

Moving On ▶▶

For those taking the next steps in their faith journey

The 7 steps into discipleship

A Bible reading for every day

Contents

Introduction	1
Stand up and be counted	2
Church - we are family	4
Church - worship	8
Growing in God	10
Life in the Spirit	13
Cheerful giving - time, talents, money	16
New life, new lifestyle	18

Introduction

Don't worry if you miss a day or just don't quite get it. Just keep 'moving on' to the next one.

The Bible is the greatest book ever written. In fact, not so much a book but more of a library of sixty-six books. It is a treasure chest, overflowing with stories, people, guidance, truths, teachings and inspiration. Through it all God speaks to each one of us. He knows our individual personalities, lives and issues and as we read his book, so he speaks.

Discipleship (learning to live like Jesus) involves developing good habits, and one of the very best habits is learning to read the Bible, a little bit each day. It doesn't come easy but it does come.

In this booklet there is a daily reading for everyday of the 'Moving On' course, arranged under seven themes. The people teaching the course will show you how to look the various passages up in your own Bible, or they may have actually printed them out in this booklet. Each day there are two or three bullet-point thoughts or questions to go with the passage. Don't worry if you miss a day or two, just keep returning to it, developing the habit and allowing God to speak to you.

In a busy and crowded life it is about making a bit of space for God and learning to relax and enjoy his presence.

The 7 habits of successful discipleship

First of all, make a big, clear decision to follow Jesus.

Then start with the seven habits:

1. Learn the mission/disciple way of caring for others and sharing the Good News
2. Move into the centre of your church
3. Get into the habit of regular and positive minded worship
4. Develop the practise of spending daily time with Jesus
5. Open yourself to receive the Holy Spirit
6. Give some of your time, money, love and prayer away
7. Establish Jesus at the centre of your lifestyle

Stand up and be counted

Mark 1:16-20

¹⁶ As Jesus Walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ¹¹ “Come, follow me: Jesus said “and I will send you out to fish for people.” ¹⁸ At once they left their nets and followed him. ¹⁹ When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. ²⁰ Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.

- Have you heard Jesus calling you to ‘follow Him’?
- Following Jesus might not mean you have to give up your job (in their case fishing) but it usually involves leaving something behind.
- Fishing for people — what do you think?

Philippians 1:3-6

³ I thank my God every time I remember you. ⁴ In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy ⁵ because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, ⁶ being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

- ‘Philippians’ is an epistle or letter written by Paul, the great missionary Apostle. He writes it to all the new Christians in the Greek city of Philippi (hence Philippians). The letter is full of encouragement and advice.
- All ‘true Christians’ i.e. disciples and followers are ‘works in progress’. We are not perfect, but we are still learning and developing.
- He will bring us to completion.

Matthew 13:1-9

¹ That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. ² Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. ³ Then he told them many things in parables, saying: “A farmer went out to sow his seed. ⁴ As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. ⁵ Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. ⁶ But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. ⁷ Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, ⁸ Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. ⁹ Whoever has ears, let them hear.”

Matthew 13:18-23

¹⁸ “Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: ¹⁹ When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path. ²⁰ The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. ²¹ But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. ²² The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. ²³ But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.”

- The famous Parable of the Sower.
- Who first sowed the seed in your life.
- What sort of soil are you, and is the seed being crowded out.

John 6:66-69

⁶⁶ From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him. ⁶⁷ “You do not want to leave too, do you?” Jesus asked the Twelve. ⁶⁸ Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. ⁶⁹ We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God.”

- Do you find it a bit of a shock reading of his disciples ‘turning back’?
- The twelve stick with Him because He has the ‘words of eternal life’.
- I thought I chose Jesus, but it seems He chose me.

Psalms 4:7-8

⁷ Fill my heart with joy when their grain and new wine abound. ⁸ In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, LORD, make me dwell in safety.

- Why do we always think of discipleship as something hard, demanding and discipline inducing.
- Why not re-write the formula and simply say, ‘disciples have more fun’. More than you can get from grain and wine.
- Actually the older I get as a disciple the more peace and sleep become more important to me than fun.

John 12:25-26

²⁵ Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶ Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honour the one who serves me.

- Loving and hating my own life (in this context 'hating' means making my own interests second to Jesus).
- Looking and finding.
- Servants, Jesus and the Father

Matthew 28:16-20

¹⁶ Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

- Discipleship begins in every situation, not with our big effort, but first with our big seeing and worshipping of Jesus.
- Disciples make disciples — that is what they do.
- Who are the three people close to you that you would love to see becoming disciples?

