



WELCOME TO BIBLE HOUSE OF GRACE

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Pearls

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



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Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

1. As we travel through Paul's letters concerning the Good News of the Gospel that he so beautifully proclaims the revelation that emerges of the Most High God that was deeply engraved in vibrant colour on the screen of his mind seems to be one of God reaching down from heaven and betrothing even the lowliest child of Adam as a pure virgin to Christ as they with honest heartfelt repentance entered the waters of baptism and rose up out of the water to eternal life and everlasting glory washed clean of everything and accepted as a sweet smelling aroma and eternal fragrance of Christ to God amongst the faithful worldwide.

2. The spiritual Kingdom of God existing now by faith in the hearts and minds of the faithful who believe in Christ should not be confused with the literal future Kingdom of God coming to earth. Neither should the literal future Kingdom be confused with salvation. The Kingdom is not the path to salvation, but the inheritance of those who are saved in Christ. The path to salvation is Jesus he is not only the golden and royal path into the Kingdom of faith existing now and the path into the literal future Kingdom of God to come, but also the royal path into eternity in all its glorious fullness and wonder.

3. Many assume that Christian spiritual maturity is measured by church attendance and adhering to ceremonial rites holy days and keeping religious customs and traditions or by the amount of biblical information and doctrine a religious person knows, these maybe one measurement of spiritual maturity, but they are certainly not the whole story. The Christian life is far more than church attendance, knowledge and creeds, it includes conduct and character. Christianity is not a religion or a philosophy it is a spiritual, eternal and unexplainable heartfelt celestial relationship and a lifestyle that is manifested in doing-good to others that is motivated by a love for the Saviour who is missing from the bloodstained cross and is now seated at the right hand side of his heavenly Father in eternal glory.

4. The Ten Commandments were put in a majestically beautiful golden sealed container called: The Ark of the Covenant. The golden lid of the Ark was called the Mercy Seat. There was a golden angel (called Cherubim) at each end of the Mercy Seat with their wings spread out above the Mercy Seat and overshadowing it. Their faces were facing each other and the LORD would meet and speak with Israel from above the Mercy Seat and from between the two Cherubim. There was no way of obtaining God's Law without opening the lid of the Ark first. How beautiful is this God speaks to His people from the Mercy Seat. God knowing man's legalistic and judgmental heart made sure His Law was covered with mercy anyone wanting to access the Law of the LORD would have to come face to face with mercy before they could handle the Law.

5. Under the Old Testament covenant of law only the High Priest could enter behind the royal, majestic and beautifully woven curtain of scarlet (red) that divided the Holy Place (the place of religious works) from the most Holy Place of God's presence in the LORD'S temple. This majestically woven scarlet coloured curtain stopped the common people from entering into the place of God's presence, but here is the wonder and glory of the New Covenant of God's grace. When God looked upon the brutal, bloody and cruel death the priests had inflicted upon His Son and saw Jesus blood stained body nailed to the cross He tore this dividing curtain in two from top to bottom making the way open for everyone (not just the priests) to come into God's holy presence and fellowship with Him through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (he is the true curtain of God).

6. Prayer is about praying what is on the heart, not memorized quotes of Scripture or being able to cleverly put verses of the Bible together, (unless they are expressing the honest heart attitude of the person that is praying). A prayer that is full of common language, stutters and pauses, but comes from an honest heart means more to God than one that is prayed in perfect King James language and quotes wonderful Scriptures, but comes from a heart without love

7. Living or walking in the Spirit of God is not something you pretend to do, something you strive to be or some standard you aim to conform to, or trying to be something you think you should be. Living in the Spirit of God is simply being who you are, no pretence, it is being your authentic self, but being it with God clothed with love and doing-good to others, it is walking in the reality of who you are with God in His love and his grace in contrast to living life without God.

8. Today there are enormously successful religions who teach a Gospel in Christ's name of prosperity, success, perfect health and worldly riches of course this appeals to self, ego and pride and naturally brings multitudes of followers and enormous global success to these religions, but if Christians are looking to the things of this world to find their joy and can have no more joy than people of the world if they do not attain them what attraction is there to the Christian faith? Those who belong to Christ bring glory to God when they find their satisfaction and their joy in Him. If Christians only find joy in the things of this world, why would non-Christians want their faith when they see that a Christian's life and joy is no different to theirs?

9. In the book of Revelation (the final book of the Bible) the Holy City New Jerusalem is seen in a most majestic glorious vision descending from heaven built of pure gold clear as glass and every kind of precious stone, jewels, jasper, sapphire, agate, emerald, onyx, carnelian, chrysolite,

beryl, topaz, chrysoprase, jacinth, amethyst and pearls (Rev 21:18-21). There is no stone more precious more valuable and more gloriously beautiful and spectacular on this earth than these rare stones. Now! this is the glory of this vision, every-one of these precious stones are symbols (amongst many other heavenly things) of how much value God places on those who are devoted to His Son and patiently endure in faith through the troubles and hardships of this life with a heart full of worship, gratitude and thanksgiving for the suffering bloody and bleeding man who hung on the cross so that they could be saved to eternal life and everlasting glory by grace apart from self-effort and religious works.

10. Imposing morals and religious laws, rules, customs and traditions upon people is not what motivates a person from the heart to live a life that will honour God, but bringing them into a greater understanding of God's love and His grace is. This is because it is according to the extent that a person understands God's grace and experiences His love as a reality in their own mind and heart that determines the strength of desire and passion, they will have to live a life, pleasing and faithful to God.

11. Christians believe Christ died for their sins, Jesus crucified, and therefore their sins at this moment and forever are forgiven by the virtue of God's grace what joy, in this they stand perfectly pardoned and redeemed by Christ's blood. What riches of grace does free forgiveness exhibit, to forgive all, to forgive fully, to forgive freely, to forgive forever. How precious and costly were the precious drops of blood which cleanses the redeemed and how gracious was the method by which the pardon was sealed. Those who know such love worship and bow down before the throne which sets them free, they hold on to the glorified MAN missing from the cross who delivers them and serve henceforth all their days the wonderful saviour who provided the pardon for their sin. The Christian faith should be the least materialistic FAITH on earth, but sadly in some circles worldwide it has become one of the most materialistic faiths amongst the many religions existing today. Many faithful writers of Psalms wrote: "God will satisfy the desire of the heart of all who love Him." This does not mean that God will give an abundance of material possessions, wealth, riches or fame to all who love him (as some teach). Since God is Spirit, He is not dependent on worldly riches or an abundance of materialistic possessions to fill the human heart with joy peace, contentment and love.

12. The apostle James wrote, "Everything that those in Christ plan must be done with the uncertainty that the Lord could require their life at any time." This means that those who belong to the Lord Jesus Christ are called to live their life knowing that their mortal life is held in the hands of God. Their future is entirely dependent on His will. God said, "The

righteous perish and merciful people are taken away, and no one considers that good people are taken away from the evil and the trouble to come" (James 4:12-12) (Isaiah 57:1). God's view of human death for the faithful is not one of darkness, but one of glorious birth into an eternal celestial world of joy and happiness where troubles, suffering and sorrow do not exist.

