

Freedom from the Sins that Entangle

Sins that Lead to Death vs. Fruits that Lead to Life

Lesson 1 – An Introduction to Some Sins and the Fruits of the Spirit

Lesson 2 – Pride – Proud of Being Proud (Luke 18:11-14)

Lesson 3 – Envy – I Want What I Do Not Have (Matthew 20:1-16)

Lesson 4 – Anger – You Would Be Mad Too (Matthew 5:21-22; Ephesians 4:26)

Lesson 5 – Slothfulness – I'm Taking Care of Me (Matthew 25:26-28; Revelation 3:15-16)

Lesson 6 – Greed – Mine, Mine, Mine (Mark 10:25; 17:21; Colossians 3:5)

Lesson 7 – Gluttony – I Want it All & I Want it Now! (James 5:1-6)

Lesson 8 – Lust – Just Looking! (II Samuel 11:1-5; Matthew 5:27-30)

Lesson 9 – The Path of Love (I Corinthians 13; Galatians 5:22-23)

Lesson 10 – Don't Shoot the Wounded (John 4:7-42; John 8:1-11; Luke 19:1-10)

Lesson 11 – Sinners Helping Sinners (Colossians 3:5-17)

Lesson 12 - Growing Tasty Fruit - The Life of a Righteous Person (Matthew 6:33)

What is Sin?

1. Sin is missing the target we are shooting for. (Romans 3:23)
 2. Sin is straying or wandering or "to slip". (I Peter 2:25)
 3. Sin is moral laziness or erosion. (Revelation 3:15-16)
 4. Sin is injustice. (Mark 7:9-13)
 5. Sin is rebellion. (Galatians 5:19-21)
 6. Sin is deliberate perversion. (Romans 1:29-31)
- (Sin is insidious, powerful, destructive -- loaded with chaotic consequences.)

Vices and Virtues Chart

Sins that Lead to Death

Pride
 Envy
 Anger
 Slothfulness
 Greed
 Gluttony
 Lust

The Fruit of the Spirit

Kindness
 Joy
 Gentleness
 Faithfulness
 Peace/Goodness
 Self-Control
 Patience/Self-Control

Lesson 2 - Pride

I Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector

The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector. Luke 18:9-14

⁹To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: ¹⁰"Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹The Pharisee stood up and prayed about^[a] himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. ¹²I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.'

¹³"But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.'

¹⁴"I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

II Historical background – the Traditional Seven Sins

- A. 4th century monk, Evagrius Ponticus, eight “evil thoughts”, including two which were combined by Gregory in the 6th century as “pride”.
- B. In almost every list **Pride** (Latin, *superbia*), or **hubris**, is considered the original and most serious of the seven deadly sins, and indeed the ultimate source from which the others arise. It is identified as a desire to be more important or attractive than others, failing to acknowledge the good work of others, and excessive love of self (especially holding self out of proper position toward God).

III References to Pride in Bible

- A. Hebrew words in old testament
 1. geah, gaavah - "proud, haughty"
 - a) Prov. 8:13 - "pride, arrogance and the evil way"
 - b) Prov 29:23 – “a man’s pride will bring him low”
 2. zed, zadon – “pride, presumption”
 - a) Prov 11:2 – “when pride comes, then comes dishonor”
 - b) Prov 13:10 – “through presumption comes nothing but strife”
- B. Greek words in New Testament
 1. kenodoxia – empty conceit; from kenos (empty, vain, hollow, groundless) + doxa (glory, praise) The idea of kenodoxia includes a highly exaggerated self-view – a passion for empty personal glory which contrasts sharply with humility. (latin, vaingloria)
 2. hyperephania – acting & thinking arrogant and superior to others (latin, superbia)
 - a) Mk 7:22 – “pride . . . proceeds from within and defines a man”
 - b) Rom 1:30 – “insolent, **arrogant**, boastful, inventors of evil . . .”
 - c) James 4:6 – “God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to humble”

3. kauchema, kauchaomai – “to boast”
 - a) Rom 11:20 – “do not be conceited, but fear God”
 - b) I Cor 1:31 – “let him who boasts, boast in the Lord”
4. alazon, alazoneia – “to boast”
 - a) Rom 1:30 – “insolent, arrogant, **boastful**, inventors of evil . . . “
 - b) I John 2:16 – “the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father . . .”