Church – we are family

John 10:1-11

¹ “Very truly I tell you Pharisees, anyone who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. ² The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵ But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger’s voice.” ⁶ Jesus used this figure of speech, but the Pharisees did not understand what he was telling them.

⁷ Therefore Jesus said again, “Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸ All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them. ⁹ I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. ¹¹ I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

- Sheep and shepherds.
- I am a unique, Individual sheep.
- Jesus the shepherd knows me and cares for me.
- Together, with all the other sheep we are a flock... a church.

1 Corinthians 12:12-20

¹² Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³ For we were all baptised by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. ¹⁴ Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

¹⁵ Now if the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸ But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. ¹⁹ If they were all one part, where would the body be? ²⁰ As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

- One body.
- Together we are one body, one unit
- One Christ, one Spirit
- This is a picture of your local church and of your place within it. It is also a picture of the great and worldwide Church.

1 Peter 2:4-7

⁴ As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him—⁵ you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God Through Jesus Christ ⁶ For in Scripture it says:

“See, I lay a stone in Zion,
a chosen and precious cornerstone,
and the one who trusts in him
Will never be put to shame.”

- A spiritual home.
- Every person becomes a living brick or stone.
- We come and let God build us together.
- A house filled with holiness, where spiritual sacrifices are offered.
- Jesus will do the building but we have to do the coming and letting ourselves.

Exodus 29:45-46

⁴⁵ Then I will dwell among the Israelites and be their God. ⁴⁶ They will know that I am the LORD their God, who brought them out of Egypt so that I might dwell among them. I am the LORD their God.

- I will dwell.
- So a church is not so much a building but more a united and spirited group of people.
- With God living amongst them (not on the edge and not with a select few).
- And we should know Him and what He does for us.

Numbers 6:22-27

²² The LORD said to Moses, ²³ “Tell Aaron and his sons, ‘This is how you are to bless the Israelites. Say to them:

²⁴ “The LORD bless you and keep you;

²⁵ the LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you;

²⁶ the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace.”

²⁷ ‘So they will put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them.’”

- A 'blessed' people.
- Christians are part of a whole people, a local and worldwide Church; a family and a nation; a small community and a massive company.
- His face shining; his countenance lifted up; his peace - his love.

John 13:33-35

³³ "My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come.

³⁴ "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you so you must love one another. ³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

- Love one another.
- As followers of Jesus, members of his body, the Church we together are all little children.
- With a new commandment to love one another.
- Everyone still knows us by our love.

Matthew 16:13-18

¹³ When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"

¹⁴ They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

¹⁵ "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

¹⁷ Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. ¹⁸ And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.

- Peter was the person to declare Jesus to be Messiah/Lord. Perhaps that makes him the person to join the Church
- It is Jesus' church, but he wants Peter to be a part of the building process.
- What about you and your church? Where does some building need to be done?

Church - worship

Acts 2:41-47

⁴¹ Those who accepted his message were baptised, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking bread and to prayer. ⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. ⁴⁴ All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵ They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. ⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

- The first Christians made 'gathering together' a key part of their lives.
- They gathered for fellowship, teaching, prayer and praise.
- So why do we make such a big deal of Sunday worship?

Psalms 150

¹ Praise the LORD.

Praise God in his sanctuary;

praise him in his mighty heavens.

² Praise him for his acts of power;

praise him for his surpassing greatness.

³ Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet.

praise him with the harp and lyre,

⁴ praise him with timbrel and dancing,

praise him with the strings and pipe,

⁵ praise him with the clash of cymbals,

praise him with resounding cymbals.

⁶ Let everything that has breath praise the LORD.

Praise the LORD.

- Praising God is a bit like offering a gift or sacrifice.
- Gifts are good for the giver as much as they are for the receiver.
- Praising God is about music, movement, voices and bodies.

Hebrews 10:23-25

²³ Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴ And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, ²⁵ not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the day approaching.

- We all know someone who has 'lost it', 'given up' or simply 'fallen by the wayside'.
- So we need to 'not neglect' meeting together (another term for congregating, have a congregation).
- Hold fast, keep loving, do not neglect, encourage one another. In the words of a famous quiz programme — 'I have started, so I'll finish'.

Psalms 147:7-11

⁷ Sing to the LORD with grateful praise;
make music to our God on the harp.

⁸ He covers the sky with clouds;
he supplies the earth with rain
and makes grass grow on the hills.

⁹ He provides food for the cattle
and for the young ravens when they call.

¹⁰ His pleasure is not in the strength of the horse,
nor his delight in the legs of the warrior;

¹¹ the LORD delights in those who fear him,
who put their hope in his unfailing love.

