

FOREWORD

A handbook is meant to be a compact, factual, and useful guide to be referred to over and over again as you do your job.

The Bible's book of Ephesians is in itself such a handbook, for it is compact (only six short chapters), factual (for Bible-believing Christians, while Paul of Tarsus was its human "reporter," the Holy Spirit inspired its writing¹), and the usefulness of Ephesians is apparent in the deep riches and wide scope of Divine help it provides to readers of all ages and roles.

This handbook was written to help you face the most important question of life – where will you spend eternity? To that end it presents very clearly the good news of free salvation to all who will receive it.

Its second purpose is to help believers in Christ, be they young or old, of any background or ethnicity, to face the spiritual and practical crises of life and to live victoriously in Christ.

The tone of this handbook is that of a warrior's manual². After all, it was written by a Jewish scholar and teacher, a

¹ See II Timothy 3:16 and II Peter 1:21. These verses teach us how God breathed His truth into the Bible, and how we can depend on the Bible for daily life on Earth and for eternal life in Heaven.

² It is not a commentary (a book which explains what a Bible passage means). It is not a study of the original language (common Greek of the First Century). Further, this manual is not a textbook of theology, and as such "bypasses" several controversies which believers have debated for centuries, just as MacArthur bypassed many isolated strongholds in the WWII Pacific campaign in order to press on to his main objective.

prisoner very likely chained day and night to a Roman soldier, a man who knew great suffering, persecution, and wide travels in his fight against spiritual darkness in high places.

Consistent with this militant theme, Ephesians can be divided into four sections:

- (1) **The School of the Soldier**, or the individual believer (Chapters 1-3:19)
- (2) **The School of the Company**, or the local church assembly (Verses 3:20-4:32)
- (3) **The School of the Squad**, the believing family/support group (Chapter 5:1-6:9)
- (4) **The School of the Army**, the great assembly of believers worldwide³ (Chapter 6:11-24)

At the end of this manual a set of appendixes contain supplemental information on vital topics and on ministries that coach and motivate believers in Bible-based maturity in each of the above areas.

The print format of this handbook is as follows:

Text of Paul's letter to the church at Ephesus in boldface.

Scripture references from other books of the Bible in italics.

Author's comments and practical applications of the text in plain print.

³ Sometimes called "The Universal Church."

Technical details such as origins of Biblical words have been put in footnotes to keep the text as direct and readable as possible.

Discussion questions or other points of Christian growth will appear in gray sidebars. These issues are offered for personal or group use parallel to a reading of this manual.

Whether we are military or civilian, we are all governed by an unseen spiritual truth beyond what we see, touch, and feel. We are every one of us trapped in a life-and-death struggle in the spiritual realm, whether or not we are aware of this conflict's existence. Trouble at home. Human relationships not right. Tempted at work. Discipline issues with children. Anger issues. Coping with traumatic past experiences. Outbursts of cursing and inflammatory language. Ephesians teaches that every one of these problems has a spiritual issue at its core, and provides a solution available from the hand of our loving and generous God.

God offers spiritual hope to everyone in need. He loved us enough to send His cherished Son to die for our sins and to show us how to live step-by-step under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Let us begin this study in gratitude to God and with a humble, teachable heart.

DEDICATION

To this work the writer has brought

- A sinner's regrets,
- a believer's joy and gratitude to the Lord Jesus Christ,
- A father's care,
- A warrior's experience,
- A pastor's heart and training,
- A language student's convictions,
- A child of God's joy of discovery,
- A messenger's sincere prayer that the reader will have life, and will have it more abundantly (see John 10:10),
- A love for the Bible and its message of freedom from sin.

For the greater glory of God this manual has been prepared that the reader may benefit and may not only persevere in spiritual battle, but be victorious and obedient to God and His Great Commission to pass the faith on to other folk. Further, it is dedicated to the brave U.S. Army soldiers of Task Force Smith in its efforts to halt the North Korean army's invasion of South Korea in July, 1950.

Any errors are my own and for them I beg forgiveness of God and of reader.

John Martin Brown, Commander, USN (ret)

Bedford, PA, in the Year of our Lord 2019

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PART ONE - THE SCHOOL OF THE SOLDIER

It is criminal for a nation to send untrained soldiers into battle. What chance for survival does a raw recruit unfamiliar with his weapon, ignorant of enemy capabilities, without the physical and emotional preparation to survive even a single day of combat? The United States learned sad lessons during the opening phase of the Korean War (1950-1953). The only Army units that were immediately available in-theater were occupation troops stationed in Japan. Many of these troops did not do well in battle and found themselves prisoners of war. Of these, a few collaborated with the enemy and remained in North Korea after the war. Analysts of these twin embarrassments concluded that the too-short initial training period and lack of realistic tactical exercises had not imparted enough soldiering skills or allowed exposure to realistic simulated combat situations.

The first section of this manual is devoted to individual spiritual warfare skills every believer needs in order to prevail and to be useful in any gospel work.

Ephesians 1 King James Version (KJV)⁴

⁴ All references will be from the King James Version of the Holy Bible. After fifty years of Bible reading and study, the author has come to trust the KJV for its fidelity to the Greek text (as it reflects the overwhelming majority of ancient manuscripts (hand-written), and its lack of commerciality (Outside of the UK it is without copyright. New versions bring publishers fresh income streams). Some find its word order and pronouns and phrasing “antique,” and they are right, for they reflect sentence structure of ancient Hebrew and Greek – a blessing to those whom God has called to teach and preach with humility toward the wondrous miracle of the Holy Bible.

1. Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:

A “church planter” is someone who gathers believers (experienced and new) into a local assembly that will have a new life and work of its own. Paul planted many congregations in the First Century, with his work being described in the book of Acts of the Apostles. The church in Ephesus was one of these new assemblies.

² Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Some brief background details are appropriate. Epistles are letters, and they follow the format of a personal letter:

- Friendly greeting reminding the reader of the relationship with the writer
- Background or preparatory comments
- Main message which often contains a request or a task or a critique
- Fraternal finish that ends on a positive note.

The Epistles are found in the New Testament after the book of Acts and before its final book, The Revelation.

The Paul, 1st Century Hebrew (literally “Little Guy” – a Roman nickname which Saul of Tarsus was known by in his many years of spreading the Christian message throughout the Roman empire), is now in prison for his faith because of the jealousies of both pagan and co-religionist opponents. Preaching the good news of salvation through faith in Christ was dangerous then, and is dangerous now. Evil gets angry when good makes inroads among mankind.

His greeting, “**Grace be to you, and peace . . .**” is rich with meaning, for it reflects Paul’s calling as “the apostle to the Gentiles⁵,” as it addresses all of his world of the Mediterranean basin: “shalom” to his fellow countrymen, and “God’s gifts” to the gentile world he served.

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

This is a doxology⁶, a “time out for praise.” Ephesians contains several doxologies, and they serve not only as “time outs for praise,” but they also mark logical section division within the letter. This doxology serves as the theme for the “School of the Soldier” section of the letter which focuses on individual training. A famous military axiom, often attributed to Napoleon Bonaparte, says, “In war, moral power is to physical as three parts out of four.” So it is that every Christian needs to be well-grounded in the faith. A beginning point for that training is to inventory the blessings of God. From here to the end of chapter three, our apostolic “drill instructor” will train us in Biblical truth. Confidence in these truths will carry us through many-a fight. Note who gives the believer this complete “gear-issue” of blessings:

⁵ God moved the Apostle Peter to stay in Jerusalem and serve Jewish believers trusting Christ as the Messiah, and the Apostle Paul to travel outside of Israel and to build up believers and congregations outside of Israel. In Ephesians 3:1, and Romans 11:13 Paul highlights this focus of his ministry.

⁶ *Doxa* = “glory,” *logia* = “saying or expression”

God the Father, God the Son, and in the background, the ever-humble God the Holy Spirit⁷.

The word that is used in the text for “blessed be” is made up of the word for ‘good’ and ‘word’ or ‘statement.’ When we praise God we acknowledge His moral goodness. Praising God is good and correct for us not because we get a reward for doing it. Praise is not some kind of pagan incantation a shaman repeats and compels a selfish evil spirit to act. Instead, it is an authentic and trustworthy thing, because it aligns us with the central truths of the universe (the greatness and goodness of Almighty God) and allows us to perceive cosmic reality the way it truly is – grounded in the goodness and greatness of God. When we praise God we align ourselves with the greatest truths, indeed the absolute Truths of the universe – that God is Creator and we are His beloved, and as we are His dependent ones, it follows we ought to be His grateful ones⁸.

4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love,”

God created time and exists outside the limitations of that created thing. Our physical lives have beginning and ending points, but He is not limited by birth and death and the decay of aging. See his purpose? **“That we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.”** How can we, weak

⁷ Study John 14-17 to learn Christ’s teaching on God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit .

⁸ Friend, even our human praise is a battleground between good and evil. See the accounts of Satan’s fall from heaven described in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28. These chapters described how a beautiful created being craved the praise of men and rebelled against his Creator.

and lowly and sin-filled folk achieve such destiny? In our own strength we cannot, for we are a feeble, disorganized and selfish mob. Without God teaching us and training us and equipping us, we will be no good to Him. In the next paragraphs blessed Paul of Tarsus will inventory for us the “gear issue” every new recruit for Christ receives, for it is God intention to prepare each recruit to strive toward the Army’s Overall Mission of Genesis 1:28 of “*Be fruitful and multiply and subdue (or reclaim) the whole earth.*” God’s will must become the mission of each individual soldier, and each family, and each congregation, and the whole worldwide assembly of believers.

