



Managing GOD's Money

Theme for June: Walking the Walk

During an intensive two-year period when I set out to prove Christianity was for “weak-minded losers,” faith preoccupied me. I realized subconsciously I put faith in many objects and people daily. Still I thought, “Why would anyone become a follower of Jesus, accepting ‘blindly,’ assumptions about Him?” I learned He died, rose, is alive today. But did I have faith enough to believe? Later, with open eyes, I found out I didn’t have faith enough to disbelieve Jesus is Messiah! This month as we look at how we practice our faith, we will review these faith-related topics:



June 1-7 - Faith and Hope

June 8-14 - Commands and Assurances

June 15-21 - Forgiveness and Restoration

June 22-30 - Happiness is ...

Topic for June 8-14: Commands and Assurances



John 16:24

Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.

After I surrendered my life to Jesus in 1985 following a lonely challenging journey, I had no clue what would happen next. How to “work out” my salvation (**Philippians 2:12**) was a huge deal for me. How do I start to grow, learn more, and get closer to the Lord? I was certain I didn’t want to

plunge headlong into doing church stuff and become religious once more; positive I wanted to learn more about following Jesus and less about religion; but unsure how to continue. To be sure, I didn’t understand the meaning and likely effect on my life of the “indwelling” of the Holy Spirit (**Acts 2:38-39; John 14:16-17**).

Many chronologically matured followers of Jesus told me to read John’s Gospel. I did; yet it didn’t answer my questions. Instead, it raised many more and merely convinced me of my ignorance about Jesus. I needed guidance

but I didn’t know the nature or the form. Happily, “I was led” to a Bible-believing fellowship about to start a “discipleship” class to teach specific areas of the “Christian walk.”

During this class, I learned that assurances from our Heavenly Father filled the Bible, each telling us about His love and unchanging nature.

Assurance of Salvation

The most comforting assurance I discovered in the Bible was in **1 John 5:11-13**:

And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.

It is difficult to describe how I felt when I understood this guarantee I got after believing in Jesus.

Meditate on the above passage from John, especially the last verse, which reaffirms why he is writing it: *so we may know we have eternal life*. When we approach each day with this attitude, current seemingly overwhelming problems will look small. God knows them; they will pass.

Besides, because our salvation is a gift from God we cannot earn, we can stop striving to please people and focus instead on serving God by continually being the best we can. Let's never forget Apostle Paul's words in **Romans 5:8**: it is while we



Memory Verse

1 Peter 3:15

A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.

were sinners Jesus died for us.

As Messiah Jesus' disciple I must fulfill certain responsibilities. I learned I needed to obey Jesus' commands; I had no alternative if I wanted to follow Him.

Command To Love

In John 13:34, Jesus tells His disciples and other believers, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." Again in **John 15:12** He said, My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Apostle Paul, reminds us in **Romans 13:8** to owe no one except to love one another.

We don't base this love God calls us to extend to others

on feelings, emotions, or other internal or external causes. It's *agape* love, which is self-less, rooted in a decision to place others' needs above ours. We should practice it daily, not only on Sundays when we feel good, or when others are pleasant to us. In **Matthew 5:44-46**, Jesus enlightens us as follows:

But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that?

As "fallen" humans, how can we love each other as Jesus loves us? We cannot grasp the love He expressed when He died on the cross to give those who believe in Him eternal life. How then can we love our enemies unconditionally?

As usual, Scripture gives the answer. Before Jesus rose to heaven, He promised to send a Comforter, the Holy Spirit

(1 John 2:1; John 16:7; Acts 1:8) to be our helper and guide. As Apostle Paul mentions in **Romans 5:5**, "...God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us."

When we surrender our lives to Jesus, the Holy Spirit comes to live in us to guide and direct us. Although our selfish nature doesn't allow us to show selfless love, through the Holy Spirit's guidance, believers in Messiah can express *agape* love. It is part of the *fruit of the spirit* referred to in **Galatians 5:22**. Paul encourages us in **Galatians 5:25** to live by the Spirit, so we may walk by the Spirit. Let's do it.

We see *agape* love's essence in **Luke 6:31**: Do to others as you would have them do to you.

Our Father not only sent us the Counselor but He promised to answer our prayers.

Assurance of Answered Prayers

In **Psalm 37:4**, the Psalmist says, Delight yourself in the LORD and He will give

you the wishes of your heart; His will becomes our wish. Later in the Bible, in **John 16:24**, Jesus tells us to ask for anything "in His name" and He will grant our requests. Many name-it-claim-it preachers take this out of context and tell us to ask for anything we want and claim it in the name of Jesus and we will get it.

God wants to give us requests that "delight" Him; not stuff we want to satisfy our greed or selfish want. When our requests please Him, we will get them in His time. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you love unconditionally, especially your enemies. You will please Jesus and He will give you the gift of love in His time.

This assurance of answered prayers from Messiah Jesus ought to be our daily reminder of Jesus' awesomeness. It should be the basis on which we go before Him daily, stating confidently, "not my will Father, but yours"!

Often, we want to pray like our pastor, friend, or acquaintance. We doubt

our ability to pray, so we don't pray. We buy books to teach us to use prayer mantras, to treat God as a "slot machine," or to find ways to frame what we want to manipulate Him to fulfill our requests.

Prayer is talking and listening to God. Jesus taught His disciples a model in **Matthew 6:9-13**—notice; God permeates the entire prayer.

Prayer is a two-way conversation with God. Imagine your two-year old daughter talking with you about various matters. Like our gracious Heavenly Father, you "delight" in giving her requests that "delight" you and do not harm her, don't you?

In the same way, God's precious children can talk with Him. We don't have to mimic others or learn fancy terms. We present our hearts like children, open to listening and speaking what the Holy Spirit lays there. Besides our prayers' content, Jesus teaches us in **Matthew 6:5** about the right attitude for prayer:

"When you pray, you are not to be like the

hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. "But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.

Application



1 Peter 1 : 15-21

"... For you know that it was not with perishable things...that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your fore-fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. ... Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

Where are you in your life's journey? Have you surrendered every area of your life to Jesus? Is He your Lord and your Saviour? Do you rely on the Holy Spirit to guide you daily as you walk the walk?

Jesus' followers, this week, let's step out confident we have eternal life. What's more, let us accept the following:

1. Jesus knows our circumstances, whatever they might be.
2. We have direct access to Him always, and we cannot surprise Him.
3. Nothing is impossible for Jesus.
4. Because of the Holy Spirit in us, we can heed the greatest commandment to love one another as Christ loves us.

Through the Holy Spirit's power, let's do our best each day in every circumstance and leave the results to Jesus. Apply this attitude at home, in the office, while stuck in traffic, and everywhere we go this week.

Get to know Jesus' commands and assurances in the Bible so you might be free.



Considering this month's theme, *Walking the Walk*, this period's topic, *Commands & Assurances*, daily, reflect on the specific verses in the *Daily Reflection* section below. These questions might help:

1. Who is talking to whom, about what, and in what context?
2. How do these verses apply to me today?
3. What lessons from these verses can I start to do today?

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Daily Reflections

June 8:
1 John 5:11-13; John
16:24; Luke 6:31

June 9:
Acts 2:38-39; John
14:16-18

June 10:
John 13:34; John
15:12-14

June 11:
Romans 5:8;
Matthew 5:44-48

June 12:
1 John 2:1; John
16:7-15

June 13:
Acts 1:8; Galatians
5:21-25; Psalm 37:4

June 14:
Matthew 6:5; 9-13;
Philippians 2:3-4;
2:12