking to an audience in Germany where she shared the message that God forgives. She joyfully told the audience, "When we confess our sins, God casts them into the deepest ocean, gone forever."

As the crowd dispersed after her message, Corrie saw a man walking toward her. Suddenly she recognized the face of an old guard from her prison. Flashbacks of his harshness and ill-treatment of her and Betsie overwhelmed Corrie and she felt sick. The man held out his hand and said, "A fine message! ... How good it is to know that, as you say, all our sins are at the bottom of the sea!"

Corrie, who had just spoken so freely about forgiveness, fumbled in her pocket instead of reaching out her hand. The man, who did not remember Corrie, went on to say that he used to be a Nazi prison guard but since then had become a Christian. He said, "I know that God has forgiven me for the cruel things I did there, but I would like to hear it from your lips as well." Once again, he held out his hand.

Corrie stood there, feeling coldness in her heart. But she knew that forgiveness is not an emotion but a choice. She silently prayed "Jesus, help me! I can lift my hand. I can do that much. You supply the feeling."

Slowly and mechanically, Corrie lifted her hand and thrust it into his. Then an amazing thing happened. Corrie later described it by saying, “The current started in my shoulder, raced down my arm, sprang into our joined hands. And then this healing warmth seemed to flood my whole being, bringing tears to my eyes.”

Corrie said, “I forgive you, brother. With all my heart!”

Corrie later said, “I had never known God’s love so intensely as I did then.”

Corrie spent much of the later years of her life speaking on forgiveness. She clearly explained that after someone makes a choice to forgive, sometimes the feelings of bitterness creep back. She used an illustration of an old church bell to help people understand how forgiveness works.

The bell is rung when someone pulls on the rope, but even after someone lets go of the rope, it keeps ringing. But as the moments pass, the ding dong gets quieter and the swinging slows down. Corrie explained that forgiveness is similar. “When we forgive someone, we take our hand off the rope. But if we’ve been tugging at our grievances for a long time, we mustn’t be surprised if the old angry thoughts keep coming for a while. They are just the ding dongs of the old bell slowing down.”

“Forgiveness is an act of the will, and the will can function regardless of the temperature of the heart.”³

— Corrie Ten Boom



FORGIVENESS/REVENGE



191. Luke 6:37-38

³⁷Judge not, and ye shall not be judged:
condemn not, and ye shall not be
condemned: forgive,
and ye shall be forgiven.

³⁸Give, and it shall be given unto you;
good measure, pressed down,
and shaken together,
and running over,
shall men give into your bosom.
For with the same measure
that ye mete withal it shall be
measured to you again.

**192. Psalm 142:6-7
Luke 23:34; Acts 7:60**

**⁶Attend unto my cry;
for I am brought very low:
deliver me from my persecutors;
for they are stronger than I.**

**³⁴Father forgive them;
for they know not what they do.**

⁶⁰Lay not this sin to their charge.

**⁷Bring my soul out of prison,
that I may praise thy name...
for thou shalt deal bountifully
with me.**



FORGIVENESS/REVENGE

193. Romans 12:19

¹⁹Dearly beloved,
avenge not yourselves,
but rather give place unto wrath:
for it is written,
Vengeance is mine;
I will repay,
saith the Lord.



FORGIVENESS/REVENGE

194. Romans 12:20-21

²⁰Therefore if thine enemy hunger,
feed him; if he thirst,
give him drink:
for in so doing
thou shalt heap coals of fire
on his head.

²¹Be not overcome of evil,
but overcome evil with good.



FORGIVENESS/REVENGE

195. 1 Peter 3:8-9

⁸Finally, be ye all of one mind,
having compassion one of another,
love as brethren,
be pitiful, be courteous;

⁹Not rendering evil for evil,
or railing for railing:
but contrariwise blessing.



FORGIVENESS/REVENGE

10. Persecution

Christ spent His entire life doing good and blessing those around Him. His life was pure, holy, and sinless, yet He was, abused, mocked, beaten, and condemned to death. If Christ was mistreated without a good reason, His followers must expect similar treatment, however faultless their life may be. Christ warned, “If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you” (John 15:20). The Bible says, “all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Timothy 3:12). When you are persecuted as a Christian, it means you are being mistreated because of your religious beliefs.