A NEW RELATIONSHIP – ENLISTMENT⁹

⁵ Having predestinated¹⁰ us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

Human adoption – the opening of hearts to bring parentless children into a loving family – is a beautiful thing. How much more beautiful the Bible’s promise that when a sinner is born again spiritually, that they are adopted by God Himself?

John 1:12-13 explains it this way,

“[But] as many as received him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his

⁹ In Christ we all have the same rank – soldier. Fraternal apologies to other services and all officers.

¹⁰ The rest of this Bible passage will help us to understand what this word means and what it does not mean. We will revisit the word at the end of this section.

name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

Note how carefully the Bible defines the uniqueness of this spiritual birth and adoption: NOT of (human) blood, NOT of the will of (human) flesh, NOT of the will of man BUT of God.

RIGHT THINKING ABOUT GOD – THE SOLDIER’S CREED

Just who is this God, and who are we, that He would want

Questions to ponder: If the new believer is adopted as a child of God, what would that imply about: Our relationship with Christ? Our family responsibilities? Our eternal destiny? Our attitude toward those outside the “family?” The heart of God that would adopt wretched folk like us into a permanent and loving relationship with Him?

us in His service? What does He have planned for us? What does he expect of us? As many-a military enlistee has thought the first minute of basic training, “Just what have I gotten myself into?” The good news for the Christian soldier is outlined in this paragraph. Read it and then consider the list of key words drawn from this motivational passage:

⁶To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

⁷In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;

9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

10 That in the dispensation¹¹ of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise,

14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

The day a person enters the military, they receive an overwhelming amount of clothing and equipment and personal items. Let's look at the passage above and

¹¹ Very literally "budgeting" or "house rules" – *oikonomian* in New Testament Greek

“unpack” the amazing things God does for the new recruit into His army¹²:

ACCEPTANCE (verse 6)

Through the Divine generosity of God, when He evaluates us, He reckons our value “acceptable in the Beloved” according to the value and sacrifice on the cross of His dear Son, Jesus Christ. This is a one-verse preview of what Paul will present in verses six through ten of the next chapter when he describes the goodness of how God saves sinners and puts them to the task of helping other sinners go from the darkness of sin to the light

REDEMPTION OF HIS BLOOD (verse 7)

The word picture here is the price, or ransom, required to buy a person out of slavery. Consider Isaiah 53:6 “*All we, like sheep, have gone astray, every one to his own way, but the LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.*” Jesus’ bloody sacrifice on the cross of Calvary buys the believer out of the slavery of sin.

FORGIVENESS OF SINS (verse 7)

Psalm 103:12-13 reads, “*As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear Him.*” While this list of “gear” every believer receives is rich and impressive, can there be any greater marvel that

¹² Be not intimidated by the length of this list and of the sentence the Apostle (sent-out messenger of God) uses here. Think of it as a “bullet list.”

God the Father would forgive the sins of all who trust in His dear son Jesus Christ?

RICHES OF HIS GRACE (verse 7)

The root word for grace is “gift” and His rich gifts for the child of God is rooted in His good and generous character. A person cannot earn a gift. It must be received – received with gratitude. The more urgent the need and the more generous the gift, the more deserving of gratitude is the giver. Romans 8:32 sheds light on the generosity of God when it encourages believers in trying times and says, “*He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?*”

WISDOM AND PRUDENCE (verse 8)

According to the Bible, wisdom is the ability to perceive the difference between good and evil. In I Kings 3:9-19 we read that after the death of King David, his son Solomon prayed to God, “*Give therefore Thy servant an understanding heart to judge Thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this Thy so great a people? And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing.*” In the book of Proverbs (verses 3:6-7), compiled by this same Solomon we find written “*Trust in the LORD with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct thy paths.*” To those outside the faith this could sound silly. It is not, for a spiritual battle between Good and evil swirls around us, and we live on a battlefield of spiritual conflict.

THE MYSTERY OF HIS WILL (verse 9)

In the New Testament, the mysteries of God are secrets which in His own good time He reveals to mankind. Later in the book we will read how the church, the assembly of all believers in Christ was a mystery unknown to the patriarchs of the Former (Old) Testament, and that the church would combine Jew and Gentile (mankind outside of Judaism) into one body. Deuteronomy 29:29 teaches “*The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.*”¹³

INHERITANCE (verse 11)

No one *earns* an inheritance. An inheritance is received by virtue of relationship with the grantor. By the goodness and generosity of the deceased, their riches are passed on to a living member of their family. So it is for the believer in Christ who enters into right relationship with God through the sacrificial death of the Son of God. The believer is adopted into the family, and receives spiritual riches that will carry them through the remainder of their earthly life and into eternity. The word for inheritance here can be interpreted as “riches given in accordance to the law.”¹⁴

It is sobering to remember the role of death here. Hebrews 9:16 spotlights this role when it says, “*For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.*” In other words, the believer’s forgiveness of sin and adoption into God’s family was made possible by the sacrificial death of the Savior. Friend, we must never forget the awful price

¹³ What kind of God would Jehovah be if we could comprehend and explain every Divine matter?

¹⁴ *Plouto* (riches) *nomia* (decree)

Christ paid on the cross to buy us out of the slave market of sin, lest we be ungrateful and forgetful brats.

“*READING OF THE WILL*” (verse 10)

And just what have we inherited? Gold? Silver? Platinum? Stocks? Bonds? \$10,000 a week for life? No. MUCH more than that, for the Holy Spirit (also known as the “Advocate”), through the Apostle Paul, informs us that we are now the recipients of a share of the riches of everything good and precious in the universe since we have been adopted into His family through trusting faith in His Son Jesus Christ. Further, there is a sense of perfect timing, for in this same verse is a foreshadowing of what Paul will explain later in the book, that in “the fullness of time” God combined all believers, both Jew and Gentile, into one body, or one great assembly.

The original New Testament language (*koiné*, or common Greek) language has two words for time, *kronos*, or sequential time as in our “chronology,” and the word used here, *kairos*, or the proper and fitting moment.¹⁵

Let’s pause and consider this kind of time. Ecclesiastes 3:11 says, “*He hath made every thing beautiful in His time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.*” In John 14:6 Jesus reveals “*I am the way, the truth, and the life, and no man comes to the Father but by me.*” Hebrews 9:27-28 says, “*And as it is appointed to men once to die, and after that the judgment, so it was that*

¹⁵ BlueLetterBible.com is a wonderful resource that enables every believer to “dig down to the roots” of any Greek or Hebrew word. Blessed hunting!

Christ came once for sin, and will come again, not for sin, but for judgment, and for those who await His coming.”¹⁶

Friend, this is no casual thing we have inherited. It is the secret of life, the power of the universe, it is more than we could ever dream of.¹⁷ No, it is not cars and lands and rings like too many TV preachers (who want your money to pay for air time) say, it is MUCH more than that. And it comes with a price. You must give your whole life to God – all of it – your hopes and hurts and sins and failures to Almighty God, and hang on for the “ride of your eternal life!”

PRAISE OF HIS GLORY (verse 12)

Fellow soldier of the cross, never again consider yourself to be a pauper, a poor and helpless person. If you have given your life to God, with all of your sins and weaknesses and selfishness, He has a wonderful plan for your life. He has a purpose for your life. He has made you more than a *buzillionaire* of spiritual wealth that can never fade away. As Jim Elliot, a missionary martyr for Christ wrote in his journal many years ago, “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep [his soul] to gain that which he cannot lose [heaven].” Friend, our Ephesians passage here, along with Romans chapter 8 are wise places to go for encouragement when we are exhausted in the fight against evil.

It is a good and proper thing for us to praise God and to give Him all the glory. Those outside the faith see this as folly. That is understandable, for they have no inheritance in Him

¹⁶ For more on this “coming again” see Revelation 4:11 and Isaiah 40.

¹⁷ But as it is written [Isaiah 64:4], Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. I Corinthians 2:9

and have never entered into the “new family” relationship with Him. For the grateful and praising Christian, however, to adopt this mindset is to “tune in” to God’s frequency – to align our thinking with His thinking, and in this way to better understand who we are and why we are and where we are going. The fact that God is good and worthy of our praise is our “true north” that enables us to navigate difficult terrain.¹⁸

TRUTH (verse 13)

This is not “relative” truth or “whatever works.” No, this is the Absolute Truth of God. In the “High Priestly Prayer” recorded in John 17:17 the night Jesus was betrayed, He said of God’s word, “*Sanctify them through Thy truth. Thy word is truth.*” Proverbs 30:5-6 says “*Every word of God is pure. He is a shield to those who trust Him. Add thou not unto his words, lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.*” For the believer, the Bible bursts alive in the hand, in the conscience, and in the heart. This conscience-based ministry belongs to the Holy Spirit who “*And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:* (John 16:8).”

SEALED WITH THAT HOLY SPIRIT OF PROMISE (verse 13-14)

Just as the King of England’s royal foresters would mark strong and straight mature trees with the broad arrow mark on their trunk, thus destining them for service as masts in the Royal Navy’s warships, so our merciful God places His invisible, spiritual seal on His own spiritual newborns as a sign of ownership and destiny of eternal life with Him in

¹⁸ We love Him because He paid the penalty for our sin!

heaven. John 14:21 memorializes Christ's promise that "*He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me, and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will manifest myself to him.*" It is the Holy Spirit who makes Christ real, or manifest, to us.