13. Every Christian who sets their supreme heartfelt desire and their thoughts and vision upon the things of this world will be robbed of the spiritual inward eternal joy and the glorious hope that strengthens the mind and heart in the mundane things of life and the hardships, struggles, disappointments and sorrows that come our way. A Christian without a mental subterranean consciousness dwelling in the mind, that the ultimate glory, is not success in this mortal world, but the glory to come in the eternal world will be robbed of the true and hidden spiritual treasures of the Christian faith. This does not mean that Christians should not have passionate goals that they set their life upon achieving in this mortal world, but simply that while we live in this world to achieve the dream and provide for our families there is a subterranean consciousness dwelling in the heart and mind that the glory of the eternal world to come will surpass all we can achieve in this mortal world with its mixture of joy and happiness and hardships and sorrow.

14. All sin involves harming another human being; physically, emotionally, mentally, financially, sexually, verbally or spiritually in that sense sin only applies to outward actions and abusive speech, but hurtful outward actions and cruel speech is a symptom of an inward corruption. Now here is the glory of the Christian faith: putting our trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and believing we are saved by his righteousness and not our own not only saves us from outward sin, but also saves us from the corruptions that dwell within, this if the royal glory and majestic grace of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

15. The Bible states: "Those who have victory over the world will inherit the tree of life." Everyone seeking God should know that victory over the world in this context does not mean success and prosperity in all we do, nor does it mean that we will all have perfect health. To have victory over the world in this context means that we faithfully endure in faith until Christ returns. Likewise victory over over sin does not mean, we never sin, but that we have faith God's grace covers this is why faithful Christians love the Lord and from this love and this grace endeavor to live a life that honors God and brings a good testimony to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Christian faith.

16. If Christians do the things of the Spirit they dissatisfy the flesh (self, ego pride, greed and such like things) so there is always going to

be a part of them that is not satisfied, but the more self, ego, pride and greed etc., are put aside the greater the Spirit of God and His love floods the heart and the mind.

17. Sickness, suffering, accidents and death should make us aware of the frailty of our mortal life and if we desire to dwell in everlasting glory after death has taken us into its endless darkness point us to a need for the immortal, invisible, eternal Almighty God the creator of all things and source of all life.

18. A Christian's heartfelt aim should be to do all they can to bring a good testimony to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, but all the while being mentally conscious that should they fall short of the standard they inwardly desire God's grace covers and Christ's blood cleanses. This is because God not only lavishes grace on all who are faithfully devoted to His Son, but His eyes also perceive the deep desire within the heart and since He sees this inward cry and understands the inward struggle He does not reject the faithful simply because they cannot overcome the battle, in fact for many the crisis of the struggle before the throne of God is often their glory.

19. The great prophet Isaiah likens God to a loving parent, who when they see their young child running toward them stand with joyful open arms ready to embrace them to their bosom. Even though the nation of Israel (God's child) was rebellious and grossly corrupt and daily provoking the LORD Isaiah in his prophetic message pictures God standing as a caring parent with loving arms wide open, ready to hug His child to His bosom when they do come running toward Him in honest heartfelt repentance. Every faithful brother and sister in Christ should know that God's love is forever flowing toward them in the same way that a loving earthly father loves his children. Both God and the loving earthly father will never withdraw their love from their children it is we who for whatever reason build the dam that stops the river of God's love flooding into our hearts and our minds.

20. The Christian faith in its pure form meets the need of the poor and rich, the noble and lowly, the intellectually gifted and those who lack education in the same ways. This is because it's promised eternal blessings are spiritual and met every spiritual need of the human heart. God may bless those that belong to Him with worldly riches, but He is not dependent on materialistic possessions and the things of this world to fulfil the human heart with joy, peace contentment and His love.

21. There are certain religions today whose primary focus is upon the Kingdom of God, but after Christ's death and resurrection this is not what

the apostles and Paul's primary focus is set upon. This is because the Kingdom is not the entry to eternal salvation. The entry into God's Kingdom is the Lord Jesus Christ he is the royal and golden door that we all have to go through to enter into the Kingdom. Certainly, it is true that the eternal Kingdom is real, but it is not the path to salvation, but the inheritance of the faithful who are saved in Christ. This is why after Christ's death and resurrection the spotlight of the apostles and Paul shifts from shining the light on the Kingdom to shining it on the King of the Kingdom, because whoever belongs to the King will naturally inherit the Kingdom.

22. Hollywood and TV movies portray love as finding someone that fulfils your needs, loneliness and emptiness, but you are not really in love in its true sense until you care more about the other person's happiness and well-being than you do your own.

23. Sadly, much of the secular world (and a large part of Christianity) does not understand that the heart of the Christian faith is based on love they have the idea that being a Christian is about adhering to ceremonial rites holy days and keeping religious customs and traditions. They don't understand or have not been told that the founder of our faith said, "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lays down his life for his friends" (John 15:14). Should anyone seeking God be reading this they should know that God has not only manifested His love for all mankind in Christ, but invites us all to come to the bloodstained cross of Calvary and accept that love. Now here is the glory of the Good News of the Gospel, whoever accepts this love will find that they can swim for days on end and bath in its overwhelming beauty and never arrive at its end, why some might ask? Because God's love is eternal and a free gift.

24. Imagine the joy, if the richest man in the world came to your door saying, "I will take care of all your financial and health needs, you will never have to work or worry again," that is what Christ is like to faithful Christians, he came to their door saying, "I will take care of all your sin and give you a gift that even the richest man in the world cannot give you, eternal life, you will never have to fear death or worry again, your eternal future has been secured."

25. When some sceptics and atheists see religious institutions, organisations or churches dividing or falling apart they feel that it supports their stand that God's Kingdom is collapsing and failing, but though it may appear this way on the outside to those who do not know God's love and God's grace, it is simply not so. This is because the true Kingdom of God is not in bricks or mortar or in religious governments, ceremony and

pomp, but in the mind and the heart of the faithful worldwide and that Kingdom can never be destroyed.

26. Many at some stage are hurt or disillusioned by a church or its leader, sadly some fall away from their faith while it makes others search for a greater spiritual reality of God and strengthens their faith. These disheartening disappointments and hurts can be viewed as tests of the genuineness of a person's faith (there are many others). Perhaps the problem is not the church or its religious leader, but that we have set our eyes and our heart upon exalting the importance of religious institutions, pomp and ceremony and the position of a human man above the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ who is the only perfect example anyone can exalt, respect and look up to with total confidence and trust that he will never disillusion or hurt.

27. There are faithful brothers and sisters in Christ who when they enter into communion with God have an overwhelming awareness of His Holiness and their lack of it which often creates a sense of the infinite distance between them and the Holy God. Their mind questions, "How shall I, dust and ashes, speak to the LORD of Glory?" But from the very first day we humbled ourselves before God and devoted ourselves to His Son in love our heavenly Father is ready to meet us in the way of mercy and accepting grace.