If everyone that follows Christ is certain to be mistreated and persecuted, you may be thinking, “Why would anyone want to follow Him?” The reason is found in a parable Jesus shared. A merchant man was looking for pearls. When he found “one pearl of great price, [he] went and sold all that he had, and bought it” (Matthew 13:46). In other words, Christ and His heavenly treasure is so incredibly good, that when you find Him, you are willing to give Him absolutely everything. Nothing in this life is worth living for without Him. Even if that means suffering for Him or dying for Him.

Christ and His heavenly treasure is so incredibly good, that when you find Him, you are willing to give Him absolutely everything.

Throughout the centuries, rulers and kings have made laws to put Christians to death. While it would seem like no one would want to be a Christian with laws like this, even more people become Christians during times of persecution. When someone suffers for Christ, it acts like fuel on a fire. The results ignite a spark in the hearts of many people. They can see that Christianity is real and they begin to think, “If they are willing to die for Christ, there must be something really valuable about Christianity.”

The Bible is so full of hope and encouragement that we do not need to worry or be afraid of what may happen to us. He will give us the strength to go through whatever He calls us to go through. Christ says, “Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer... be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life (Revelation 2:10). We don’t even need to worry about what to say or plan it out.

He promises “it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak” (Matthew 10:19).

The Bible gives us specific instructions for how to react when someone hates us, speaks evil against us, or harms us. It says, “Rejoice ye in that day, and **leap for joy**: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven” (Luke 6:23). Can you imagine jumping for joy when someone mistreats you? This is what God tells us to do. We

Talk of God’s power instead of Satan’s. Instead of telling your problems to others, take them all to God in prayer

can rejoice, knowing that our heavenly treasure is great, and it cannot be taken from us by any man. Not only are we to rejoice, but we are also called to love those who persecute us and pray for them

(Matthew 5:44). We are to be kind to our enemies and return good for evil.

Maybe you have heard stories about some of the suffering that God’s people have gone through and you’re thinking, “I could never go through that.” And it is probably true that right now you do not have the strength to go through what you are thinking of. God does not give us strength to go through something until we are in the midst of it. Do not look into the future and borrow trouble. Today is the day that has been given to you. And for today, He has promised strength to meet your need (Deuteronomy 33:25).

Remember Jesus is your friend who is always with you. The comfort and joy that He gives far surpasses any abuse or persecution you will ever face. Jesus said, “There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God’s sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting (Luke 18:29-30). The Bible also encourages, “the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Romans 8:18).

God doesn’t waste any of your pain and suffering. Everything He allows is for a far greater good. There may be souls in heaven as a result of the trials and suffering that you are called to go through. Instead of looking around at the troubles and uncertainty in our world, spend your time getting to know Jesus. When you have Him, anything you are called to suffer will seem quite small.

Faithful unto Death

Richard Wurmbrand and his wife Sabina lived in Romania in 1944 when the Communist government seized power over the country. Communism prohibited the freedom to worship God or to own religious materials.

Richard and Sabina were invited, along with 4,000 other religious leaders, to a large government meeting intended to show the superiority of Communism over Christianity. One by one the pastors stood and lied, saying that Communism was a good thing for Christians. Each man was too scared to speak the truth.

As Sabina heard each minister denying Christ, she whispered to her husband, "Richard, stand up and wash away this shame from the face of Christ."

Richard, knowing the danger of the situation, said, "If I speak, you will lose your husband."

Sabina replied, "I do not wish to have a coward for a husband."¹ When Richard took the stage, he preached the truth by glorifying God and denying Communism. Despite efforts of the Communist officials to stop him, Richard continued to preach and the audience began to applaud. He was preaching what they all knew was truth but were too afraid to say.