IV What else does the Bible say about Pride?

A. A note on the ambiguity of English language –

1. The same word can mean different things, depending on the context.
2. Sometimes more distinction between various original Greek words

B. Neutral context

1. Thoughts & feelings of praise, joy, satisfaction, triumph
 - a) 2 Corinthians 7:4
 - b) 2 Corinthians 8:24
 - c) Galations 6:4 Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else,
 - d) James 1:9 The brother in humble circumstances ought to take pride in his high position. But the one who is rich should take pride in his low position, because he will pass away like a wild flower.

C. Sinful / Negative context

1. **One of defining characteristics of evil people.**

- a) Psalm 73 Therefore pride is their necklace; they clothe themselves with violence.
- b) 2 Timothy 3: 1-5 People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy,
- c) Proverbs 21:4 Haughty eyes and a proud heart, the lamp of the wicked, are sin!
- d) Revelation 13:5 The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise his authority for forty-two months.

2. **A characteristic Christians are to avoid**

- a) Romans 12: 3, 16 For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. . . . Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.
- b) I Corinthians 13:4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.
- c) I Peter 5:5 Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

3. Detested by God

- a) Proverbs 16:5 “The Lord detests all the proud of heart. Be sure of this: They will not go unpunished”
- b) 2 Chronicles 32:25 But Hezekiah's heart was proud and he did not respond to the kindness shown him; therefore the LORD's wrath was on him and on Judah and Jerusalem.
- c) Proverbs 8:13 To fear the LORD is to hate evil;
I hate pride and arrogance,
evil behavior and perverse speech.

4. Warnings about consequences

- a) Proverbs 13:10 Pride only breeds quarrels, but wisdom is found in those who take advice.
Proverbs 29:23 A man's pride brings him low, but a man of lowly spirit gains honor.
Proverbs 16:18 Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.
Proverbs 15:25 The LORD tears down the proud man's house but he keeps the widow's boundaries intact.

V What is/is not Pride (in the sinful context)

- A. PRIDE is an excessive belief in one’s own abilities, which interferes with recognition of the grace of God. Characteristics include:
 - 1. empty conceit
 - 2. arrogant attitude of superiority
 - 3. boastful
 - 4. belief and reliance on self; lack of dependence on God
 - 5. passion for praise and glory
 - 6. blindness to own faults and weaknesses
- B. Humility – the antithesis of pride.
- C. Pride is NOT a healthy self-esteem
- D. Origins of Pride
 - 1. compensating mechanism that frequently arises out of our own emotional needs and feelings of inferiority.
 - 2. human nature to feel a need for significance – but pride can be a self-defeating mechanism to attempt to meet that need.
 - 3. self-centered absorption which is insensitive to others
 - 4. Pride can also manifest itself in “inverted form”
 - a) Self-condemnation, False humility and self-abasement (see Colossians 2)
 - b) Poor me, martyr syndrome.

VI The Problems with Pride

A. The Spiritual Problem

1. Denies God: A reliance on self = Rejection of God
2. Pride-ful thinking is incompatible with loving others
3. Contention: “through presumption comes nothing but strife”
4. Leaves us blind and vulnerable to our weaknesses – “pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before stumbling” Prov 18:12.
5. Pride rationalizes and erodes our moral compass

B. Other Practical Problems

1. What typically happens when we let Pride take over our thinking?
 - a) “Should” thinking
2. Pride blinds us to our weaknesses and vulnerabilities
3. Does anybody really like being around a proud person?
4. Does Pride-ful thinking make us any happier or more successful?
5. Is there any benefit at all to pride-ful thinking?

C. So why do we keep thinking this way ??? . . .

VII Strategies and Tactics – So practically, how do we get better?