28. Some time ago I watched the movie titled, "The Golden Compass" it had an absolutely glorious and beautiful scene of a courageous young and small girl galloping through the pure white snow-covered hills on the back of an enormously gigantic, but friendly polar bear. For me it was one of those small moments in life that fantasy touches the heart with overwhelming joy. This is because my mind immediately went to the glorious prophecies of one of the Bibles greatest prophets who in a vision given by God not only saw our world and our planet earth renovated by the power of God back to its pristine glory, but also saw lambs playing with the wolves. Maybe in this new glorious age to come when deserts blossom and wild animals are harmless, we as this small girl did in the world of entertainment and fantasy well be able to ride a polar bear in the same glorious manner. Certainly (for me at least) it would by far surpass any thrill a man-made roller coaster ride can give. For those who might be interested this movie it had a very interesting theme, "No authority likes free thinkers in their kingdom" (whether the kingdom is political or religious) (Isaiah 11:6) (Isaiah 65:25).

29. When the heart and mind get a glimpse of love in its deepest and purest form, it sees it in such glory that it surpasses every form of sexual fulfilment, self-need, self-gratification and self-satisfaction. The power of

pure love is so great it sets those who find it free of deep emotional hurt and mental bondage, its widespread magnitude brings joy and contentment by replacing the need of having others attend to me with the joy of attending to the need of others. God expressed this love by giving his only son to the world so that whoever (rich or poor, noble or lowly honoured or shunned, loved or unloved Jew or Gentile) believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

30. If we as Christians are solely looking forward to Christ's return because we will be with him in glory it may mean we are still primarily focused on self. The Lord's glorious return will mean no more hunger to starving children, no more innocent families killed in war, no young girls being sold as sex slaves and no innocent and naïve teenagers being destroyed by drugs. It will mean no global companies will be able to make mega billions of \$\$\$ profit by oppressing the poor (i.e., third world countries) to make even greater profits etc. When we shift our eyes from self and toward others the glory of Christ's return takes on even greater wonder and majestic royal beauty and glory.

31. Many churches have Christians testify of a positive and successful story they have experienced to encourage others to believe in the love of God in Christ, but for me the greatest testimony was from a lovely thirty-year old Christian lady with terminal cancer named Tracy Chong who had a loving husband and two beautiful children. I had the privilege of standing behind Tracy and watching her sing with arms raised in worship to the Lord. I still remember thinking to myself "This young woman has everything to live for and knows she is soon going to die, yet she stands in praise glorifying God." I was totally humbled by her faith and amazing love for God and her joyful spirit toward Christ even though she was facing impending death. This to me was an unforgettable testimony of the mystery of God's love manifested in a mortal human and a testimony that not only touched my heart more than any success story ever could, but also one that I will never forget. Tracy passed onto eternal glory a few days later.

32. When we as Christians can see that God gifts those outside his Kingdom with brilliant talent, musical skill and glorious voices etc., we can then appreciate the endless array of God's abundant creative beauty displayed in all His majestic creation and enjoy it. A person may not have eternal life, but that does not mean God will not bless them with a voice or talent that will thrill us all, this is the wonder, beauty and grace of God.

33. A great scholar once said, "Some people like to read their Bible in Hebrew and others in Greek, some like to read the King James version and others a modern version, but I like to read mine in the love and grace

of God,” What a fabulous comment and insight into what is important to God’s heart. I suspect that only those who know the love and grace of God while they are reading the Bible actually understand the beauty and depth of these insightful words. To be able to quote and memorise Scripture and have tremendous intellectual knowledge of the Bible is truly a great blessing, but to know God’s love and His grace surpasses them all.

34. Jesus even prior to his resurrection was able to transcend the laws of our planet, he supernaturally produced bread and fish, walked on water and when Judas and a crowd with swords came to seize him, Jesus told his disciples that he could appeal to his Father and He would immediately send more than twelve legions of angels to his aid? The full power of God was at any given moment only a prayer away from His Son.

35. When a person knows someone well and that they care it is a lot harder for them to do something that offends or hurts that person. The more a person knows someone loves them the more they are motivated to do-good for them. When a person fully understands the message of the cross and sees how much God loves them they are automatically motivated to do-good for God, for Jesus and for humans they do not need to be forced to follow legalistic rules.

36. Some believe Christians are brainwashed (perhaps some are), but we get nothing from life unless we completely surrender in passion to the thing we love. A husband and wife will never have a truly intimate relationship until both surrender their minds and hearts to each other such is the way of love. When I look to the bloodstained cross I know that Christ has surrendered his life in love to a brutal, bloody and cruel death so that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16) so if I am to experience his love and spiritual life in him it is for me to surrender mine.

37. God’s Spirit is not limited to being with faithful Christians at Bible study groups, amongst Christian music, spiritual songs, and hymns or even at church itself. Though these are good in themselves God’s presence also exists outside of their existence. Wherever we are God’s Spirit and His comfort can be found this is because it is not the environment that determines God’s presence, but our faith.

38. On a Sixty Minutes TV programme a man and his wife were so awe inspired and overwhelmed by the glory and majestic beauty, fury and power of erupting volcanoes they gave their life to the study of them and didn’t care if they were killed by one (they eventually were). Knowing the

majestic abundant and eternal love and never-ending grace of God has had this same effect on many men and women throughout history.

39. When Jesus walked on earth it mattered not to him if those who came to him believed he was who he claimed to be, worshipped other gods, lived in sin or had a lack of moral consciousness he healed them regardless, he always showed kindness and compassion. He never had his disciple's council those who came to him to discover if they were worthy to be healed, but always showed those outside his Kingdom spectacular compassion regardless of what their faith was, who they were and how they lived. The only exception to this was the self-righteous, prideful hypocritical and legalistic religious leaders.

40. The more I read the Bible the more I am led to believe that there is something God not only considers far more glorious and far more majestic than all His spectacular and breathtaking awe inspiring miracles, but also fills His heart with overwhelming joy, what might this be? Simply this: when a man or woman puts someone else's interest and well-being before their own this totally unselfish act I think as I read the Bible and discern the heart of God not only lightens up all heaven, but also causes all the angels to rejoice with great joy.

41. How amazing are the ways, the love and the grace of God a woman with an alabaster flask of oil who the religious leaders of Jesus generation considered too unclean and sinful to even touch is chosen to be remembered forever in a spirit of heartfelt endearment by all who read of her story as a woman of the most deep love and faith alongside the only man who has ever lived without sin.

42. Many pagan faiths and many religions worldwide believe the human spirit upon death ascends from the human mortal body to an eternal afterlife. In contrast to this biblical faith is unique it that it teaches the complete person (body and spirit) is resurrected from the grave to immortality and eternal glory. God resurrected Jesus from the dead so that Christ could show his disciples that in the afterlife we will not be some kind of ghost like spirit that has ascended from our dead bodies, but will like him rise from the grave and be clothed with a body of immortal flesh and immortal bones that will even enjoy eating food such is the majestic eternal power of God.