After that day, Richard was taken to prison where he endured fourteen years of much suffering. But despite the persecution he faced, Christ did not leave him alone. Richard said later:

I have seen many beautiful things, but never have I seen the beauties which I have seen in the dark cell beneath the earth...Jesus was with us... Sometimes when we were beaten and tortured, we were like St. Stephen, who while they threw stones at him, did not see his murderers, did not see the stones, but saw heaven open and Jesus standing at the right hand of the Father. In the same way, we didn't see the Communist torturers. We didn't see that we were in prison. We were surrounded by angels; we were with God.²

Richard also found that with Christ's spirit working in his life, he could have love and pity for those who abused him. He later stated, "The more we were mocked and tortured, the more we pitied and loved our torturers."³

When asked how it's possible to love someone who abuses you, Richard replied, "By looking at men...not as they are, but as they will be... Many officers of the secret police to whom we witnessed became Christians...We dreamed that soon they would ask, 'What must I do to be saved?'"⁴

One lieutenant commanded Richard to write a list of rules he had broken. Richard wrote, "I am a disciple of Christ, who has given us love for our enemies. I understand them and pray for their conversion so that they will become my brothers in the faith."⁴ The lieutenant was so moved that he accepted Christ.

Another time, the director of the prison stormed in furiously because he had heard that many of the prisoners had been singing disruptive songs. He then asked the prisoners to sing a song to him. The director listened to the entire hymn. He was so touched by it that he turned and walked out without saying a word. Later he also became a believer in Jesus.⁵

Though willing to die for Christ, Richard was eventually released. He and Sabina founded a ministry called The Voice of the Martyrs which is dedicated to serving persecuted Christians around the world.

But not everyone who is persecuted is released. In 1555, Thomas Hawkes was sentenced to be burned because he would not give up his faith in Jesus. The day before his execution he was allowed to see his friends. They asked him to lift his hands in the air the next day if his mind was still at peace during his execution. He promised that with God's help, he would "show them that the most terrible torments could be endured" and that the comforts of Christ "were able to lift the believing soul above all the injuries men could inflict."⁶

The following day, as his body was surrounded by flames, everyone thought he was dead. But suddenly they saw his burning hands raised above his head. They clapped together three times as if he was ecstatic and joyful. A great shout came from the crowd as they realized the truth of his actions — the comforts of Christ exceed the worst torments on earth.

"Not all of us are called to die a martyr's death, but all of us are called to have the same spirit of self-sacrifice and love to the very end as these martyrs had." — Richard Wurmbrand

196. Matthew 5:10-12

¹⁰Blessed are they which are
persecuted for righteousness' sake:
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹Blessed are ye when
men shall revile you,
and persecute you, and shall say
all manner of evil against you
falsely, for my sake.

¹²Rejoice,
and be exceeding glad:
for great is your reward
in heaven.



PERSECUTION

197. Matthew 5:38-42

³⁸Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:

³⁹But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

⁴⁰And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also.

⁴¹And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

⁴²Give to him that asketh thee,
and from him that would borrow of
thee turn not thou away.