A. Understanding true nature of “pride”

1. Often an unconscious defense mechanism
2. Ask yourself - Does anybody really like a proud person?
3. Self-defeating – no upside benefit to thinking this way

B. Self-awareness of how we think

1. Watch for symptoms of Pride-ful thinking
 - a) Have to win arguments? Easily offended? Anger, . . .
 - b) Give thought to what your symptoms are . . .
2. Our thoughts are the battleground of our souls
3. Self-control begins with self-discipline over how we think

C. Challenge and Interrupt our own sinful and unproductive thinking

1. Many of our thoughts, assumptions and semi-conscious beliefs are not really valid – so don’t believe everything you think (particularly about ourselves)
2. Thought-Stopping technique: CANCEL – REDIRECT
 - a) Visualize a CANCEL or INTERRUPT button on the computer console in front of you. Mentally push that button to cancel/interrupt a defective (malware) program running amok in your biological computer (aka brain)
 - b) Redirect – start up a new program / consistent with a vision of how we want to be.

- D. Substitution Principle – Re-directing our thoughts
1. Focus our minds on what we desire to become, not what we want to avoid.
 - a) Visualize the nature and practice of humility
 - b) Analogy of visualizing a successful golf swing
 2. Whatever our minds are focused on, we become transformed into
 - a) Romans 12:2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.
 - b) Col 3:1-2 ¹Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.
 - c) Phil 4:8-9 ⁸Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. ⁹Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.
 - d) One reason for regular Bible study and prayer
 - e) Cultivate the spirit – through Bible study & prayer – fruits of spirit are the antithesis of pride
- E. Practice makes perfect – being transformed into his likeness

Lesson 3 - Envy - I Want What I Do Not Have

(Matthew 20:1-16)

*** Green with....**

Jesus tells a story.... Matthew 20:1-16

Is this any way to run a farm? Paying all the workers the same, even if they show up late?

The "all day" workers are filled with envy - envious of the generosity of the farmer to the other workers.

I. Characteristics of Envy

1. Envy is always complaining. (v. 11)
2. Envy is always comparing. (v. 12)
3. Envy is blind to all the gifts received. (v. 13)
4. Envy robs us of joy. (v. 15)

II. Warnings about and Examples of Envy

1. Envy put Jesus on the cross. (Matt. 27:17)
2. Let not thine heart envy sinners. (Prov. 23:17)
3. Envy wars against Christian contentment. (Heb. 13:5; Phil. 4:11)
4. Envy wars against loving our neighbors as ourselves. (James 2:8)

III. Defeating Envy and Embracing Generosity

1. Choosing Service Instead of Special Privilege. (Matthew 20:20-28; v. 25-28)
2. Choosing Giving Instead of Grasping. (Galatians 5:22-26)
3. Choosing Contentment Instead of Criticism. (I Timothy 6:6-10, 17-18)

Lesson 4 Anger - *You Would Be Mad Too*

(Ephesians 4:26-27; Matthew 5:21-22)

*** The Danger of Anger**

What are the common results of anger out of control?

1. Physical violence - Families, Conflicts, Wars
2. Emotional abuse -
3. Damaged relationships and Broken friendships
4. Business problems and failures
5. Isolation
6. Other?

Anger Words - How We Describe our Anger

"frustrated" "hurt" "hot under the collar" "enraged" "livid"

Anger is:

A basic human emotion in response to a fear or perceived threat.

Afraid or threatened by change, rejection, abandonment, alienation, criticism, exclusion and more.

I. When Anger Becomes the Deadly Sin...

1. When we lose control. (Proverbs 29:11)
2. When we rationalize and excuse it. (Matthew 5:21-22)
3. When we seek revenge. (James 3:13-18)
4. When we become bitter. (Ephesians 4:26-32)
5. When being "right" is more important than the well being of our self or others. (James 1:19-21)

II. Anger Solutions

1. Confession - (James 4:6-10)
2. Practice Patience (Exodus 34:5-7; James 1:19-21)
3. Avoid Friendships and Association with Angry People (Proverbs 22:24-25)
4. Choose a Positive Virtue to Replace Your Anger-Gentleness(Galatians 5:22-25)
What is gentleness?
It is not weakness.
It is empathy with the situation of others.
It focuses on mending relationships not winning arguments.
It is the strength to not be controlled by our fears.
See I John 4:10-21; I Cor. 13:4-7

Lesson 5 Sloth

I'm Taking Time for Me Right Now!

Two toed or three toed? How big of a sloth can I be?

What is the meaning of the word "sloth" when applied to human beings?