15 Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints,

16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;

Here the Apostle Paul expresses a loving, brotherly concern for the believers in Ephesus. Encouraged by reports of their faith and love, he records a prayer for them here that contains a roadmap for the new believers of two thousand years ago, and for us today.

17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,

20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,

21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,

23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all¹⁹.

The Holy Spirit of God is our mentor, our teacher, and our revealer of the riches of God. Not only have we received the gift of eternal life through the sacrifice of Christ, we have before us a rich and joyful earthly life to live out for His glory. These are the twin glories described by Christ in John 10:10; that we might have life, and have it more abundantly.

In verse 22 we see the first mention of the church in Ephesians. The New Testament word does not mean a building or a denomination. It means an assembly, or a group called together for a mission. In following chapters Paul will provide solid guidance to help the Ephesian “task force” do the will of God.

Ephesians 2 King James Version (KJV)

2 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

¹⁹ Here the apostle likens the *ekklesia/the assembly/the church* to a body – the living organism brought to life by Christ’s willing sacrifice of his own life. Like all uses of the word for church in the New Testament, twin concepts are in view – the local, visible church (as described in Ephesians 4) and the worldwide “great assembly” of all believing local assemblies combined (as described at the end of Ephesians 3).

² Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

³ Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

Friend, you are engaged in the fight of your life – no the fight of your lives – your earthly *and* your eternal lives. Why did Jesus sweat blood in the garden of Gethsemane before his betrayal, capture, and crucifixion? Who robbed Job of family, of riches, and of health? Why did Jesus teach us to pray “lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil? Because we have a spiritual foe, the enemy of our souls. Verses two and three above refer to the Devil.

It is essential in war to understand your enemy as best you can.²⁰ As you study your Bible, remember Satan is a fallen angel. He is not a god. He is not a *counterpart* of our Lord, but a proud and ancient self-appointed *counterfeit*. You would be wise to study Isaiah chapter 14 and Ezekiel chapter 28 to learn more about the origin and motivation of this evil personage.

⁴ But

²⁰ Sun Tzu, an ancient Chinese general and strategist, “If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle.”

Soldier of the cross, when you study your Bible, do not overlook the little word “but.” It is a change-of-direction sign packed into three little letters. It often shows a change of direction or a change of subject. The Apostle briefly mentions our spiritual adversary, and with the word “but” returns to his grand subject of what our Lord and Savior has done for us. Whenever you see the word “but” pay attention.²¹

God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

⁵ Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

⁶ And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

⁷ That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

⁸ For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

⁹ Not of works, lest any man should boast.

¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.²²

²¹ An example is Romans 6:23: “For the wages of sin is death, BUT (emphasis added) the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

²² See Appendix N.

Compare this process, described in verses five through ten above, to a recruitment, training, and deployment process for a soldier. Just as enlistment is the entry portal into military service, salvation – delivery from death and sin and entry into life and right relationship with Him – being born again, or “born from on high” as described in John chapter three, is the entry portal into God’s service (verse 5). God has an eternal intent for those He gathers to His service, that of glory and relationship (verse 6) and here He expresses that high spiritual intent. Verse seven reveals our Divine Commander’s heartfelt leadership and commitment to us as he brings us into His army.

Further, verse seven begs a question: “For whom is this ‘display’ of trophies of grace intended, these undeserving saved ones who are recruited into service and family?” It appears the viewers of this display will be of two parts: the obedient angels and the redeemed of mankind who will forever praise the generosity of God, the fallen angels and the unrepentant sinners who will forever regret their rebellion. Psalm 8:1-2 comes to mind as it mentions the praise of small children contrasted with the rebellion of the evil one: *“O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens. Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.”*

¹¹ Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;

At this point it would be wise to go back into the Old or Former Testament²³ to Genesis chapter 17 where God made unchangeable promises to Abraham and his descendants (all anchored in the giving, merciful, and everlasting elements of God's character), a covenant with a sign, or a reminder of that event. The sign was circumcision (*literally cutting around*), or the removal of the foreskin from the male baby's sexual organ. Bloody. Dramatic. So was the cross. For the Old Testament believer, circumcision was a sign of inclusion in the people of Israel.

With that background in mind, we can better how the word circumcision can be symbolic of the Jewish people.²⁴ Remember, the word "gentile" (*goyim* being the plural form in Hebrew) to the Jewish mind described every human outside the covenant of Abraham.

12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:

13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

²³ Adherents of Judaism call it the TANAKH, an acronym for its three parts, the TORAH (The Law received by Moses), NAVIM (Prophets), and KETUVIM (Writings – the poetical books and Daniel). It is understandable when some find the word "Old Testament" offensive as it is not "worn out" or "out-of-date."

²⁴ When one word stands for a whole, it is a figure of speech called a "metonymy," such as "All hands on deck!" On a sailing ship where hands and arms and backs did the heavy work, the one body part represented the whole person.

14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;

15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;

16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

18 For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;

21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:

22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

Do you see the foundation Paul is laying here? It is something new to his readers. Before Christ came into the world, there was great separation between Jew and Gentile. Sadly, this separation and even animosity is still in the world today. The building “fitly framed together” that “growth unto an holy temple in the Lord” is a grand family of believers from all around the world. Gentile and Jew in one

spiritual army if you will. We have chosen to study Ephesians from a mission-oriented military perspective. We do the text no harm in doing this. The militaries of all countries are great “melting pots” where not metals, but different ethnic backgrounds are combined. The result is something new – a new way of thinking. New methods. New goals. A new sense of belonging. A new mission.

Recommendation. Go back and read this last section of Ephesians again with the idea of God reconciling differences, and unifying purposes, and combining different backgrounds into one grand spiritual family centered around the cross.

Ephesians 3 King James Version (KJV)

1 For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles²⁵,

Paul risked his life to establish the church at Ephesus. In his prison he rejoices to hear of their growth in faith and numbers. Unable to go to that city in the flesh, he meets them in prayer.

²⁵ Ephesians is one of Paul’s “prison epistles.” Can you imagine the explosiveness of colonial Roman society of the First Century? Rome trying to keep order while extracting wealth from conquered lands. The religious establishment of Israel jockeying to stay in power. Some of Paul’s accusers were gentiles (like the silversmiths of Ephesus described in Acts 19) while others were Jewish authorities “licensed to operate” by the Romans (see Acts 22). The Apostle was imprisoned more than once. For those behind bars now or in the past, it makes the Bible more approachable to know that many Bible characters and penmen were once prisoners: Joseph, Daniel, Jeremiah, Paul, the Apostles Peter and John.

² If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:

³ How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,

⁴ Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)

Remember, a Bible mystery is an event that is not revealed until the correct time – the “kairos” time described earlier.

⁵ Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;

⁶ That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:

Even in the Former Testament there are foreshadowings of this great truth. Consider the non-Jews who embraced the faith of Israel: Rahab (a repentant Canaanite prostitute, by the way) of Jericho, Ruth the widowed woman of Moab (an enemy tribe) who became King David’s grandmother, Jethro the father-in-law of Moses.

⁷ Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.

⁸ Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;

Note again here that *grace* is *given*²⁶, for by definition it is a gift. It cannot be earned. God took the initiative and sent Christ to die for the sins of mankind. “While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” says Romans 5:8.

⁹ And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

¹⁰ To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God²⁷,

¹¹ According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:

¹² In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.

¹³ Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.

¹⁴ For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

¹⁵ Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

¹⁶ That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;

²⁶ *C(h)aris* is the word here for “grace” and its root is *c(h)ar* or “gift.”

²⁷ This verse reflects the glorious “portrait of grace” described in Ephesians 2:6-7. Those verses deserve long reflection by followers of Christ as they provide an insight to the heart of God Almighty toward us poor and sinful folk. Praise God! He has an eternal purpose for us!

17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God²⁸.

PART TWO – THE SCHOOL OF THE COMPANY

20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

At the time this manual is being written, there exists a very low view of the “organized church” among not a few Christian leaders and many followers of Christ. This low view is understandable given the moral failures and greed of many church officials. Such failures encourage the evil one and his followers and discourage the saints.

Don’t give up on the church! These verses tell us the church of the Bible is an everlasting and precious institution. Let us fight for the church and not abandon it!

Let us examine the doxology of verses 20 and 21 above. As an aid to memory, you can see a “pentagon of A’s” in the first verse: “Now unto Him that is ABLE to do exceedingly

²⁸ In Romans 8 Paul uses similar “three dimensional” imagery to display the immense superiority of God’s love and provision as compared to our minute (in comparison) needs.

ABOVE ALL that we ASK or think, ACCORDING to the power that worketh in us,”

Is this power individual? Is it collective? Is it personal?

Keep reading: “Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.”

Aha! The Holy Spirit has revealed to Paul that God intends²⁹ to set up “glory stations” on planet Earth in which Christ’s followers will invest themselves toward the end of building up people in the faith and spreading the good news of Salvation in Christ. When you set Christ’s Great Commission expressed in Matthew’s gospel;

“All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to obey all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” (Matthew 28:18-20)

This isn’t some kind of comic book or Hollywood or lying spirit power, this is the Salvation Power of God. Remember, trooper, Jesus’ very name means “Jehovah Saves!”