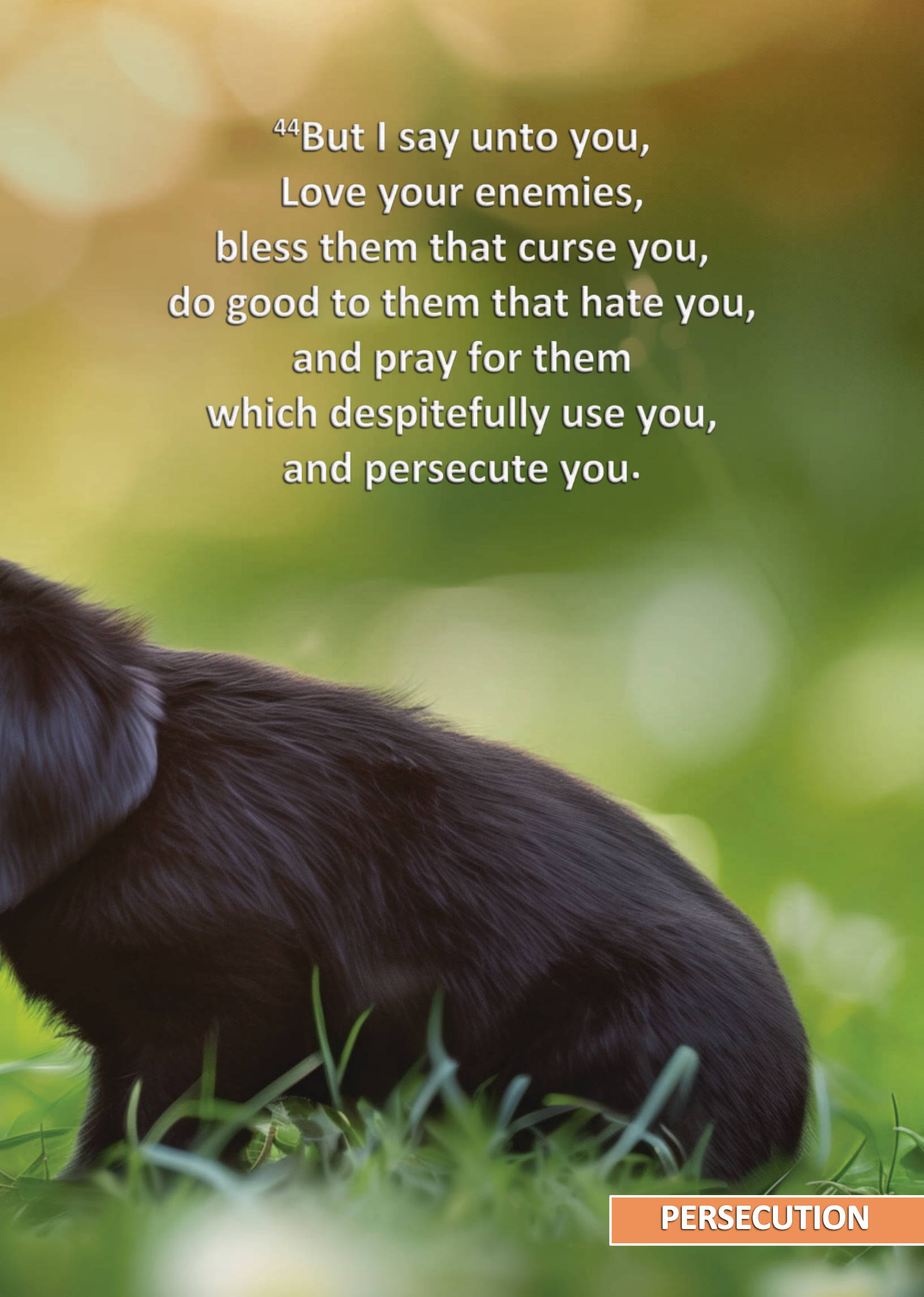


PERSECUTION

198. Matthew 5:43-44

⁴³Ye have heard
that it hath been said,
Thou shalt love thy neighbour,
and hate thine enemy.



A black dog is lying down in a field of green grass. The background is a soft, out-of-focus bokeh of green and yellow light. The text is centered in the upper half of the image.

⁴⁴But I say unto you,
Love your enemies,
bless them that curse you,
do good to them that hate you,
and pray for them
which despitefully use you,
and persecute you.

PERSECUTION

199. Matthew 10:22,28 Revelation 2:10

**²²And ye shall be hated of all men
for my name's sake:
but he that endureth to the end
shall be saved.**

**¹⁰Fear none of those things
which thou shalt suffer...
be thou faithful unto death,
and I will give thee a crown of life.**

**²⁸And fear not them which kill the
body, but are not able
to kill the soul:
but rather fear Him which is
able to destroy both
soul and body in hell.**



PERSECUTION



**200. 2 Timothy 3:12
Luke 6:23
1 Peter 3:14**

¹²All that will live
godly in Christ Jesus
shall suffer persecution.

²³Rejoice ye in that day,
and leap for joy:
for, behold,
your reward is great
in heaven:

¹⁴But and if ye suffer for
righteousness...
happy are ye:
and be not afraid
of their terror,
neither be troubled.