Lazy -
 Idleness
 Sluggish
 Negative
 Cynical
 Hesitant
 Weak-Willed
 Fearful
 Abdicates Responsibility - "It's not my job."
 Apathy
 The "Whatever" attitude -

I. Pictures from Scripture

Proverbs 6:9-11; 20:4; 26:15
 I Thessalonians 5:14
 Revelation 3:15-16

II. The Prison of Sloth

The Tragedy of the Buried Talent (Matthew 25:26-28)
 Sloth is the sin of neglect.
 Sloth is the sin of lack of love.
 Sloth is the sin that covers its tracks with fear and anxiety.
 Sloth is the sin of selfish inactivity.
 "I'm just taking time for me now."

III. Freedom from Sloth

1. Practice the virtue of faithfulness (Galatians 5:22,23)
2. Practice Courage - the Never Give Up Attitude! (Galatians 6:9)

IV. Sloth Busters

1. Do the Little Things faithfully. (Romans 12:12-13)
2. Envision More and Better! (Philippians 3:12-14)
 Dig up that talent and put it into use and watch what God will do!

Lesson 6 Greed: Mine, Mine, Mine!

(Mark 10:17-31; Luke 12:13-21; Colossians 3:1-17)

*** The "Scrooge" Syndrome**

What words would you use to describe greed or avarice?

Miser, hoarder, Insatiable desire for more, money and possessions become an idol or rival God.

I. What Greed Does to Our Relationship with God and Others

- > We no longer trust God; we trust only ourselves, our wealth, our stuff, etc.
- > God is no longer our provision - we are so smart we provide for our self.
- > Other people become "objects" that we use to get what we want for ourselves.

II. The Sad Story of the Greedy Farmer Luke 12:13-21 -

- * A Warning: Beware: of All Kind of Greed!
- * The Setting: A Family Dispute About Possessions (v. 13-15)
- * The Story: (v. 16-20)

The Best Crop This Farmer Ever Had!

Plans to Expand!

Totally Self-Centered (Count the times he says "I", "my", "myself".)

Forgets Where His Blessings Come From.

The Farmer Loses Everything!

- * The Moral or Lesson of the Story: Beware of Greed: Be Rich Toward God! (v. 21)

Why did the farmer turn out to be such a failure? Denied God and Hoarded his blessings for himself.

III. Solutions to Greed

> In one word: "Stewardship"

What does it mean to be a steward? Take good care of something that is not ours.

> Practice Generosity! (I Timothy 6:6-10 & 17-19)

> Embrace Peace and Contentment! (Philippians 4:10-14)

> let each esteem other better than themselves (Philippians 2:1-11)

Lesson 7 Gluttony: I Want it All & I Want It Now!

*** Consumer Addicts...**

Living in a culture of consumption....

I. Gluttony Attitudes:

- * I can and will do it all and have it all!
- * When the going gets tough, the tough go shopping!
- * Born to shop!

Gluttony: Beware the Bait - James 5:1-6

- > Lures us into thinking that food, drink, spending, buying, or indulging will make us truly happy!
- > Marketing and Advertising promise success, power, happiness, health, beauty, etc.
- > Gluttony misuses God's good gifts and destroys their beauty.

II. From Misery to Joy

Misery on Display - James 5:1-6

- > Hoarding doesn't bless us or others (v. 1-3) (Eph. 4:28)
- > Cheating others out of fair wages will not go unnoticed. (v. 4) (Lev. 19:13) (Mal. 3:1-10) (Deut. 24:15)
- > Self-indulgence is not our calling. (v. 5) (Phil. 2:1-11)
- > Mistreatment of the innocent will destroy us. (v. 6) (Matt. 25:41-46)

The Joy of Self-Control - Titus 2:11-14; Ephesians 5:15-20

- > Self-Control is the desire to be better than I am by showing restraint.
- > Self-Control is about the long journey of spiritual growth.
- > Self-Control chooses true contentment over immediate gratification.

Celebration with Gluttony - The Feast of Joy - Luke 15:22-24

The angels in heaven rejoice over one sinner who repents.

(Luke 15:8-10)

Lesson 8 Lust: Just Looking??

(II Samuel 11:1-5; Matthew 5:27-30)

*** Looking for Love in all the wrong places...**

Lust is the sad distortion of God's beautiful gift of love and sex.