- The Psalms contain lots of teaching about worship. They were the hymns of the Old Testament Temple.
- God is a great God, it is good to praise him.
- He takes pleasure in all who...

Matthew 18:18-20

¹⁸ "Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

¹⁹ "Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them."

- The importance of a small gathering. We often prefer big ones.
- Jesus there in the midst in a special way.
- So what is the difference between my own individual time with Jesus and a 'shared with others' time?

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

²³ For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, ²⁴ and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." ²⁵ In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." ²⁶ For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

- Crucial to all shared worship is the Lord's Supper, Eucharist, Mass or Holy Communion.
- It was passed from Jesus to the disciples to Paul.
- Not words but two incredible symbols, bread and wine.

Corinthians 14:26-33

²⁶ What then shall we say, brothers and sisters? When you come together, each of you has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. Everything must be done so that the church may be built up. ²⁷ If anyone speaks in a tongue, two—or at the most three—should speak, one at a time, and someone must interpret. ²⁸ If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and to God.

²⁹ Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said. ³⁰ And if a revelation comes to someone who is sitting down, the first speaker should stop, ³¹ for you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged. ³² The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets. ³³ For God is not a God of disorder but of peace—as in all the congregations of the Lord's people.

- The key words in all of this are 'when you come together'.
- What is your coming together like?
- How regular is it, and what contribution do you make?

Growing in God

Mark 1:35-39

³⁵ Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. ³⁶ Simon and his companions went to look for him, ³⁷ and when they found him, they exclaimed: "Everyone is looking for you!"

³⁸ Jesus replied, "Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come. ³⁹ So he travelled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.

- Jesus might have been the busiest man in the world, but he still made time for God.
- In fact, It was because he was so busy that he knew he had to make time for God.
- Time with God is his petrol station, his source of energy renewal. His time with God empowers his mission.

Matthew 6:5-13

⁵ "And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ⁶ But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. ⁷ And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸ Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

⁹ "This, then, is how you should pray:

"Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,

¹⁰ your kingdom come,
your will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

¹¹ Give us today our daily bread.

¹² And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

¹³ And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.

- Prayer - not formal, but simply to God - is a key part a good daily 'God slot'.
- Best done privately, quietly.
- Prayer is not just asking.

2 Timothy 3:14-17

¹⁴ But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, ¹⁵ and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

- 'Continue in what you have learned'. Prayer is one ingredient of a regular meal the other is Bible.
- The sacred writings.
- All scripture — inspired and useful.

Ephesians 3:14-19

¹⁴ For this reason I kneel before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. ¹⁶ I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸ may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, ¹⁹ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

- Paul's letter of encouragement and teaching to the Christians of Ephesus
- Praying that they may be strengthened in their inner being.
- That they might learn (come to comprehend).
- How is your learning coming along?

John 15:1-5

¹ "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. ² He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes ill so that it will be even more fruitful. ³ You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. ⁴ Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

⁵ "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

- Abide in Me. Be rooted.
- Let prayer, Bible, time and space all flow back and forth .
- Bear fruit.

Acts 10:9-16

⁹ About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. ¹⁰ He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. ¹¹ He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. ¹² It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles and birds. ¹³ Then a voice told him, “Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.”

¹⁴ “Surely not, Lord!” Peter replied. “I have never eaten anything impure or unclean.”

¹⁵ The voice spoke to him a second time, “Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.”

¹⁶ This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven.

- Example number 1 — Peter prays daily.
- His best place and time — on the roof and at noon. What is yours?
- He listens and looks, God appears and speaks.

Luke 10:38-41

³⁸ As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. ³⁹ She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet listening to what he said. ⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, “Lord, don’t you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!”

⁴¹ “Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things,

⁴² but few things are needed—or indeed only one.— Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.”

- Example number 2 — Martha and Mary invite Jesus in.
- Martha is distracted.
- Mary drops the tasks and has a face to face.

Life in the Spirit

John 14:15-17

¹⁵ “If you love me, keep my commands. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.

- Jesus looks ahead beyond his death and resurrection to his returning to Heaven.
- He promises that as he departs this earth the father will send another.
- The other is the Holy Spirit, he will be a friend, a supporter, a helper, a comforter.

John 7:37-39

³⁷ On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. ³⁸ Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.” ³⁹ By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

- The Holy Spirit is like water
- A spring of water....
- Like all water, he will bring refreshment and life

Acts 1:3-8

³ After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. ⁴ On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. ⁵ For John baptised with water, but in a few days you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit.”

⁶ Then they gathered around him and asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?”