SCRIPTURE INDEX

Loving Others

151. John 13:34-35

³⁴A new commandment
I give unto you,
That ye love one another;
as I have loved you,
that ye also loved one another.

³⁵By this shall all men know
that ye are my disciples.

152. John 15:13

¹³Greater love hath no man than this,
that a man lay down his life for his friends.

Selfishness/Pride

156. Proverbs 22:4

²By humility
and the fear of the LORD
are riches, and honour, and life.

157. Jeremiah 9:23-24

²³Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom,
neither let the mighty man glory in his might,
let not the rich man glory in his riches:

²⁴But let him that glorieth glory in this,
that he understandeth and knoweth me,
that I am the Lord which exercise
lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth:
for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.

Obedience

161. Deuteronomy 11:26-28 Joshua 24:15

²⁶Behold, I set before you this day
a blessing and a curse;

²⁷A blessing, if ye [will] obey
The commandments of the Lord your God...

²⁸And a curse,
if ye will not obey
the commandments of the Lord your God...

¹⁵Choose you this day
whom ye will serve...
As for me and my house,
we will serve the Lord.

162. Proverbs 6:20-23 (NKJV)

²⁰My son, keep your father's command,
and do not forsake
the law of your mother.

²¹Bind them continually upon your heart;
Tie them around your neck.

²²When you roam, they will lead you;
When you sleep, they will keep you;
And when you awake,
they will speak with you.

²³For the commandment is a lamp,
And the law a light.

Speech/Honesty

166. Proverbs 12:22 Colossians 3:9

²²Lying lips are abomination
to the LORD:
but they that deal truly
are His delight.

⁹Lie not one to another,
seeing that ye have put off
the old man with his deeds.

167. Ecclesiastes 12:1 1 Timothy 4:12 (NKJV)

¹Remember...your Creator
in the days of your youth,
(when) the difficult days come,
And the years draw near
when you say,
"I have no pleasure in them."

¹²Let no one despise your youth,
but be an example to the believers
in word, in conduct,
in love, in spirit,
in faith, in purity.

**153. Romans 13:8
Galatians 5:14-15**

⁸Owe no man anything,
but to love one another:
for he that loveth another
hath fulfilled the law.

¹⁴For all the law is fulfilled in one word,
even in this;
Thou shalt love thy neighbour
as thyself.

¹⁵But if ye bite and devour
one another,
take heed that ye be
not consumed
one of another.

**154. 1 Corinthians 13:4-8
(NKJV)**

⁴Love suffers long and is kind;
love does not envy; love does not parade itself,
is not puffed up;

⁵Does not behave rudely, does not seek its own,
is not provoked, thinks no evil;

⁶Does not rejoice in iniquity,
but rejoices in the truth;

⁷Bears all things, believes all things,
hopes all things, endures all things.

⁸Love never fails.

155. 1 John 4:7-8

⁷Beloved, let us love one another:
for love is of God;
and every one that loveth
is born of God,
and knoweth God.

⁸He that loveth not
knoweth not God;
for God is love.

158. Matthew 20:26-28

²⁶Whosoever will be great
among you,
let him be your minister;

²⁷And whosoever will be chief
among you,
let him be your servant:

²⁸Even as the Son of man
came not to be ministered unto,
but to minister,
and to give His life
a ransom for many.

**159. 1 Corinthians 4:7
James 1:17; John 3:27**

⁷For who maketh thee to differ from another?
and what hast thou that thou didst not receive?
now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory,
as if you had not received it?

¹⁷Every good gift and
every perfect gift is from above,
and cometh down
from the Father of lights,
with whom is no variableness,
neither shadow of turning.

²⁷A man can receive nothing,
except it be given
him from heaven.

160. Philippians 2:5-8

⁵Let this mind be in you,
which was also in Christ Jesus:

⁶Who, being in the form of God,
thought it not robbery
to be equal with God:

⁷But made himself of no reputation,
and took upon Him
the form of a servant,
and was made in the likeness of men.