What is the evidence that we live in a "culture of lust"?

pornography marketing of sex uncontrolled sexual behavior degrading of humans as objects
no self-control

*** Lust: When the Mighty Fall - Biblical Case Study - David**

(II Samuel 11:1ff)

David's Low Point: The Results of his Lust

> Adultery > Loss of Personal Integrity > Abuse of Power > Murder > Calamity and death of a child

Lust promises pleasure and all it does is bring pain.

I. Lust is....

Two words:

1. "Porneia" - sexual sins associated with lust (Paul's word in Galatians 5:19)
2. "Luxuria" - to over indulge for the purpose of personal pleasure. (Latin word for lust)

Men think about sex about 60 times an hour.

Women think about sex several times an hour.

Lust is ...

1. An addiction to the sensual and erotic with little or no restraint.
2. A fixation with thought or fantasy of sex.
3. An obsession with and uncontrolled desire for sex, money, power, success or fame.
4. An attitude that degrades and dehumanizes others. People become objects to be used.
5. Irrational thinking which leads to irrational actions that destroy relationships and lives. lust - sin - death vs. the Father's perfect gifts (James 1:12-18)

II. Love and Sex: The Good God Planned

1. Adam and Eve: Genesis 2:20-25 - "very good" Gen. 1:31
2. Intimacy is the ultimate goal of sex by God's design - not just pleasure.
3. Agape love means that sex should never be selfish. (I Cor. 13:4-7)
Love endures all things - Lust takes and runs when things get tough.
4. Love and Sex are guided by patience and self-control.
(the fruit of the Holy Spirit - Gal. 5:22-23)
Self-Control - "eegratia" - mastery -

*** Sowing Love Rather Than Lust**

1. Think like a lover - not a luster. (Philippians 4:8-9)
2. Practice love - not lust. (I Corinthians 13:7)

Lesson 9 The Path of Love

(I Cor. 13, Gal. 5:22-23)

* Love Busters

The Seven Deadly sins are the ultimate "love busters" - look over the list and describe how each one is the opposite of love:

Pride -
 Envy -
 Anger -
 Sloth -
 Greed -
 Gluttony -
 Lust -

Vices and Virtues Chart

Sins that Lead to Death

Pride
 Envy
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The Fruit of the Spirit

Kindness
 Joy
 Gentleness
 Faithfulness
 Peace/Goodness
 Self-Control
 Patience/Self-Control

I. Love - the Fruit of the Spirit

Galatians 5:22-23

To live in the power of the Holy Spirit is to walk in the pathway of love. Paul describes the various ways in which we show this love: joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

What happens when we begin to view all of life through the lens of love? All actions, all beliefs, all values?

*** The fruit of the Spirit is love with legs on it.**

Joy - is a deep and abiding sense of the beauty of life.

Peace - is a sense of being whole and correctly deployed in life.

Patience - is the ability to trust God and wait for the right answers.

Kindness - is the predisposition to treat someone else well simply because that is what love does.

Goodness - means sharing our self in healthy ways - being generous.

Faithfulness - means keeping our self "centered on" and "trusting in" God.

Gentleness - teaches us sensitivity and calls us to treat others the way we long to be treated.

Self-Control - means mastering our passions, so that we serve Jesus in love - doing what needs to be done, when it needs to be done, the way it needs to be done.

* Which of these is most important to you in expressing love and defeating the sins that trip you up?

II. Love Clinic

Read I Cor. 13:4-7.

What does real love challenge you to not do?

What does real love challenge you to do?

Lesson 10 Don't Shoot the Wounded

(John 4:7-42; John 8:1-11; Luke 19:1-10)

*** Eats with Sinners**

Jesus and Sinners - Mark 2:13-17 & Luke 15:1-2

How did the "religious folks" react to Jesus' association and friendship with "sinners"?

"Christians have become known as the only army to shoot its wounded. We act like God has never seen a sinner before." Randy Rowland - in Sins We Love
Jesus refused to "shoot the wounded" - he consistently reaches out to and demonstrates genuine love for sinners.

What is the mission of Jesus according to Jesus? (Luke 19:10)

I. Only Sinners Need Apply

> Our Story - Eph. 2:1-10

Describe our "sin history". v. 1-3

Describe our rescue. v. 4-9

Describe our new purpose. v. 10

II. Sinners and New Life

> Jesus Encounters -

* John 4:7-42 - The Samaritan Woman

Which sin tripped her up?