⁷ He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

- Jesus is returning to Heaven.
- But he does not want to leave the disciples alone and 'Jesus-less'.
- He tells them to wait and they will receive the power of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:1-4

¹ When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. ² Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. ⁴ All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

- 40 days and nights after the resurrection, the Spirit comes on the first Christian Pentecost.
- The Holy Spirit is the wind and fire.
- Every follower of Jesus receives the Holy Spirit

1 Corinthians 12:4-11

⁴ There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. ⁵ There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. ⁶ There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

⁷ Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. ⁸ To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, ⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, ¹⁰ to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues! ¹¹ All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.

- The Holy Spirit comes into our lives and brings gifts for ministry.
- Each individual receives a gift but they are for the 'common' or shared good of the Church.
- So where are you serving, and what is your gift?

Galatians 5:22-26

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. ²⁴ Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵ Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. ²⁶ Let us not become conceited provoking and envying each other.

- As the Holy Spirit lives in us, so we gradually change. We become more loving, patient and kind.
- There are seven fruits of the Spirit.
- Fruit grows slowly. They don't just appear. Pray to God for the fruit to grow in your life.

Ephesians 5:15-20

¹⁵ Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶ making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. ¹⁷ Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. ¹⁸ Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹ speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, ²⁰ always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- Refreshing water
 Powerful fire
 An ever-present friend/comforter
- So we are encouraged to be 'filled with the Spirit'.
- Every day we can drink/breathe in God's Spirit.

Cheerful giving - time, talents, money

Luke 21:1-3

¹ As Jesus looked up, he saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. ² He also put in two very small copper coins. ³ “Truly I tell you,” he said, “this poor widow has put in more than all the others.

- Jesus turns worldly values of rich and poor upside down.
- Two coins — how many do you give?
- And who cares anyway?

John 3:16

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

- Why do we always focus on our giving?
- God gives his Son to us.
- God gives his everything.

Matthew 6:24-26

²⁴ “No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

²⁵ “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes?”

²⁶ Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?

- The big contest, between the two masters.
- Food, drink and nice clothes.
- God understands and provides

Matthew 9:35-38

³⁵ Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. ³⁶ When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷ Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. ³⁸ Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”

- Jesus calls on us to be labourers. To give time, energy and work.
- The big motivation is compassion.
- The big life changes are you and me.

2 Corinthians 9:6-10

⁶ Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. ⁷ Each of you should give what you have your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸ And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. ⁹ As it is written:

“They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor;
their righteousness endures forever.”

¹⁰ Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply increase our store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness.

- God does not want miserable followers. If you are going to give, give cheerfully.
- So do we first feel cheerful and then give, or do we give and this leads to being cheerful?

John 12:1-3

¹ Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. ² Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honour. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him. ³ Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

- There is lots of time, preparation and service being given to Jesus.
- And there is some very expensive perfume.
- Which Jesus recognised and appreciated.

Matthew 7:9-11

⁹ Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? ¹¹ If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!

- Enough of our giving - back to God
- He is the ultimate, cheerful giver.
- And we get to receive and enjoy.

New life, new lifestyle

2 Corinthians 5:16-17

¹⁶ So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

- If you are following Jesus you are 'in Christ'.
- If you are 'in Christ' you are a 'new creation'.
- New is new.

John 20:24-29

²⁴ Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. ²⁵ So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!"

But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."

²⁶ A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."

²⁸ Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

²⁹ Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

- Thomas (called the doubter) is able to hold magnificent faith alongside his questioning.
- Jesus is Lord i.e. in charge, central and overall.
- So who is Lord of your life?

Romans 8:1-6

¹ Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, ² because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. ³ For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. ⁵ Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. ⁶ The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace.

- So what is the big conflict between the Spirit and life in the flesh?
- Why is flesh so strong in us? Why is temptation so tempting?
- But the Spirit is life and peace.

Matthew 7:24-27

²⁴ “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. ²⁶ But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. ²⁷ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”

- Yesterdays' conflict between flesh and Spirit is today a choice between two houses, or two sets of foundations.
- Act on Jesus' words, or don't bother...
- One house falls, another stands.

Matthew 22:34-40

³⁴ Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. ³⁵ One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: ³⁶ “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”

³⁷ Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ ⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.

- So this is what the new life is all about.
- Not religion, not purity or obedience but love.
- Loving God and loving people go together.

Luke 6:43

⁴³ “No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit.

- Two houses become two trees.
- Bear good fruit — does this remind you of the ‘Parable of the Sower’ and the ‘True Vine’.

John 4:39-42

³⁹ Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I ever did."⁴⁰ So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days.⁴¹ And because of his words many more became believers.

⁴² They said to the woman, "We no longer believe just because of what you said: now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world."

- Jesus transforms this woman's life.
- He becomes her Lord.
- So she lives the new life by telling others.



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