43. Jesus said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life" (John 5:24). Based on these words of Jesus a person reading the Bible can be saved to eternal life by

simply reading the red print in the New Testament (i.e., Jesus words) and believing in the immortal, invisible Almighty God the creator of all things and source of all life who sent him.

44. No faithful brother or sister in Christ who finds themselves in troubling circumstance or suffering situations should ever think that it is because God loves them less if this was the case God not only had very little love for the apostles and Paul, but also very little love for His most beloved Son. Every Christian worldwide knows that this is a ridiculous statement, but it does shine a brilliant spotlight on the truth that God's love toward us should never be measured by outward circumstances, but by looking at the bloodstained cross and whose Son was nailed to it.

45. The underlying thought of many in the secular world today is that Christianity is religious hogwash nonsense and claptrap. Sadly this is clearly understandable (at least to me) why some might ask? Simply this: they are judging Christ according to human behaviour and not on Jesus himself since even the world's most powerful kings during the time of Christ could find no fault in him. So though I fully agree with those who say there is a lot of religious hogwash nonsense and claptrap in the world today and fully understand why they would think this way, since our global media only focus' on the worst of the worst, I am also fully aware that God would say, "Stop judging Me by sinful mortal human behaviour look at my Son and judge me according to his behaviour."

46. The same events can be seen through our natural eyes or perceived through our spiritual eyes and even though it is the same event depending on which set of eyes we view it in each view will have a different perspective yet both perspectives will be correct. Let me explain: On a mortal level of understanding Judas betrayal of Jesus was an act of evil against Christ and in that sense opposed to God, but on a higher level it was in the plans and purposes of God for the salvation of mankind. Much of what we view on a mortal level as evil is on an eternal level bringing about the final eternal plans and purposes of God. This means that whether certain events appear good or bad God is always sovereign.

47. Jesus said, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser and you are the branches. The meaning of the word vine carries the idea of coiling about something for support. Jesus is presenting amongst many other things a picture of himself being intertwined around the Father for his spiritual support and eternal future and all those who belong to Christ being intertwined around him for their spiritual support and eternal future (John 15:1-10).

48. Jesus stated, "Greater love has no one than that they lay down their life for their friends" So he knew the only way to show his friends

how much he loves them was to lay down his life for them and that when his friends understood he did this for them they would from the heart willing desire to live in a manner that is worthy of his heavenly Father and in this way Gods law would be written by love on their hearts.

49. Since we are all descendants of our earthly father Adam and have therefore inherited certain sinful dysfunctions and aberrations within our nature some faithful brothers and sisters in Christ struggle to find mental peace. This is because the voices of these sinful dysfunctions and aberrations constantly plague their mind with condemning guilt. We can chose to allow these voices to condemn us or allow our minds to rest in peace by accepting the reality that it is impossible for anyone of us to attain to the inward perfection we might desperately desire and be fully assured that our lack of perfection is covered by grace. No faithful brother or sister in Christ should allow these condemning voices to rob them from the joy and at peace of the Lord, to do so, is not only denying the grace of God, but also denying what Christ achieved for us on the cross and making his death count for nothing.

50. Generally (there are always exceptions to every rule of life) real servants of Christ are not found in the spotlight they are quietly content with serving the Lord in the shadows. No servant of Christ should be discouraged when their service goes unnoticed or is taken for granted, rather they should keep on serving because the servants the Lord truly delights in is those servants who think more about others than they do about themselves. God, Jesus and all the angels in heaven rejoice when they look upon servants who forget themselves long enough to think about others, this is what it means to lose your life, servants do not only focus on their own needs they are also aware of the needs of others around them.

51. Though the religious rulers of Israel strictly adhered to Moses law and their ceremonial rites and holy days and kept their religious Jewish customs and traditions Jesus called them hypocrites and pretenders, because they lacked compassion and mercy. Nowhere in the New Testament does Jesus say that the Kingdom of God will be given to those who adhere to ceremonial laws and holy days and keep religious customs and traditions. In contrast to this he does say that the Kingdom of God will be given to those who produce its fruits (Matt. 21:43) meaning to those who show love, kindness, compassion, mercy, grace, forgiveness and such like things. Every faithful brother and sister in Christ should always be fully aware that the fruits of the Spirit not only supersede adhering to ceremonial rites, holy days and keeping religious customs and traditions every time, but are also the things that God most values .

52. God said, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts (Isaiah 55:8-9). God's eternal ways and His eternal foreknowledge are a stunning mystery to the human mortal mind, but they majestically manifest the wisdom of God who has given mankind free will. By foreknowledge God is able to allow us to do as we please and come what may our free will is still mysteriously working within His Sovereign will and bringing about His eternal plan that He set in motion before the beginning of time such is the wonder and glory of God's eternal foreknowledge and God's eternal wisdom.

53. Daily experiencing the mind filling peace and heartfelt comfort of Christian faith only comes by believing that God is present in the now (i.e., in every present moment of our life). Belief is the power that brings to the mind the majestic glory of the Christian faith without belief there is no spiritual power. Belief is being mentally conscious and totally convinced God is present in the good, the bad and even the ugly moments of our life. The wonder, beauty and splendor of God is that He like any earthly father who loves his children will get down in the broken and ugly places with them to lift them up to higher ground. God's love and grace is so abundant that He will not leave His children simply because they have got some mud on their linen clothing. The Christian life without total mental and heartfelt belief that God by His eternal Spirit, His eternal love and His eternal grace is present in both the good and muddy moments of our mortal and flawed life is like a golden tap without water, dry and useless.

54. Sometimes I am reading certain sections of the Bible and wonder, "How can people not believe it?" But on other occasions I'll be reading a section and wonder, "How can anyone believe it?" This dilemma enforces to me that though intellect and logic should never be done away with and always highly valued without clothing them in faith it is impossible to believe in the God the Bible reveals, because there is always a certain amount of questions that cannot be answered and a certain amount of mystery that doesn't make sense to the natural mortal mind.

55. Luke writes: "God obtained the church with his own blood" referring to Christ's brutal, bloody and cruel death on the cross. These few words of Luke shine a brilliant spotlight on the truth that the cost of purchasing the church to God was the sacrifice of His most beloved Son and the cost to His Son was a most horrific death this should give every faithful brother and sister in the global body of Christ an idea of how much the Father and the Son loves and values them.