Ephesians 4 King James Version (KJV)

²⁹ The other three gospels and the book of Acts also contain statements of the same “final orders” from “The Commander-In-Chief of the Armies of Heaven.”

1 I therefore,³⁰ the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk³¹ worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;

3 Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;

5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

Unity based in the absolute truth of God's word is in view here. Consider the central confession of Judaism, the "Shema Yisrael" is found in Deuteronomy chapter six which says, "Hear, O, Israel, the LORD your God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." (Deuteronomy 6:4-5³²)

³⁰ "What is the therefore there for?" An excellent guide to interpreting scripture. Wherever you find the word, look for the answer to that question in the previous paragraph!

³¹ Paul the beloved Pharisee, student of Gamaliel who was student and son-in-law of Hillel, one of the greatest rabbis of ancient Israel, likely was very intentional in the use of this verb "walk." *Halakalah* in Hebrew, is indeed "to walk," but to a Pharisee meant the consistency between inner faith and the actions of everyday life. In this teaching the Pharisees were wise and Biblically correct. It was their "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:9) which drew the Master's scorn.

³² When printed in all capitals, **LORD**, the Divine Name "JVHV" or Jehovah or Yahweh is found in the Hebrew text. This name can be

7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

Not jewels or gold or platinum or stocks or bonds did Christ give, but as we will see, but *people empowered for service* were the gift given to the church that it might live and might expand and might prosper as verses 3:20-21 predict above.

9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?

10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

Christ left the glory of heaven and became a man so He could be the willing sacrifice for the sins of mankind. He taught us how to live victoriously through vigilant obedience to the Holy Spirit's guidance. He died on a cruel Roman cross and rose from the grave on the third day as prophesied in Scripture. He now reigns from heaven. He left behind eleven disciples with orders to spread worldwide the good news of free salvation in Christ. This series of events is clear from the gospels³³.

translated "The Living God," or "The Covenant God," or "I Am." When printed **Lord** the Hebrew word "Adonai," translated "Master" is found. This helps us, for example, to understand better the opening of Psalm 110 which says, "The LORD said to my Lord, sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool."

³³ In addition (and not in contrast) to this understanding, some Bible scholars believe that during the three days between crucifixion and resurrection Christ descended further, into the abode of the dead, and

11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

12 For the perfecting³⁴ of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

It is a sad thing when children never thrive physically or mentally. So it is when the child of God remains a “baby Christian” never being built up in their faith, never trained to communicate the gospel to others, to usher other fellow-sinners into the kingdom, to coach other believers into maturity and thus obey Christ’s final orders.

Let’s not pass over that phrase “*speaking the truth in love.*” In the context of the local church, Paul is coaching us to make sure when we have something critical to tell a fellow believer, that we first keep in mind that we are sinners saved by the grace of God. We cannot dictate from a position of superiority.

preached the message of salvation through faith in Him to the souls there awaiting judgment.

³⁴ *Completing*

A workaday example would be the “praise sandwich.” Folks in leadership positions (like parents, coaches, bosses) who are wise and have something critical to say to a subordinate will “sandwich” the often discouraging words in between encouraging words.

16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.³⁵

17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,

Paul is a good drill sergeant here. He uses the “military communication method” of “Tell them what you are going to tell them, then Tell them, then Tell them what you told them.” In verse one he says “Walk like a Christian.” In verses 2-16 he gives very practical and specific behaviors for family life, professional life, and for “body life” in the church. In verse 17 he says “Walk like I just told you to walk.” We need to remember this isn’t just Paul. This is God the Holy Spirit speaking through Paul.

An old preacher once said “The gospel gun has two barrels. One barrel points toward the hearer and one toward the speaker. Whenever the speaker gives a blast outward, he has to be ready to take one himself.” We who are saved should

³⁵ The Bible has more to say on this point in I Corinthians 12, where Paul compares members of the local church to parts of the human body which though different and having dissimilar functions, work together smoothly to complete their assigned tasks.

be grateful and caring enough to tell others about what we have seen and heard of the mercy and majesty of God!

18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:

19 Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

This is the bleak existence of the person who knows not the abundant life promised by Christ when He said, *“I have come that ye might have life, and that ye might have it more abundantly.”* (John 10:10). Note the key words of verses 18 and 19: darkened, alienated, ignorance, blindness of heart, past feeling, lasciviousness (fulfilling sinful physical desires), uncleanness, greediness. *“The way of the sinner is hard”* says Proverbs, and to every sinner Jesus said, *“Come unto me all ye who are weak and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for my yoke is easy, and my burden light.”* There are two pathways open to every person. One leads to glory and the other to destruction³⁶.

20 But ye have not so learned Christ;

21 If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:

³⁶ Psalm 1 gives a vivid contrast between these paths, and warns of three steps that go down from good to evil. Turn to that short Psalm now and consider those two destinations. Every believer, like every soldier, no matter how mature, must be vigilant to stay true to their oath and duty in order to finish well. Hiding Psalm 1 in your heart will help greatly in this ongoing private struggle.

22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;

24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

“Put off . . .” “Put on . . .” is a Bible principle with great power – the power of the Holy Spirit behind it. Note the three steps open to every believer: 1. Put off the habits and thinking of the unsaved, 2. Depend on the Holy Spirit to empower you in the new life. Obey what God commands and God will make Himself real to you is the promise of John 14:21: *“He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me. He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifest to him.”* 3. Live the obedient and abundant life in the power of Christ’s sinless life and His everlasting life.³⁷ Just like a civilian puts away their old clothes and puts on the uniform of their country when they enter military service, that uniform carries with it history and tradition. That new clothing symbolizes a new life. So it should be for the believer. Put off the thinking and habits of a person living for self and for pleasure at the expense of others. Put on the new life that Christ, the founder and pioneer of our faith, has provided for every soldier of the Cross dedicated to His service.

25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.

³⁷ The Book of Hebrews speaks of these two factors in reverence and awe. When you study Hebrews, look for those concepts and ponder what effect they should have on the daily walk of individual Christians – including you!

26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:

27 Neither give place to the devil.

28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

29 Let 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.

30 And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

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

It is wonderful and fruitful spiritual discipline each morning after Bible reading and prayer to consciously pray verse 31 above (“breathing out the bad air”) and then pray verse 32 (“breathing in the good air”).³⁸

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

“This is impossible!” you might say, to answer good for evil, to forgive others for their nastiness toward you. Yes, my friend, in the flesh it is impossible, but in Christ it is not only

³⁸ The list of the “sweet” fruits of the Holy Spirit given in Galatians chapter 5 are also an excellent substitute for the “bitter” fruit of sinful and all-too-human habit. They are: Love, Joy, Peace, Longsuffering (patience with others), Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness (putting God and others before your own interests), Temperance (not following burning desires of the sinful flesh).

possible, it is commanded. And such a joyful command if we will only obey it. Many the time has this father reviewed verse 32 with children in conflict. Forget the “he said, she said, he hit me first,” young ones in Christ, but instead consciously bring to mind the fact that you once were a rebellious, dirty brat of a sinner, and Christ forgave you anyway – while you were still a sinner!³⁹

With these verses we close out the school of the company. Our manual now moves on to the “school of the squad,” where families and small “units” of believers like circles of friends, or fellow-believers in neighborhoods, or barracks, or ships can support each other and grow and become useful in the struggle to come.

PART THREE – THE SCHOOL OF THE SQUAD

Ephesians 5 King James Version (KJV)

1 Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;

2 And 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.

Here Paul returns to image of the walk of faith, bringing to mind the opening words of Psalm 1: *“Blessed is the man who walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.”*

³⁹ Romans 5:8

Sweet-smelling savour? The Former, or Old Testament records how the LORD God is pleased when righteous burnt offerings were presented on the designated altar. Further, sweet-smelling incense compounded according to God's specific recipe was to be in continuous use in His temple. The smoke was symbolic of the prayers of believers. The image before us in Ephesians is that of God being well-pleased with Christ's sacrifice on our behalf, and declaring that Christ's holiness and sinlessness has for the believer granted access to God's holy realm of heaven. Speaking of this sacrifice, Isaiah 53:6 reads, "*All we like sheep have gone astray, every one to his own way, but the LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.*"

Remember, this is the practical, "behaviorally specific" section of the book where Paul challenges his readers to "Walk worthy of the vocation wherein you are called." So it is when a soldier's conduct and habits begin to slack off and "get civilian again" or wander out of bounds and a reminder of the oath of enlistment or commissioning is needed, so it is necessary for followers of Christ to keep on track toward maturity, usefulness, and the "Well done, good and faithful servant!" "performance evaluation" from the Lord's lips at the end of our days.

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.

⁵For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

⁶ Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.

Picture this. A caltrop was a medieval equivalent of a landmine. It was four or more iron spikes pointing outward so one spike was always pointing up. Many of them sown on a battlefield (or smaller ones on the deck of a ship) would take any horse or warrior who stepped on a caltrop out of the battle, and instantly at the mercy of the enemy. So it is with the behaviors listed above. God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life. Health, joy, family, meaningful relationships. The weaving of a beautiful tapestry of life onto the background of voluntary obedience to the wise counsel of God expressed in His word the Holy Bible. What do you do when your car or computer or any gadget “coughs?” You get out the operating manual and troubleshoot the problem so you can get authoritative advice from the designers. In the troubles of mind, body, and spirit that are common to every person on Earth today, and every person who ever lived, God’s “Operator’s Manual,” the Bible, is open and available and prepared by the Holy Spirit to guide every child of God around the caltrops the evil one has sown in our paths.