Outcast

Failure

Woman

Samaritan

Jesus calls her to worship and serve God - she becomes his Evangelist to her village.

- * John 8:1-11 - The Woman Caught
 - Which sin did she get entangled in?
 - Adultery
 - Woman
 - Accused and Caught

Jesus forgives her and calls her to a new life, leaving sin behind.

- * Luke 19:1-10
 - Which sin had this man in its grip?
 - Greed
 - Tax Collector - Crooked/ Chief
 - Despised and Hated

Jesus goes to his home - calls him to a new life.

- Zack's Response
 - > Repents > Restitution > Resolves

III. Real Church - Rehab for Sinners

(Galatians 6:1-3)

- > No More Denial Games
- > Accountable to God and each other
- > Genuine Support -

Lesson 11 Sinners Helping Sinners (Colossians 3:5-17)

*** Slip Sliding Away...**

Paul's word in Galatians 6:1 – "paraptoma" – sin – literally "trip or slip".

Goal: to restore from the fall and to watch ourselves lest we fall.

I. How We Help Each Other (Colossians 3:5-17)

> Some things must die...

"put to death" v. 5 "rid yourselves" v. 8 - imperatives

> Two Lists: (Post Baptismal Lists)

List 1 – v. 5-6 – (stacking)

>sexual immorality

>impurity

>lust

>evil desires --"porneia" – See also Galatians 5:19ff.

>Greed/ Idolatry (Luke 12:15; Ephesians 5:3)

Past lifestyle – "Gentile" style living

List 2 – (v. 8-9) Three Attitudes – Three Verbal

>anger

>rage

>malice

>slander

>filthy language

>lies

II. Our New Self (v. 10-17)

> "put on" – baptismal picture (v. 10)

1. New Creation people (v. 10-11)

chosen, holy, loved

2. New Spiritual wardrobe (v. 12)

>compassion

>kindness

>humility

>gentleness

>patience

3. New Attitudes (v. 13)

"bear with" "forgive" "love"

4. New Heart (v. 15-17)

"peace of Christ" "word of Christ" "gratitude"

Lesson 12 Growing Tasty Fruit - The Life of a Righteous Person (Matthew 6:33)

*** What Is the Passion of Your Life?**

If someone followed you around for a week, making notes and recording how you spend your time, money and talents what would they say is the purpose of your life?

Jesus on our Life Passion:

"Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness..." (Matthew 6:33)

What We Truly Long For...

Deep within us is the desire to Grow, Flourish, to be Productive - to be a Spiritual Person!

I. The Path of the Righteous Life (Growing Life)

How We Reach Our Goal:

1. Put Off the Old Ways...Put On the New Ways.

²²You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; ²³to be made new in the attitude of your minds; ²⁴and to put on the new self, created to be like God ***in true righteousness and holiness.*** (Ephesians 4:22-24)

> New Way Living - "repent" - a religious sounding word that simply means to change course. (Romans 8:13)

> Not Religion but Abundant Living - (John 10:10)

2. Seek More and More - More Love, Understanding, Knowledge, and Insight for Living.

"And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, ¹⁰so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ,"

(Philippians 1:9-10)

23

> A Passion to Know and Grow - (Proverbs 20:5)

> The Focus is not "should's" and "ought's" and "being good" -- the focus is growing in insight and living "Spiritually Smart". The others are some of the bi-products of living "Spiritually Smart" (Philippians 4:8-9)

3. Commit to the Challenge - Embrace Discipline, Training and Peace.

"No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it." (Hebrews 12:11)

> "Discipline" and "Training" - Are these positive words?

> Love grows in the structure of discipline and training.
Self-Control is a passionate act of love. (Galatians 5:23)

"Love is the heart of a growing person - discipline is the skeleton providing form and protection."

Dr. Henry Cloud, in How We Grow

> Discipline and Training Busters - (Matthew 7:1-5)

1. Denial
2. Rationalization
3. Minimization
4. Blame

*** How Does Your Garden Grow?**

(Galatians 5:22-23)

> Pray the Fruit of the Spirit Text for 30 Days.

> Find a Good Farmer - Learn from those who know the path to growth!