56. Let's suppose for a moment that a car is a symbol of Christ and the roads and streets represent doctrines. Now imagine a man driving the car in stormy weather desiring with all his heart to reach a certain destination because his sweetheart is there. On his journey he takes a wrong turn, but he is still in the car so he is safe. He realise he is on the wrong road and does a U turn and finally gets back on the right road. This happens a few more times on his trip, but each time it does once he realises he is heading in a wrong direction he does a U turn and heads back because the true passion of heart is to reach his final destination and his dream girl. Now here is the point of this story: even though he travelled on a few wrong roads he was always in the car and so was always protected from the storm. Our Christian walk is very much like this we begin our spiritual journey toward our final destination as infants in Christ, it is almost certain that we will embrace some doctrines for a time that we may discard later and others that we will hold dear to our hearts and minds. This is the common spiritual experience of most men and women who walk with Christ. The important thing to learn from this story is that in the same way that the man driving the car was always safe providing he remained in the car, so too will those who have faith in Christ remain eternally safe and in God's love providing they remain faithful in Christ.

57. I have a valued friend yet they don't need me, why? Because they have abundant life in themselves, if I died they would obviously be grieved, but they would still go on to live life to the max, and I love that, because it means I am under no pressure to fulfil any need in their life, neither are they in mine and therefore we can enjoy each other's company without feeling emotionally pressured and friendship in this freedom is beautiful.

58. The preacher in Ecclesiastes says that his searching to understand God brought him to the conclusion that no-one can find out the work of God and His ways no matter how much they study, because there are too many contradictions and exceptions to the general rules and laws of any given event or thing. He concluded that God has designed the universe this way so that no-one whether righteous or wicked can determine or discover what will happen to them tomorrow.

59. People with all sorts of sinful aberrations and dysfunctions came to Jesus. I am sure if they got to the nitty gritty of what they believed many would not have agreed with the things Jesus said concerning himself and his heavenly Father and he would know that, but he still showed compassion and without question healed all who came to him. If he is our example then we who follow him are all called to do-good and show kindness whether people agree with us or not.

60. When men and women deeply love and intimately know someone close and understand all the pieces of them, the laughter, the sorrow, the silences and all the deep telling moments of their life then that person by love inhabits them and they feel part of them. In this same way Christ inhabits the heart of faithful Christians and they feel part of him.

61. People will feign love if they are going to gain from it, but no-one can hide honest love from those they love, since when love is true there will always be some degree of self-sacrifice (obviously the greater the sacrifice the greater the love). No-one is going to pretend to love another if there is nothing to gain; likewise, no-one is going to sacrifice anything for another unless they have love in the heart.

62. Our mental pictures of Satan's power are mostly established by the influence of Hollywood and comics presenting some kind of evil red creature with horns holding a three pronged pitchfork, but perhaps a more realistic picture might be an expensive pair of Victoria's Secrets red panties, certainly a far more tempting and a much more powerful path to ruin for men throughout history than the red creature with two horns.

63. Just as love binds a sweetheart to her lover and captivates her heart and possess every thought of her mind and thereby imprints upon every cell within her the desire to be faithful to the one, she loves and to him only whether he is present with her or not. In this same way love binds the faithful to Christ and captivates their heart and possess their mind so that they like the lover's sweetheart have no desire to seek after another whether he is seen or not.

64. No Christians self-worth should be dependent on how they look on the outside (especially women), but on how abundant the fruits of the Spirit are on the inside. We may value the external appearance, but God doesn't. His eyes fall in love, not with our eternal appearance, but with what is on the inside (i.e., kindness, compassion, grace, mercy, love forgiveness and such like things). If we want God to fall in love with us this is the clothing, we should dress ourselves in. When we go out into the world dressed in these royal robes not only does God go with us, but we will also find that we never lack, good and valued friends.

65. Learning about the Bible, the Father and the Son should multiply the fruits of the Spirit (i.e., love, compassion, kindness, mercy, peace, grace, forgiveness and such like things) within each one of us. If our knowledge is not producing the fruits of the Spirit it is simply cold legalism and the only one who benefits from this kind of knowledge is our intellectual pride.

66. Paul prayed that every brother and sister in Christ would know the love of the Lord that surpasses knowledge, that they may be filled with all the fullness of God (Ephes. 3:19). This prayer shines a brilliant spotlight on the truth that to be filled with all the fullness of God in this context is to be filled with love. To support this statement even more Paul wrote, "If I have prophetic powers and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love I am nothing" (1 Cor. 13:2). This not only means that the heart of Christ's message and the heart of God is love, but also if love is lacking in faith so too is God.

67. Some people say that those who believe in Christ do so as a crutch to support them in their life, though God's love and grace certainly makes a difference to the well-being of the human heart, mind and spiritual life I wonder how much truth is in this statement. Consider this: would the apostles who suffered enormously because of their faith and the thousands worldwide throughout every generation of history who suffered mockery, persecution, imprisonment and even death to serve Christ say that their faith was a crutch. When people are prepared to sacrifice their life for what they believe it cannot be explained away as a crutch, obviously there is something far deeper going on in their hearts and mind that others cannot understand. In the Christian faith this hidden treasure that surpasses one's own life is God's eternal love and grace which comes through faith in God's Son and cannot be experienced by anyone unless they surrender their lives to him. It is only natural that those who don't know the hidden wonder and deep beauty of God's love and grace explain it away by demeaning and belittling those who do experience it.

68. The apostle John says we can be sure we are abiding in Christ and Christ is abiding in us by the Spirit he has given us. But some might say, "What is the Spirit he has given us?" Simply this, love it is by love Jesus dwells in God; it is by love God dwells in Jesus and it is by love God dwells in us and we dwell in God and in Christ. Love is the cement that binds us all together. The Bible says, "God is love" and it is by the Spirit of love that God the Father, Christ the Son and believers are all united in each other. Added to all this glory; John tells us, "Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love." It is by this love flowing through us toward others that we manifest the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ dwelling in us to those around us (1 John 4:8) (1 John 4:16).

69. Matthew in his writing does not give specific details of where those in Christ will be taken when Christ returns, but instead puts the focus on being caught up with Christ rather than the final destination or place that they will be caught up to. It appears that Matthew is not so much

concerned with were Christ's brothers and sisters will be taken, but that they are taken to be forever with the Lord Jesus Christ. This would make perfect sense since if a person deeply loves another their greatest concern is not where they will be with that person, but that they will be with them. Added to this it is a no-brainer that wherever Christ will take those who have faithfully followed him will by far surpass in beauty and majestic glory anything we have known in this corrupted world and anything we could comprehend with our and mortal minds.

70. The Bible states, "It is God who Justifies," this is because only God perceives the hidden depths of the human heart and the true motivations. The following is a typical example of this principal, a young mother who loves God and has two children, but happens to be living in a third world country, she has no hope of a job, no social security and no-one with money to help her, so to provide food for her children she against everything that is in her sells her body. This woman is mentally and emotionally suffering beyond what most of us can imagine, but most religious men and women would look to her outward behaviour and condemn her as a gross sinner, but God sees the brokenness of the heart, the motivation to lay her own dignity aside to save the life of her children. This is why the Bible says, "It is God who justifies and not us," especially if we are not prepared to step in and do whatever is necessary to rescue others from what we might be condemning them for.