Many people outside the simple Bible-based faith ridicule those who are heaven-bound because they do not partake of questionable or outright sinful behaviors. The Apostle John wrote on this subject, *“Love not the world, neither the things of the world, for the lust⁴⁰ of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life are not of the Father, but are of the*

⁴⁰ Literally, anything that “gets you hot” emotionally.

world. And this world, with its lusts, is passing away, but he who does the will of God will abide forever.” (I John 2:15-16)

⁷ Be not ye therefore partakers with them.

⁸ For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:

⁹ (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)

Oh how precious is the Holy Spirit who guides the Christian into all truth, and who takes the things of God and makes them real to us. In the Gospel of John chapters 14-17 our precious Jesus, in the upper room Passover observance with His followers, explained how He would not leave them on their own but how the Holy Spirit would guide them internally (conscience, thought, and spirit) as He had guided them externally (sight and sound and touch). Please read those chapters at your first opportunity and look for Jesus’ teaching on the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the believer’s life. Why not read those chapters right now?

¹⁰ Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.

¹¹ And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

¹² For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.

¹³ But all things that are reprovèd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.

¹⁴ Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

15 See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,

16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

“Circumspectly” here literally means “keep your head on a swivel” or “keep your wits about you” or “be on the lookout” or “maintain situational awareness.” Most excellent advice seeing we live out our everyday lives in enemy territory. In his combat memoir a WWII P-47 Thunderbolt fighter pilot recorded how he learned the silk scarf around his neck was more than just a dashing accessory. He forgot his one day and after a combat patrol that included intense dogfighting, his neck was raw from constantly scanning the skies. The fighter pilot who flies straight and level for more than a few seconds, or who is not constantly on the lookout for the enemy will not live long in combat. So it is for anyone in the voluntary service of the King of Kings. While it is true that nothing can snatch the believer out of God’s hand,⁴¹ every believer is just one bad decision, one sin, away from shame and broken relationships. Let us pray that our Merciful God in heaven will protect us from our own stupidity and selfishness! How quickly our attention is drawn to the “latest shiny object” and away from God’s best for us.⁴²

17 Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.

⁴¹ See Romans Chapter 8. Remember where to find that chapter, for every Christian will need it in times of extreme trial and uncertainty!

⁴² Biblical stewardship of our time is SO important. The “carnival of cheap tricks” that is the world can steal our time and strength in so many ways. This important topic is covered briefly in Appendix M.

18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

19 Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;

20 Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;

How do we gain skill and strength and endurance? By exercising our bodies and by pushing the limits of what we can do. The spiritual disciplines described above will strengthen us internally. Regular reminders of the power of God expressed through the Holy Bible will make us stronger to resist sin, and will make His will clearer to us in our Christian walk. This section of Ephesians is very practical and immediately useful. See how the following section is based on our voluntary humility or submission not only to authority figures, but to the most important people in our lives – the members of our immediate family⁴³.

21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

⁴³ Alien to human nature is God's plan for our relationships. The sinful human heart wants others to obey and submit and serve it. God says *"He who would be greatest among you, let him be the servant, for even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life as a ransom for many."* (Mark 10:45)

23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.

24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.

25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.

29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:

Christian marriage can be thought of us a triangle, with God Almighty at the top and on the bottom, the husband at one corner and wife at the other corner. Man and woman have individual relationship and responsibility to God in the vertical dimension, and as husband and wife have responsibility and relationship with each other in the horizontal dimension. As both individual believers draw closer to God in obedience and submission to His divine will, they will blessedly be closer to each other in the horizontal dimension. Oh yes, this concept is foreign to the world, and the world is the poorer for it! II Corinthians 5:17 says, *“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new*

creature. Old things are passed away. Behold, all things are become new.” New ways of thinking. New relationships. Relationships made more profound and permanent through obedience to God’s commands and “operating in accordance with the designer’s specifications!”

³⁰ For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

³¹ For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.

The author would be an irresponsible ingrate not to commend Christian marriage to readers, and to endorse God’s plans and commands in this essential area of life – based on forty years plus of marriage and much of that transcontinental and transoceanic changes of duty station!

³² This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

³³ Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

This verse recaps what the Holy Spirit, speaking through Paul, taught above. In the Bible repetition is significant. It underlines importance and at times signals immediacy.⁴⁴

Ephesians 6 King James Version (KJV)

⁴⁴ In Genesis 41:32 Joseph explains to Pharaoh the doubling of his dream signaled “the thing will soon come to pass.”

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

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

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

4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

See the balance here, the continued theme of “mutual submission.” Children have a God-given responsibility to honor their parents (a lifelong responsibility). Parents are commanded not to be tyrants over their children, but to “coach them” and prepare them for interdependent life in permanent relationship with God and family. Recall how in the fourth chapter we are instructed to “share the truth in love” and to “be kind one to another.” All of these interpersonal behaviors are expected of all children of Almighty God, for He forgave us our sins, and expects us to forgive others when they harm us. Friend, there is rich and renewing Holy Spirit power in this concept of forgiveness, if we will only be obedient to the word of God.

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

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

7 With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:

⁸ Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.

⁹ And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.⁴⁵

Again, balance and symmetry based on a mutual submission, a complementarity of roles where both sides of the relationship are striving to be obedient to God.

PART FOUR – THE SCHOOL OF THE ARMY

God’s combined plan for all the Bible-based churches on earth, is His Great Commission which we read in Matthew 28:18-20.⁴⁶ Individual born-again Christians obeying God in their own families and among their circles of influence, combine skills and gifts together with other believers in local churches to be recruiting stations and training camps, to continue our military imagery. These companies of believers in every land and of every tongue combine spiritually⁴⁷ to form the “great congregation.” It is wonderful to travel in foreign lands and to visit local

⁴⁵ Please read the one-chapter book of Philemon on this matter. Onesimus is the master (over half the population of the Roman Empire was in bondage of slavery!) and Philemon the master. See how God, through Paul, called Philemon to act as a believer should toward Philemon.

⁴⁶ See Appendix H for His final orders in all four gospels and Acts.

⁴⁷ This writer sees no basis in the Bible for organizations or authorities ruling over local churches. This topic is so large it would deserve treatment in another book.

assemblies and feel the fraternal bond that the children of God share.

A common fight is shared with these “companies” (congregations) spreading the gospel all over the world. Spiritual warfare is the fight described in this last section of the epistle and of this manual.

¹⁰ Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

Here begins the final section of Paul’s marching orders to the company stationed in Ephesus. He knows their only hope is to be connected to the one Mighty in Battle. Paul was no stranger to beatings, to stonings, to deprivations.⁴⁸

¹¹ Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

Comrade-in-arms, please read verse eleven again, but last phrase first: “That ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil, put on the whole armor of God.” It is logical to observe that if we go into battle against the devil without the complete armor (also called a “panoply”) of God we will be unable to survive on that battlefield. And why would that be . . . ?

¹² For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

⁴⁸ See II Corinthians chapters 10-12

Ah, the enemy is ancient, and stronger than a man, is not single but many, and is skilled in weapons beyond human forging or imagination.

For a fight like this, a believer engaged in spiritual warfare (and remember that every child of God is already a target for the evil one and is in the fight already!) will need equipment and weaponry superior to the enemy's.⁴⁹

13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Stand. The context is the Roman battle formation. Shield in front. Short sword in hand. Shield-to-shield protection. Drilled, skilled fighting power with each warrior controlling the fighting space and interlocked with the fighting spaces of those to right and left and ahead and behind. Absorb the push. Fend off missiles with the shield. When ordered make the *testudo*, or turtle formation (with shields above and all around) to form a barrier to protect from arrows and thrown or slung projectiles.

14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

We can understand these to be Christian virtues. First, the absolute revealed truth of God contained in His holy word, the Bible. This is not the relative “truth” the modern world compiles by comparing human to human, but rather a gift from God, and not open to human censorship. Appropriately

⁴⁹ Paul's years as a high-visibility political prisoner in the custody of Roman soldiers gave him an intimate familiarity with their equipment and tactics. We also know that he told soldiers about Christ and that some became his brothers in the faith.

these Roman “battle pants” protected the abdomen which has no skeletal protection for the vital organs and blood vessels within it. Have you ever experienced such a shock or danger that you felt immediate nausea when your “guts churned?” If you have you can understand why the ancients saw “the bowels” as the seat of emotion. Here Paul appears to show how the truth of God protects us better than our own emotions.

Second, the ribcage and the heart, lungs, and core muscles needed for battle are protected by a breastplate of confident courage based in obedience to God’s commands and right relationship with God Himself. Only Christ is righteous, yet through the miraculous gifting from God, the believer is seen by Him as being righteous through the sacrifice of Christ on the cross.

¹⁵ And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

¹⁶ Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation,

Physically, what does the helmet protect? The “command center” of the body, the brain. Sight, smell, hearing, voice – all important sensors and signaling “devices” on the battlefield are all on or in the head.

Spiritually, there is Bible-based knowledge that produces right thinking. This right thinking is for the Christian is a result of following the “*lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path*” described in Psalm 119:108.