⁸And being found in fashion as a man,
He humbled himself,
and became obedient unto death,
even the death of the cross.

163. John 2:5

⁵Whatsoever He saith unto you,
do it.

164. Ephesians 6:1-3

¹Children, obey your parents
in the Lord:
for this is right.

²Honour thy father and mother;
which is the first commandment
with promise;

³That it may be well with thee,
and thou mayest live long
on the earth.

165. Ephesians 6:5-6

⁵Servants, be obedient to them
that are your masters
according to the flesh,
with fear and trembling,
in singleness of your heart,
as unto Christ;

⁶Not with eyeservice,
as menpleasers;
but as the servants
of Christ,
doing the will of God
from the heart.

**168. Ephesians 4:29
Psalm 34:13
James 1:26**

²⁹Let no corrupt communication
proceed out of your mouth,
but that which is good
to the use of edifying,
that it may minister
grace unto the hearers.

¹³Keep thy tongue from evil,
and thy lips from speaking guile.

²⁶If any man among you seem to be religious,
and bridleth not his tongue,
but deceiveth his own heart,
this man's religion is vain.

169. Ephesians 5:2-4

²And walk in love,
as Christ also hath loved us,
and hath given himself for us an offering and a
sacrifice
to God for a
sweetsmelling savour.

³But fornication, and all uncleanness, or
covetousness,
let it not be once named among you,
as becometh saints;

⁴Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting,
which are not convenient:
but rather giving of thanks.

170. Matthew 12:34-37

³⁴Out of the abundance of the heart
the mouth speaketh.

³⁵A good man out of the good treasure of the heart
bringeth forth good things:
And an evil man out of the evil treasure
bringeth forth evil things.

³⁶But I say unto you,
That every idle word that men shall speak,
they shall give account thereof
in the day of judgment.

³⁷For by thy words
thou shalt be justified,
and by thy words
thou shalt be condemned.

<div>Gossip</div>	<div> 171. Proverbs 17:9 Titus 3:2; 1 Peter 2:17 Proverbs 18:8 </div> <div> ⁹He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter sparateth...friends. </div> <div> ²Speak evil of no man, ¹⁷Honour all men. </div> <div> ⁸The words of a talebearer are as wounds, And they go down into the innermost parts of the belly. </div>	<div> 172. Proverbs 18:21 Psalm 35:28 Psalm 141:3 </div> <div> ²¹Death and life are in the power of the tongue: </div> <div> ²⁸And my tongue shall speak of thy righteousness and of thy praise all the day long. </div> <div> ³Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips. </div>
<div>Hospitality/Service</div>	<div> 176. Deuteronomy 15:11 Proverbs 19:17 Luke 3:11 </div> <div> ¹⁷He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again. </div> <div> ¹¹Open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land. </div> <div> ¹¹He that hath two coats,let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise. </div>	<div> 177. Proverbs 3:27-28 Proverbs 11:25 </div> <div> ²⁷Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it. </div> <div> ²⁸Say not unto thy neighbour, Go, and come again, and tomorrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee. </div> <div> ²⁵The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself. </div>
<div>Getting Along</div>	<div> 181. Matthew 7:12 </div> <div> ¹²Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them. </div>	<div> 182. Romans 2:1 Matthew 7:1-3 </div> <div> ¹Thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things. </div> <div> ¹Judge not, that ye be not judged. </div> <div> ²For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: </div> <div> ³And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? </div>

173. Matthew 18:15-16

¹⁵If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou has gained thy brother.

¹⁶But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

174. James 3:2,7-10

²If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.

⁷For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind:

⁸But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

⁹Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God.

¹⁰Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.

175. James 4:11

¹¹Speak not evil one of another, brethren, He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.

178. Matthew 25:34-36,40

³⁴Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

³⁵For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

³⁶Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

⁴⁰As ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

179. Hebrews 13:2

²Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

180. 1 John 3:16-18

¹⁶Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

¹⁸My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

¹⁷But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

183. Romans 12:10

¹⁰Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another.