71. When the principal of the following secular story is applied to Christianity it gloriously shines a spotlight on the truth that God has no prejudice and presents a beautiful picture of the justice that will take place at the Judgment seat of Christ and the angels rejoicing. A fifty-year old white woman arrived at her seat on a crowded flight and immediately didn't want the seat, because it was next to a black man. Disgusted, the woman immediately summoned the flight attendant and demanded a new seat. She said "I cannot sit here next to this black man." The flight attendant said "Let me see if I can find another seat." After checking, the flight attendant returned and stated "Ma'am, there are no more seats in economy, but I will check with the captain and see if there is something in first class." About ten-minutes went by and the flight attendant returned and stated "The captain has confirmed that there are no more seats in economy, but there is one in first class. It is our company policy to never move a person from economy to first class, but being that it would be some sort of scandal to force a person to sit next to an unpleasant person, the captain agreed to make the switch to first class." Before the woman could say anything, the attendant gestured to the black man and said, "Therefore sir, if you would so kindly retrieve your personal items, we would like to move you to the comfort of first class as the

captain doesn't want you to sit next to an unpleasant person." Passengers in the seats nearby began to applaud while some gave a standing ovation.

72. God's Spirit and Christ's Spirit are in perfect unity, perfect love and in perfect harmony of mind in will and purpose therefore the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ can be viewed as being identical since those in Christ have fellowship with both the Father and the Son (1 John 1:3). To attempt to separate and dissect down to microscopic detail the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ as a spiritual surgeon with a scalpel is (I think) to do God and the Lord an injustice since there is nothing in prayer we can say to Christ that God does not hear neither is there anything we say to the Father that the Son is not also listening to and there is nothing we can hide in deed or action from either God or the Lord Jesus Christ. This is why God's Spirit and Christ's Spirit can be seen as being identical especially in prayer since they are united together in perfect love, mind and purpose and both God and Christ dwell in the heart of every brother and sister in Christ by faith and God's grace. If we were to attempt to explain the Spirit of God and of Christ in simple material terms (howbeit very limited) the Spirit of God and of Christ could be likened to a golden torch, its light and its batteries. The torch gives brilliant light that dispels darkness and allows all who walk in its light to clearly see, but without batteries the torch has no power since they are the source of its light. Christ could be likened to the torch and God to the batteries since God is the source of all life, but the batteries without the torch or the torch without the batteries cannot give light. This is another good reason we should not try to dissect in microscopic detail God's Spirit from Christ's Spirit or Christ Spirit from God's Spirit but always allow for a certain amount of mystery since they are together united in perfect unity, perfect love and perfect mind will and purpose. Added to this there is nothing the Father wouldn't do for us that Christ wouldn't also gladly do, nor is there anything that Christ wouldn't do for us that the Father would not also be pleased to do.

73. The Scriptures proclaim that God by the Spirit is building a Temple in the Lord Jesus Christ and that the whole structure of this Temple is growing into a dwelling place for God (Ephes. 2:21-22). God is the master builder of this majestic and glorious Temple; Christ is the corner stone; faithful believers are the proper materials; the prophets and apostles are its foundation and the Gospel, love, grace, mercy justice and forgiveness its pillars. Christ is the door and faith is the entrance into it. It is a spiritual building and through, faith and grace this living building is growing into an eternal House fit for the Most Holy God to dwell in. Its beauty and radiance will surpass all temples that have ever gone before it since it will

be adorned with a vast variety of rich colour made up of Jews and Gentiles of every age, country, nation and language. Not only is this Temple formed by the mightiest of kings, the most renowned lawgivers, the most faithful prophets and profound philosophers and the most eminent scholars, but also by all those of whom the world was not worthy and the lowly, the poor and the destitute this is because God laid the cornerstone chosen and precious of this eternal Temple and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame (1 Pet 2:6).

74. Jesus in the book of Revelation said, "The one who overcomes, I will grant to sit with me on my throne, as I also overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne (Rev 3:21). This is a glorious picture of the Father's love for his Son and the Son's love for his heavenly Father. As in any family the father sits in his own chair while the son sits alongside him in his chair, likewise it is in these eternal words of Jesus. God the Almighty and heavenly Father sitting on his throne while the beloved Son sits alongside of him on his throne; but as any child loves to be nearer to their father and the father loves to hold their son, so likewise in these royal and stunning words of Jesus, Christ the Son is pictured as climbing from his throne to be nearer to his Father and his Father with open arms and a loving heart is seen making room for the Son to sit alongside him on his throne. This is how Christ says he will receive those who come to him. Can there be any more astoundingly awe-inspiring words of wonder. Christ himself tells us that every faithful brother and sister will be seated on his throne as he sat on the Father's throne. This is the royal and majestic depth of Christ love toward those in his family and the glorious eternal heights to which that love raises all who overcome and endure in their faith through the trials and troubles of life and faithfully follow him.

75. The Scriptures proclaim God raised Christ up to the throne of glory and to universal dominion and gave him a name which is above every name, a name that no other name can be compared, a name that stands alone. Ever wondered what this name might be? Jesus is the Redeemer, Saviour and the Christ the anointed of God and the only Son of God and as such his rank, his titles, his dignity are above all others. The name above every name refers to the name, "Jesus the Saviour" as no other being either in heaven or on earth can possess this name as Christ who is the redeemer of the world does. Jesus alone is the only Saviour for fallen mankind there is no other that can redeem us to God, but Christ and throughout eternity he will ever appear as the sole Saviour of the human race. Even before his birth, Gabriel stated that his name should be called Jesus and gave the reasons for this stating that he will save his people from their sins. The qualifications of the Saviour of the world were so extraordinary, the redeeming acts so marvellous, and the results so

glorious both to God and man, that it is impossible to conceive a higher name or title than that of Jesus the Saviour of the world.

76. Paul's majestic and glorious words, "The grace of God in truth" (Col. 1:6) does not refer to every doctrine of the Bible or even every doctrine of the New Testament as some might think, but to the glorious truth about God's grace. The Colossians have clearly understood something about God's grace that others haven't (especially certain Jewish converts) and even today many who confess to believe in Christ still don't fully understand the truth about God's grace. This awe-inspiring and humbling truth is that we are not saved by self-effort or by adhering to ceremonial rites and holy days or by keeping religious customs and traditions, but by God's grace. This is what Paul is referring to when he states that the Colossians have clearly understood the grace of God in truth.

77. The following words of Paul show the enormous importance of trusting in God's grace in Christ. Paul in his letters wrote, "I do not nullify the grace of God, for if justification were through the law (or any form of religious self-effort), then Christ died for no purpose" (Gal. 2:21). This means, when a brother or sister in Christ begin to justify themselves through the law and self-effort, they nullify the grace of God and by their actions declare that Christ's death was of no value. Equally as horrific as this Paul states, "When we forsake grace, we separate ourselves from Christ because it was only by grace that God made us alive in Christ" (Gal. 5:4) (Eph. 2:5). Paul to highlight even more the majestic glory of grace wrote with absolute boldness that "It is only by grace that any brother or sister has been saved" (Eph. 2:8). Paul in these verses is shining a brilliant floodlight on the truth that every brother and sister in Christ is saved, solely by faith and by grace and it is not their own doing, but the gift of God". This means that without grace no-one can be united to Christ and whoever is without Christ is separated from God and without God no-one can be saved to eternal life. Thus; in regards to eternal salvation, Christ, God, grace and faith, are all on an equal par with each other since no-one can be saved to eternal life without any one of them. This is what the glorious words, "The grace of God in truth" (Col. 1:6) mean and the truth the Colossian brothers and sisters clearly understood.