Salvation, or being rescued from the power and penalty of sin is the first step in the Christian journey of faith. Let us remember here that the very name Jesus means “The Salvation of Jehovah.” Jesus Christ, if He is indeed our Savior and Master, deserves to reign also in our thought life, does He not? It is perhaps a crude observation to quote the “mob movie” line that “The fish rots from the head,” but sin is aptly defined as “an evil thought entertained.”⁵⁰ Another “animal illustration” applies that temptation is like a bird that lands on your head (unwelcome and not your fault), but sin is letting that bird build a nest in your hair (inviting it to stay and take up residence).

Lesson? Don’t take your helmet off on the battlefield!

and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

And such a sword! The book of Hebrews⁵¹ in verse 4:12 says, “*For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*”

Every Christian soldier needs to be competent in God’s word. How do you become competent in any field of endeavor or warfare skill? By the application of correct principles and drill of proper application of those principles. The two-part equation of obedient Christian living contained

⁵⁰ Picture this: Temptation is like a bird that lands on your head. Sin is letting that bird build a nest in your hair!

⁵¹ A mightily encouraging book of the Bible, which very likely (to this student) was anonymously authored by Paul of Tarsus.

in John 14:21 discussed earlier comes to mind again (comments in parentheses):

“He that hath my commandments” (knows the Bible) *“and keepeth them”* (obeys those commandments) *“he it is that loveth me”* (and if we don’t know or keep my commandments, by this verse’s definition, we don’t really love Christ – convicting but absolutely true) *“and he that loveth me will be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and I will manifest myself to him.”*

Without a sword, a soldier may be able to survive a battle, but certainly no damage will be done to the enemy, and properly expected service will not be rendered.

¹⁸ Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

¹⁹ And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,

²⁰ For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

Prayer is our “sacred weapon” that links the “whole army of God,” the whole universal church, in a way that is instant, miraculous and is beloved of God. This dynamic “weapon” has different aspects including supplication where we bring our requests before God. Intercession is begging Gods help on behalf of others. “For all saints” surely includes those

unknown believers in other “companies” or assemblies around the world.⁵²

Paul, by his own account, was often fearful and trembling as he proclaimed the gospel⁵³ in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East to Romans, Gauls, Greeks, Hebrews, Syrians, and perhaps even Spaniards (see Romans 15). In our own human strength, we cannot expect to stand up and declare the truth of the Christian gospel. We must obey His command to testify (like in a court of law!) of what we have seen and what we have heard.

Friend, you may be bedridden and feeble; unable to travel or even to attend the services of your local church, but you can pray. You may be elderly or ill, but you can lift up missionaries and pastor and persecuted brothers and sisters far away. You may be a child still at home, but you can travel over sea and land to pray for others so very far away.

God loves His children, and He relishes their prayers. The book of Revelation tells us there is an altar of incense in heaven where the prayers of the saints fill the heavenly temple with the glorious and fresh and invigorating aroma of the praise, the thanksgiving, the requests, the “I love you’s” of all those who pray.

21 But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things:

⁵² Appendix F contains encouragement for Bible-based prayer.

⁵³ I Corinthians 2:2-3, “For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and fear, and in much trembling.”

22 Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts.

“General” Paul is in chains and he cannot travel, so he sends a personal messenger, not a servant, but a brother” and a “faithful minister,” or servant in the Lord. Remember, Christ’s ministry was in-the-flesh or “incarnational.” If you are His, you are His vessel, his royal messenger. In the military sense, you are the commander’s “runner” who carries personal messages to those who await God’s orders.

In 2 Corinthians 5:20 and following, Paul teaches that all believers are “ambassadors for Christ” and “ministers of reconciliation” between sinful man and holy God. An ambassador serves in a foreign land (Is not every born-again believer now a citizen of heaven and no longer an “earth dweller” as unbelievers are described in Revelation?) in the embassy of their homeland. Ambassadors, by the way, hold an equivalent rank of a three-star general or admiral. They deliver official messages on behalf of their president. Every gospel messenger speaks for God and is on the King-of-King’s business.

23 Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Can you sense the connected care Paul expresses in these closing words? God used Paul to plant the church in Ephesus. He labored and suffered there. Like a spiritual midwife he assisted in the spiritual birth of believers there.

24 Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.

Bravely, and warmly, and in few words, Paul commends his beloved Ephesian company to God. And we, two millennia later, and in other companies, are part of a “long red line” of blood-bought believers who make up the “army of the faithful” at the command of God alone.

May God keep us true to our “enlistment oath” go God that every one of us took when we entered into the service of Jehovah Tsabaoth, the “Commander-In-Chief of the Army of God.”

FINAL WORDS

This little book is finished, yet God’s mighty Book of Books, the Bible, lies open before us to guide and to direct:

*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.
(Psalm 119:108)*

As we close our time together, let us review how God has foreseen our needs and has given us four broad avenues of learning and service:

INDIVIDUALLY, in the “school of the soldier” as each individual Christian “unpacks” the wonderful truths gifted to every believer.

IN FAMILY AND AMONG FRIENDS – in “the school of the squad” where practical faith is lived out and passed on to new generations.

IN A LOCAL CHURCH – in “the school of the company” where God is praised, where the gospel is preached, where believers are trained and taught, and where a body of believers work together to advance the gospel.

AS A UNIQUE PART OF HIS “EVERYWHERE CHURCH” - in “the school of the army” in the sharing, praying, suffering, rejoicing worldwide movement of Bible-based, historic Christianity.

A Sunday School teacher once pointed out to a children’s class a cluster of grapes on the vine behind the church, pointing out the leaves and roots and tendrils and even the seeds within a single grape, as he illustrated the opening words of John 15 where Christ, on the night He was betrayed was still teaching His followers. The teacher plucked the cluster of grapes and hid it up on a bookshelf where the cleaners wouldn’t find it. The following week the children were wide-eyed when they saw the shriveled, brown, and dead cluster. They understood, as Jesus had intended, that to be a healthy, productive believer, we must stay connected to Christ Himself. May god impress that lesson upon us all.

To the greater glory of God.

Appendixes – Subjects Worthy of Further Study⁵⁴:

- A. How to Get from Heaven from Your Present Location (p. 60)
- B. Discipleship Means Lifelong Learning (p. 63)
- C. Hiding God’s Word in Your Heart (p. 64)
- D. Beginning a Bible Reading Program (p. 65)
- E. The Transforming Power of the Proverbs (p. 66)
- F. Prayer in the Believer’s Life (p. 67)
- G. The Obedient Christian In Action (p. 68)
- H. Christ’s Great Commission (p. 69)
- I. Spiritual Survival As a Lone Christian (p. 70)
- J. Jesus Christ, God’s “Right Hand Man” in Scripture (p. 71)
- K. Jesus, the “God of Hosts” (p. 73)
- L. Sharing Your Faith With Others (p. 74)
- M. Time Management (p. 75)
- N. God’s Recruiting, Training, Deployment Process (Ephesians 2:6-10) (p. 76)
- O. Preparing a Bible Lesson (p. 77)
- P. Jesus’ Model Prayer (the Lord’s Prayer) and His Great Commission (p. 78)
- Q. Leading Folks to Christ along the “Roman Road” (p. 79)
- R. RU Recovery Ministry’s Ten Principles (p. 80)
- S. Faithful Christian Ministries and Resources (p. 81)

⁵⁴ In order to keep the manual small and the read short, much worthy and useful resources were held for these brief appendixes.

A. How to get to Heaven from your present location

Jesus spoke about being “born again,” or “born from on high⁵⁵” in the third chapter of John’s gospel. John 3:16 says, *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only (or uniquely) begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”*

There is no simpler example in the Bible of a person being born again than that of the believing thief who was crucified beside Jesus. See what the gospel of Luke (chapter 23 verses 39-43) records:

39. And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.

40. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?

41. And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.

42. And he said unto Jesus, Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.

43. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

Two men, one hell-bound as he refuses to trust in Jesus, the one named “Salvation of Jehovah,” the other, just as guilty as his companion in crime, by calling Jesus “Lord,” confesses with his mouth that Christ Jesus is Lord and believes in his heart that Jesus would rise from the grave.

⁵⁵ The prefix “*ana*” occurring before the verb for birth means both “again” and “from above.”

Romans chapter ten is a great “salvation story” portion of the Bible. See how the Luke account parallels Paul’s description of the process of being born again:

8. But what saith it (the law)? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach;

9. That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

10. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

11. For the scripture saith, Whosoever beliveth on Him shall not be ashamed.⁵⁶

12. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.

13. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

No human writer, and definitely not this one, can add anything to the clear meaning of the Bible in the matter of salvation. Pray for God’s guidance in this area and the Holy Spirit will enlighten your mind. Follow the path the believing thief took to glory:

1. Confess to God that you are a sinner deserving of punishment.

⁵⁶ Isaiah 28:16

2. Tell God you believe the Bible promise that you believe that Jesus Christ is what the Bible says He is – the Son of God who died to pay for the sins of mankind, and who rose again from the grave.
3. Trust God and believe the truth preached by John the Baptizer in John 3:36:

“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”

B. Discipleship Means Lifelong Learning

The New Testament word for “disciple” can be translated “learner.” The word *mathematics* literally means *that which teaches me what I do not yet know.*” In the ancient world, teachers had a group of student-followers around them who listened to what the teacher had to say, and who observed how the teacher lived, and who learned if what the teacher taught could be applied to the practical issues of life. Jesus’ disciples had three years to accompany their Master. A powerful testimony to the effectiveness of their period of apprenticeship as His disciples is that most all of the faithful eleven Apostles⁵⁷ died as martyrs rather than deny their Savior.