184. Ephesians 4:31-32

³¹Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

³²And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

185. Philippians 2:3-4

³In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

⁴Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

<div>Hurt Feelings</div>	<div>186. Genesis 50:20</div> <div>²⁰Ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good.</div>	<div>187. Psalm 28:7</div> <div>⁷The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in Him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise Him.</div>
<div>Forgiveness</div>	<div>191. Luke 6:37-38</div> <div>³⁷Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven:</div> <div>³⁸Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.</div>	<div>192. Psalm 142:6-7 Luke 23:34 Acts 7:60</div> <div>⁶Attend unto my cry; For I am brought very low: Deliver me from my persecutors; For they are stronger than I.</div> <div>³⁴Father forgive them; for they know not what they do.</div> <div>⁶⁰Lay not this sin to their charge.</div> <div>⁷Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name... for thou shall deal bountifully with me.</div>
<div>Persecution</div>	<div>196. Matthew 5:10-12</div> <div>¹⁰Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.</div> <div>¹¹Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.</div> <div>¹²Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven.</div>	<div>197. Matthew 5:38-42</div> <div>³⁸Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:</div> <div>³⁹But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.</div> <div>⁴⁰And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also.</div> <div>⁴¹And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.</div> <div>⁴²Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.</div>

188. Psalm 62:5-6 (NKJV)

⁵My soul, wait silently for God alone,
For my expectation is from Him.

⁶He only is my rock and my salvation;
He is my defense;
I shall not be moved.

189. Galatians 2:20

²⁰I am crucified with Christ:
nevertheless I live;
yet not I,
but Christ liveth in me:
and the life which I now live
in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God,
who loved me,
and gave Himself for me.

190. Colossians 3:1-5

¹If ye then be risen with Christ,
seek those things which are above,
where Christ sitteth
on the right hand of God.

²Set your affection on things above,
not on things on the earth.

³For ye are dead,
and your life is hid with Christ in God.

⁴When Christ, who is our life,
shall appear,
then shall ye also appear
With Him in glory.

⁵Mortify therefore your members
which are upon the earth.

193. Romans 12:19

¹⁹Dearly beloved,
avenge not yourselves,
but rather give place unto wrath:
for it is written,
Vengeance is mine;
I will repay,
saith the Lord.

194. Romans 12:20-21

²⁰Therefore if thine enemy hunger,
feed him; if he thirst,
give him drink:
for in so doing
thou shalt heap coals of fire
on his head.

²¹Be not overcome of evil,
but overcome evil with good.

195. 1 Peter 3:8-9

⁸Finally, be ye all of one mind,
having compassion one of another,
love as brethren,
be pitiful, be courteous;

⁹Not rendering evil for evil,
or railing for railing:
but contrariwise blessing;
knowing that ye are
thereunto called,
that ye should
inherit a blessing.

198. Matthew 5:43-44

⁴³Ye have heard
that it hath been said,
Thou shalt love thy neighbour,
and hate thine enemy.

⁴⁴But I say unto you,
Love your enemies,
bless them that curse you,
do good to them that hate you,
and pray for them
which despitefully use you,
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for, behold,
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in heaven:

¹⁴But and if ye suffer for righteousness...
happy are ye:
and be not afraid
of their terror,
neither be troubled.

Bible Stories By Chapter

Use these Bible stories for further study.

1. Loving Others

Good Samaritan	Luke 10:25-27
Zacchaeus	Luke 19:1-10
Jesus feeding 5000	Matthew 14:13-21
Jesus heals blind man	John 9:1-12

2. Selfishness/Pride

Saul	1 Samuel 15:3-35
Haman	Esther 5:11
Nebuchadnezzar	Daniel 4:30
Jesus washing feet	Luke 22:29-27; John 13:4-10

3. Obedience

Abraham offers up Isaac	Genesis 22
Jonah	Jonah 1-4
Saul	1 Samuel 15
Mary	Luke 1:38

4. Speech/Honesty

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10 Spies	Numbers 13-14
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Bible Stories By Chapter

6. Hospitality

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7. Getting Along

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8. Hurt Feelings

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