78. The glory of justice and its healing power Sarah Monahan as a young innocent child was sexually abused by an adult man in an era when no-one talked about such gross horrors. Twenty-five years later the man was brought to stand before the court and the law and justice came down upon him. Certainly, justice cannot undo the wrong done, but after years of hidden deep emotional hurt and sorrow Sarah tweeted, "I'm literally crying with happiness right now." People talk about justice being about

punishing the guilty, but there is another more powerful thing that takes place when justice is administered upon the guilty, what is that one might wonder? Simply this; justice acts like a healing balm upon a heart that has been grossly hurt, I have no-doubt this is one of the reasons (obviously there are many more) that justice is one of the great pillars of the throne of God.

79. Whatever we have done or can do, when we come to receive salvation to eternal life from the hand of God, there is no other element which enters into it but mercy. It is not because our deeds deserve it; it is not because we have by repentance and faith wrought ourselves into such a state of mind that we can claim it; but, after all our tears, and sighs, and prayers, and good deeds, it is a pure favour and a gift of God. Here is the wonder, splendour and spectacular glory of the Christian message of Salvation, "Our justification and our redemption is not in our works or our own self-righteousness, but in the kindness and love of God who accepts us through the excellences and virtues of Christ alone and not from any goodness in us, but according to his own mercy and by his grace and his free unmerited goodness. Clearly this is one of the celebrated reasons the Christian message of salvation is called, 'The Good News.'

80. The Scriptures state God's love is toward those who belong to the family of Christ, but we must believe this or we will not experience such great unconditional and heavenly love. Whoever belongs to the family of Christ and does not experience God's love in their heart should know that it is not because God does not love them, but because they don't believe it. God's love is always over-flowing as a river toward those who love His Son, it is only disbelieve that dams this river of God's love flowing into the heart of those who belong to the Man who missing from the bloodstained cross. Every faithful brother and sister in Christ should arrive at a place of heartfelt assurance and confidence in their faith that God love them. Especially since God's love for them is so great that He gave his only Son so that they should not perish, but have eternal life (John 3:16). What more can the heavenly Father do to show how much He loves those who love His Son? But there is even more glory since God's eternal Spirit and His love is not limited to Christians only, but longs to dwell in the hearts of those who don't yet know His forgiveness and the grace He so abundantly lavishes on those who come to Him such is the breathtaking majesty of God.

81. The Gospel proclaims that Jesus will return to take all those who believe in him to himself so that wherever he is they will be with him. This should be enormously comforting to every brother and sister in Christ,

since it shows that it is not the destination that Jesus considers important, but the love relationship of being with him in eternity. Some teach we will go to heaven others that we will dwell with Christ on earth both of these teachings contain a truth and both can be harmonised to complement each other, but the important thing to the Lord and New Testament writers is not the destination, but that we will be with Christ throughout all eternity in whatever shape or form eternity may look like.

82. The Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ shines a brilliant floodlight on the royal and eternal majesty of love with the following words, "At this present moment faith, hope and love remain, but the greatest of these three is love. The glory of love is that it is eternal and there is no law that needs to be applied to it, because whoever lives from love will only bring life and good to others. The heart of the entire Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is love. It is built upon the foundation that the Son of God laid his life down for others because of love and proclaims that those who show love and do-good to others need have no fear on the Day of Judgment. This is because there is no law against love or any punishment for those who walk in its fruits (i.e., patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, forgiveness and such like things). The practical lesson in this for those who confess to believe in God is to put the greater effort into perfecting love rather than on increasing in intellectual knowledge and adhering to ceremonial rites, holy days and religious customs and traditions (1 Cor. 13:4-7) (1 Cor. 13:13) (Gal. 5:22-23).

83. When Christians begin to perceive the ugliness and depth of indwelling sinful dysfunctions and aberrations within their hearts and minds, (i.e., selfishness, pride, ego, jealousies, envy, coveting and such like things) it is not a sign of moving away from God as some may feel, but rather a sign that they are spiritually moving toward God as well as a sign of spiritual growth since the further we enter into God's pure and holy light the clearer we will see the inward ugliness that we have been saved from.

84. The Scriptures call all Christians to show love toward all people, but this does not mean that they should compromise their faith to manifest the love of God dwelling in them. Some people think being accepted is love, but this is a deception if a person has to compromise who they are (i.e., their authentic self) or compromise what they believe. Compromising who we are or what we believe to be accepted is not love, but simply responding to a desperate need in the heart to be accepted by those who will not accept us as we are. This type of relationship sadly results in conforming outwardly to the control and demand of others and an inward life of emotional and mental tension (this principal applies

whether a person is a Christian or not). No faithful brother or sister in Christ is called to compromise the Gospel, but they are all called to show love.

85. Some in the Christian faith determine whether God loves them by their good or bad circumstances. If life is charmed and blessed, they feel God loves them, but if it suddenly takes a turn for the worse and trouble comes they feel God has withdrawn his love, but this is superstition and judging God according to this world. When anyone who believes in Christ doubts God's love all they have to do is look to the bloodstained cross and see what it cost the Father and how much his Son suffered so that they could be saved to eternal life and everlasting glory apart from human priests and adhering to ceremonial rites and holy days and keeping religious customs and traditions.

86. Paul wrote, "My God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus." This does not mean God will give us everything we want in this world as some teach, but that in Christ God will supply everything we need to be saved to eternal life. It means whatever a person needs to be saved to eternal life is in Jesus. God's riches in glory do not refer to worldly riches, but to God's love, kindness, forgiveness, compassion and His great grace that he lavishes on those who seek after Him. The Bible teaches that whoever has faith in God's Son is a brother or sister of the Lord and therefore an adopted child of God and as such a rightful heir to all the glorious majestic and eternal promises God made to Abraham the father of faith thousands of years ago. This is why Paul was able to say with total confidence, "God will supply your every need" meaning our every need to be saved to eternal life because everything we need to be saved to everlasting glory and inherit the breathtaking and awe-inspiring promises made to Abraham is in Christ (Philip. 4:19).