How can we living today be faithful disciples of Christ? We can obey the commandment of Christ to “continue in (His) word” contained in chapter 8 of John’s gospel:

Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; (John 8:31)

We can remain in Him (emphasized throughout chapter 15 of the gospel of John) as grapes (us) that are connected to Him (the vine) mature, and grow, and produce more and more fruit through seeds falling to the ground and sprouting and in turn maturing and producing more fruit.

Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. (John 15:8)

May God bless our lifelong process of learning and obeying!

⁵⁷ Literally “sent out ones.” See Acts 1:2, and 21-11.

C. Hiding God's Word in Your Heart

Psalm 119 verses 9 and 11 ask and then answer a vital question when they say, “Wherewithal (how) shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word.” “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.”

Scripture memorization is a big first step toward “hiding God's word in our hearts.” Here are some ideas on how to memorize Bible passages:

1. Repetition. Read it over and over. Write it out repeatedly.
2. Listen to the passage on a recording. Learning theory tells us that if we use multiple “learning gates” (hearing, sight, writing, speaking) we learn more and learn it faster.
3. Make your own little sketches. Psalm 119:54 is a precious verse. It says, “Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.” Picture this: A musical note drawn inside the tablets of the law, with the tablets on the back of a little trailer looking like a shack on wheels. “Thy statutes” (the tablets) have been my songs (the note) in the house (the shack) of my pilgrimage (with wheels, the shack is now a trailer!)
4. Use the Navigators' Topical Memory System to get you started. Their “wheel diagram” presented in a separate appendix has the verses for each topic. Their hints and methods are definitely a God-send to anyone hoping to memorize scripture.

D. Beginning a Bible Reading Program

At a normal reading speed, the entire Holy Bible, Former and New Testaments can be read in 72 hours. 72 hours times 6 minutes per hour means the Bible can be read in 4,320 minutes. 4,320 divided by 365 days a year works out to be 12 minutes a day of reading.

A godly pastor once asked an older Christian he admired, “Sir, what is the secret to your deep faith.” The older brother in Christ answered immediately, “No Bible? No breakfast!”

We aren’t talking legalism here, or following a rule for a rule’s sake. Instead, we are talking about the power of God transforming the believer’s life. Everything we need to know about God is contained in the Bible, so let’s get busy reading it from cover to cover.

While there are many ways to approach this task, here is a simple one that your author has been using for several years now. Four chapters a day:

- ✓ An Old Testament chapter
- ✓ A Psalm
- ✓ The chapter of Proverbs corresponding with the day of the month
- ✓ A New Testament chapter

This plan will take you through Proverbs each month, the Old Testament once a year, and the New Testament twice a year. It has the advantage of being simple to follow and you can’t get behind of a written schedule or chart and have to catch up.

You will be amazed by how the Bible fits together perfectly!

E. The Transforming Power of the Proverbs

Proverbs is a treasure-store of wisdom which if studied and learned and integrated into our thinking will enrich our lives.

Most months have 31 days in them. The Book of Proverbs has 31 chapters. This “coincidence” points toward reading the chapter of Proverbs corresponding to the day of the month.

Its very practical topics include love, money, war, justice, temptation, government, work, wages, families, and philosophy to name but a handful.

The believer who exposes their thinking to the wisdom of the Book of Proverbs will be blessed by seeing things from God’s perspective.

While some chapters of Proverbs’ subjects are definite and focused on one aspect of the life of faith, other chapters are collections of sayings over a wide range of subjects. The new reader may be dismayed by an apparent “lack of organization” of the book, but with time and constant study, the Holy Spirit’s wisdom in “spreading out the guidance” will become apparent. Like the refrains of a song, or the seasons of the year, the encouraging words from Proverbs on money, on aging, on faith (and other real-world issues) will provide a long-term series of reminders of the goodness and provision of Almighty God.

The Holy Spirit can use a proverb as a wonderful witnessing tool to make a hearer think if it is offered with an opening like this, “The wisest man to ever live had this to say on this topic.” When the hearer asks who that was, you can say “King Solomon in the Book of Proverbs!”

F. Prayer in the Believer's Life

Prayer deserves its own book – no its own library! Consider these types of prayers:

- “Arrow Prayers” that are shot heavenward in a moment of need.
- Requests for blessings over meals, over trips, responses to requests from those in need.
- Daily commitment of activities and concerns to God's care.
- Dedicated seasons of prayer in which we invest blocks of time to communicating with God.

One new believer was asked, “Do you know how to pray?” and responded negatively. His friend advised, “Prayer is like talking to yourself with God listening. You can't lie to yourself, and you can't lie to Him.”

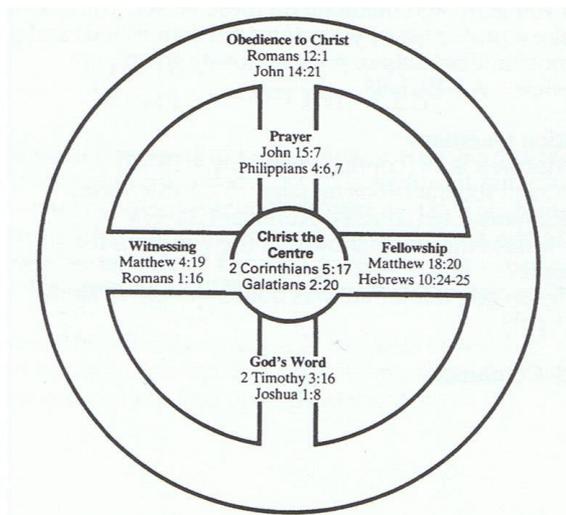
Here is a prayer discipline that can be followed when there is time to do so. Each aspect of prayer has a Psalm that goes with it:

CONFESSION	Psalm 51
ADORATION	Psalm 103
THANKSGIVING	Psalm 23
INTERCESSION	Psalm 127
SUPPLICATION	Psalm 130
AFTERGLOW	Psalm 133

A written record of prayer requests will be a great blessing when you see just how God answered in His wonderful way!

G. The Obedient Christian In Action

This is “Navigators Wheel” illustration is a very useful graphic illustration of the basics of Bible-based Christianity.



Note how Christ is the center, and that the power to live the obedient Christian life comes from Him, and is transmitted to the believer's life through four “spokes:” Gods word, Prayer, Fellowship, and Witnessing.

This picture isn't magic. It is a way that the Navigators and others have been coaching new believers for years to follow the way of the cross.

These verses are an excellent set to learn and to live by!

H. Christ's Great Commission

Hear what our Risen Lord Jesus Christ commanded His disciples, ancient and current, to do:

Matthew 28:18-20 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Mark 16:15 And He said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

Luke 24:46-49 Then opened He their understanding that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

John 20:21 Then said Jesus unto them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

Acts 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

We had better be busy about the King of Kings' work!

I. Spiritual Survival As a Lone Christian

The Christian faith is one of *community* with other believers, but sometimes Christians find themselves isolated in work or school or even in prison. When you find yourself in a situation as a “lone” believer, remember, you are NOT alone. Look at the Matthew 28:18-20 passage. It begins with Christ’s statement “**All power is given to me in heaven and on earth**” and ends with his promise “**Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the earth.**” In that transforming power, let us consider these concepts of a single believer instead of cowering alone, being a:

- ✓ Pioneer blazing a path for others to follow
- ✓ Lighthouse guiding others toward safety
- ✓ Billboard proclaiming the truth for all to see
- ✓ A living demonstration of the love of God
- ✓ The only “Bible” some have ever read
- ✓ An explorer of the depths of God’s grace

Man of our brothers and sisters in Christ are suffering forced isolations in house arrests, in prisons, in extreme conditions we cannot imagine.

No believer is ever alone. The Holy Spirit, the Comforter, is always with us, as Jesus promised. We can draw strength from the knowledge that all around the world brother and sister believers are worshiping and praying for us though they know us not.

Hebrews 13:3 says, “**Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.**”

J. Jesus Christ, God’s “Right Hand Man” in Scripture

As we devote ourselves to a life of reading and studying and obeying the Holy Bible, we will be blessed by recurring themes and phrases that will reinforce our faith. The identification of Jesus with the phrase “right hand” is such a blessing for it helps us to see our Savior’s work “woven” throughout the Bible.

Psalm 98:1

O sing unto the LORD a new song; for He hath done marvelous things: His right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory.

Psalm 118:16

The right hand of the LORD is exalted: the right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly.

Psalm 138:7

Though I walk in the midst of trouble, Thou wilt revive me: Thou shalt stretch forth Thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies, and Thy right hand shall save me.

Mark 16:19

So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.

Luke 22:69

Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God.

And David himself saith in the book of Psalms, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand.

Acts 5:31

Him hath God exalted with his right hand [to be] a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

Acts 7:55

But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God.

Hebrews 12:2

Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of [our] faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Revelation 1:6

And he had in His right hand seven stars: and out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance [was] as the sun shineth in his strength.

Revelation 5:7

And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.

K. Jesus, the “God of Hosts”

This manual has highlighted the military themes contained in the book of Ephesians. Here we will briefly consider an aspect of the Second Person of the Trinity brought out in Joshua 5:13-15. The scene is the night before the conquest of Jericho.

13. And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?

14. And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my Lord unto his servant?

15. And the captain of the LORD's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so.

The Hebrew words translated here “Captain of the Hosts of the LORD” are (in their root forms) Saar Tsaba Yehovah, and can also be translated “*The Prince or Commander-in-Chief*” of the “*Angel-Armies*” of “*The Living God.*” See in verse 13 how Joshua, the appointed successor to Moses, who had witnessed many miraculous deliverances, reacted. He fell on his face and worshipped his Divine Commander.

Brothers and sisters in arms, our God is no pacifist!

L. Sharing Your Faith With Others

Let's suppose a researcher found a cure for a terrible disease and then kept it secret. What kind of person would that researcher be?

Continue that line of reasoning when it comes to telling others about how to be born again.

If we are truly grateful for what God has given us, shouldn't we be telling others how they can escape the wrath of a just God who will not tolerate sin in His heaven?

The New Testament word for a person who shares their faith is "witness." Just what does a witness do in a court of law?

They are not the judge. Not the jury. Not the accused. Not the prosecutor. Not the defending lawyer.

Their only responsibility is to faithfully report what they have seen and what they have heard. That is what God calls his witnesses to do.

A human witness is powerless to draw or drag anyone else into the kingdom of God. Here are some things we can and we ought to do:

- ✓ Learn a gospel presentation.
- ✓ Carry a tract and small give-away New Testament with us.
- ✓ Give the hearer a bit of scripture to take away and ponder.
- ✓ Love people enough to learn about them and to be sensitive to openings to share.
- ✓ Pray for those we are privileged to give a kind word as we are prompted by the Holy Spirit.

M. Time Management

“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might, for there is no knowledge, nor wisdom, nor device in the grave, whither thou goest.”

Set Biblical Priorities. You can adapt this one to your own use:

1. Relationship with God
2. Relationship with your spouse
3. Relationship with your children
4. Great Commission
5. Earning Your Living
6. Protecting Your Health
7. Educating Your Mind
8. Recreation and Relaxation

These aren't "set in stone," but if you find yourself playing golf Saturday and Sunday and leaving wife and children at home to fend for themselves, something is out of whack.

If you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, you are "bought with a price" and God has a righteous claim on you as His servant. His wonderful plan for your life includes spending time with Him in prayer, and in Bible reading. The "No Bible, no breakfast" principle has helped many a Christian over these many years.

Do the important thing first!

N. God's Recruiting, Training, Deployment Process
(Ephesians 2:6-10)

It would indeed appear from this passage that God has work for His children to do, and He has that work in mind from the beginning to the end of a believer's life.

SPIRITUALLY DEAD, SINFUL PEOPLE, SAVED BY GRACE

Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

DESTINED FOR HEAVEN AND GOD'S PRESENCE

5. And hath raised us up together, and made us to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:
6. That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

WHERE WE WILL EVERLASTINGLY DISPLAY THE GREATNESS OF HIS FATHERLY, LOVING HEART

7. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of your selves; it is the gift of God:
8. Not of works,
9. lest any man should boast.

WE HAVE NO REASON TO BE PROUD, FOR THIS PROCESS IS OF GOD'S PLANNING AND HIS INITIATIVE.

10. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

WE ARE NEW CREATIONS IN CHRIST AND PARTICIPATE IN HIS WORK OF BRINGING THE GOOD NEWS TO ALL!

O. Preparing a Bible Lesson

YOU are somebody's Bible teacher because some day a friend or a family member is going to ask you the question, "what does this mean?" No matter how long you have walked with the Lord, you can approach any Bible passage by posing these three questions:

1. What does the passage say?

What are the "bounds" of the passage. Normally a paragraph, not a word or a verse, is the smallest unit of meaning in the Bible. Examine the grammar. Who does what to whom? Is it a narrative passage, or is it a commandment?

2. What does the passage mean?

The Holy Spirit included this passage in the Bible. See II Timothy 3:16, which contains these five purposes of Scripture. Does the passage teach a *doctrine*? Does it *reprove*? Does it *correct* a behavior? Does it *instruct in righteousness*? Pray that the Holy Spirit will make plain what His purpose and meaning is. Remember the three rules of Bible interpretation: Context, Context, and Context.

3. What must we do in light of this truth?

- It may be we must abandon a previously held opinion.
- It may be we must ask someone's forgiveness.
- God may be calling us into a new area of ministry.
- Whatever God tells us to do, we had better do it.

Write out some notes and questions discussion and be brave!

P. Jesus' Model Prayer (the Lord's Prayer) and His Great Commission

Matthew 6:9-13 contains Jesus' reply to his disciples request "Teach us to pray:"

9. *After this manner therefore pray ye:*

Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name.

10. *Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*

11. *Give us this day our daily bread.*

12. *And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.*

13. *And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil: For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen*

Look at verse ten. "[May] Thy kingdom come." "[May] Thy will be done in earth" [when your kingdom *comes down from heaven onto earth*] 'as it [already] is in heaven."

In the Great Commission Jesus tells His followers (including us!) to spread the good news of full salvation through faith in Him alone. When we do that, are we not advancing His kingdom on earth, since each believer's heart can be thought of as an "outpost of glory" when it belongs to Jesus?

Yes we are, and let us remember that mission every time we recite the model prayer Christ gave us.

Q. Leading Folks to Christ along the “Roman Road”

A simple and effective way of presenting the gospel to a person is “The Roman Road” series of Bible verses:

Romans 1:16 – For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ : for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth ; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

Romans 3:23 – For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

Romans 6 :23 – For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Romans 5:8 – For God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 10:9-10 – That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Romans 12 :1-2 – I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto Go, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

A tract, a memorized series of verses recited and explained as you step floor-tile to floor-tile, a marked Bible with the next verse annotated in the margin. It is a tool. Try it out.

R. RU Recovery Ministries’ Ten Principles for overcoming stubborn habits (all drawn directly from the Bible):

1. If God’s against it, so am I.
2. Every sin has its origin in your heart.
3. It is easier to keep the heart clean than to clean it after it has been defiled.
4. We cannot fight a fleshly appetite by indulging in it.
5. Small compromises lead to great disaster (or little sins lead to big sins).
6. Those who do not love the Lord will not help us serve the Lord.
7. Our sinful habits do hurt those who follow us.
8. It is not possible to fight fleshly temptation with fleshly weapons.
9. We lose our freedom to choose when we give in to temptation. Our consequences are inevitable, incalculable, and up to God.
10. God balances guilt with blame. Accept the blame for your actions and God will remove the guilt.

There is nothing “magical” about this list, but many people have found them of great use in helping them overcome sinful habits.

S. Faithful Christian Ministries and Resources

God has given us a “yardstick” to measure the reliability of any teacher or organization. That yardstick is the Bible. You plus your Bible plus prayer plus the leading of the Holy Spirit will help you discern the reliability of ministries and churches. With their titles you can search the internet for websites and check them out for yourself.

While there are many worthy organizations dedicated to helping believers and their families, this short list is limited to those which your author has had direct personal experience and have been of great benefit (listed randomly):

THE NAVIGATORS – Christian discipleship and scripture memory are their hallmarks. NavPress is their publishing house. “To know Christ and make Him known” their motto.

CRU – Formerly Campus Crusade for Christ. Founded as a student movement. Specialized ministries for many walks of life.

THE GIDEONS – Businessmen volunteers who contribute their own funds to place Bibles in hotel rooms, prisons, in the hands of military and students.

THE OFFICERS CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP – Great encouragement for US officers and their families.

CHRISTIAN MILITARY FELLOWSHIP – Great encouragement for US military enlisted and their families.

A.C.C.T.S. – Association for Christian Conferences, Teaching, and Service. Encourages establishment of international military fellowships.

THE AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY – Many useful and inexpensive Bible materials. Author cannot recommend any translation other than the King James / Authorized Version.

FOCUS ON THE FAMILY – Media ministry of Dr. James Dobson. Wide variety of practical helps for believers.

TURNING POINT – Dr. David Jeremiah’s media ministry. Gifted expositor of God’s word.

LIFE WORTH LIVING – Dr. Adrian Rogers’ recordings. Gifted expositor of God’s word.

THE HOME SCHOOL LEGAL DEFENSE ASSOCIATION (HSLDA) – A resource for home educators to help navigate legal requirements of their states and to represent them in court should that become necessary.

KOINONIA HOUSE – Dr. Chuck Missler’s books and recordings. Unique, challenging, and thoroughly Bible-based teaching.

CHURCH GROWTH INTERNATIONAL – Dr. Charles Brock’s excellent witnessing and discipleship materials. Inexpensive materials “teach themselves” are tailored for ANY audience.

WHITTAKER HOUSE BOOKS – Inexpensive Christian classics. Awesome giveaways for churches and soul winners.

THE BIBLE BROADCASTING NETWORK – Traditional Christian music and reliable teaching. Shortwave international programming. “Giving the winds a voice” their theme.

RU RECOVERY MINISTRIES – A faith-based addiction recovery organization whose chapters operate out of Bible-believing churches.

WARNING – Be a “Berean” when it comes to preachers and organizations:

These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. (Acts 17:11)

Not everyone claiming to be reliable is so. God has given us much guidance on how to discern what is trustworthy and what is not.

NOTE: I hereby waive copyright of "Field Manual Ephesians" for use and reproduction by the Australian MCF of this book. It was written to serve the greater glory of God, and I praise God for moving me to produce it.

John Martin Brown
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