87. A godly man named John had a magnificent vision in which he saw the Holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. If you have ever been to a wedding you will understand the beauty and glory of John's vision. I attended a wedding that was held at a magnificent dam surrounded by vividly coloured trees. The brilliant shade of green grass and the sparking water of the dam acted as a magnificent backdrop while the Groom and guests all waited in excited anticipation for the Bride to appear. Eventually the chatter of the invited guest was broken as the wedding music began and there she was, the Bride radiant, pure, innocent her white dress with its lacy train caressed the fresh green grass as she came closer to her first real love. I turned and glanced at the Groom and noticed the struggle he had to hold back his joyful tears from filling his eyes like a river

overflowing its banks as he saw the beauty and radiance of his Bride approaching him with her smile of grace, and charity and her obvious affection and tender compassion she had for the man she loved at first sight. Just as I was touched by the splendour and glory of the appearance of my friends' Bride, John is no-doubt touched in his vision by the same overwhelming wonder as he sees in his heavenly vision the glorious beauty of the earthy city Jerusalem restored as a Bride adorned for her husband. We often think of how much we love the Lord and how great our rejoicing will be on that day when we see him face to face, but just as the Groom at this wedding was overwhelmed with inexpressible joy when he saw the woman who had so faithfully committed her life to him, Jesus our Groom will also be as excited and thrilled when he sees the radiance and beauty of his Bride as she approaches him, knowing she has patiently endured life's many trials and testings to be with him throughout eternity (Rev. 21:1-2).

88. A pearl is a product of a living organism, which is not true of any other precious stone. The pearl is produced as the result of an injury suffered by a living organism, such as an oyster, this injury causes the beginning of the pearl's production. It is the presence of some external substance, such as a grain of sand or some parasitic intruder that calcareous matter in thin layers that is spread over the intruding object until ultimately it assumes a pearly lustre. In the process of making the pearl the living organism surrounds the object tormenting it with mother of pearl, until gradually the pearl is formed. It is out of much suffering, an object of beauty is produced and the offending particle becomes a pearl of great worth. How accurate is this fact of the faithful Christian and the faithful church, which came out of the wounded side of Christ. But even greater than the mystery and the wonder of the creation of a pearl in an oyster shell, is the marvel of him who through the travail and pain our sin caused him, covered us over and transformed the thing of injury to the desired thing. As the little grain of sand is ultimately clothed with a beauty not its own, so those in Christ are covered with a beauty and splendour of him who suffered on their behalf.

89. Jesus said, "The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it (Matt. 13:45-46). Christ (the merchant man) paid a great price he was fully innocent of any sin and yet suffered at the hands of his Father's creation and died as a common criminal nailed on a cross suffering a most terrible death. He sold all that he had to possess the pearl the only sacrifice that was great enough to have that lustrous pearl in the palm of his hand was his very own life. Whether we deem the goodly pearls to represent individual believers in Christ and the one pearl as the collective faithful global church worldwide amongst the nations

matters little because the Lord's church is one body and we are all one in Christ Jesus. Christ paid the ultimate price to have a redeemed people as his pearl he gave his most precious possession, his own life and with his own blood bought the sinner back to God. The preciousness of the pearl consists, not so much in its own value or worth but in the price paid for its possession. Another resemblance between a pearl and the church is the fact that the pearl is formed slowly and gradually behind its production is a tedious process of waiting while the pearl is being secretly and surely formed. So, it is with the formation of the faithful church which Christ's death made possible, and which the Holy Spirit through more than nineteen centuries has been making actual? Just as the oyster constantly repeats the process of covering the wound that pierced its side with one layer after another until a thing of beauty is formed so it is with Christ out of each generation of men and woman on earth Christ is adding many pearls to his church which He is now building. When the Lord returns to gather his church to himself then the sons and daughters of God will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father (Matt 13:43) and Christ's pearl will be perfected and shine in brilliant glory throughout all eternity. Paul wrote; "For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God" (Col. 3:3). It must not be forgotten that the formation of the pearl is a secret one, none but the eye of God watches the oyster transforming into a pearl of beauty and great worth. Is it not so with the faithful church world-wide which Christ is now forming? Unknown and unseen the Lord's pearl is being fashioned. Certainly we can see the organised, visible church, churches of wood stone and cement with their governments, institutions and denominations we can see both plain and ornamental, but no-one can see the church of the living God behind the scaffolding hidden in the heart and mind of the sons and daughters of God the true bricks and mortar of the church which is Christ's body, growing up into a pearl fit for a king's royal crown.

90. Jesus prayed, "That his brothers and sisters would all be one, just as his Father is in him, and he is in the Father and that we would also be one in the Father and one in the Lord" (John 17:21). Some may wonder, "How, can the Father be one in Christ and Christ be one in the Father and at the same time multitudes of faithful brothers and sisters in Christ worldwide can not only be one in the Father and one in the Lord, but also be one in each other?" How is it possible that beings from vastly different origins, vastly different minds and vastly different personalities can not only be one with each other, but also be one in each other? The answer is spiritual and actually very simple and I am sure to many it is also very obvious, since there is only one way anyone can be one in and with another and at the same time be one with and in many others and that is by love. It is by love that God is one in Christ and Christ is one in God and we are one in the Father and His Son and they are one in us. This is one

of the reasons why love will endure throughout all eternity the second reason of course is that God is love (1 John 4:8) (1 John 4:16). There is another glorious truth we can learn from this, "What is that you might ask?" Simply this, anything that is against the law of love is also against the will of God.

91. The glory of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is that it proclaims that whoever accepts Christ will be saved to eternal life not by self-effort and striving to attain to God's perfect standard of Holiness, but by Christ righteousness and by God's Grace. Whoever doubts this ponder the following thought; if it was possible for us to perfectly keep all God's law a personal relationship with God would be insufferable because striving to perfectly keep the law to be justified would put a person's life under constant stress and anxiety for the following reasons, on the days a person perfectly kept the law they would comfortably approach God, but on the days they failed in any part of it they would be unable to approach Him. Added to this dilemma, if a person was able to perfectly keep the law, they would most likely tend to become very self-righteous. Those who were able to perfectly keep it would be inclined to be very judgmental to those who had difficulty, worse still if a person died on a day, they failed to perfectly keep the law in any part they would be condemned to eternal death

92. We live in an age where many tend to think of the church as being a bricks and mortar building and its members only coming together on Sundays, but this mindset has developed from years of tradition not the Bible. This is because the church is people not bricks and mortar buildings so wherever two or more people are gathered in Christ's name to fellowship that is where the church is for that moment. It could be on any day of the week and be in a cathedral, a church building, a home, at a picnic by the river side, in a park or even at a coffee bar. This is because it is not the day or the location that is the church, but the people at the location who are the church regardless of the day and regardless of what the location is or wherever it maybe.

93. In the book of Acts we are told that Paul and Silas went into a Jewish synagogue at Berea and that the Jews in this synagogue were more noble than those in Thessalonica, because they not only received the word with all eagerness, but went home to examining the Scriptures daily to see if what they had been taught was correct (Acts 17:10-11). How amazing is this, these men after hearing Paul (the author of most of the New Testament) go home and not only question what he had taught them, but studied the Scriptures to see if what he was saying was true and they are commended for it. Sadly, in certain churches today if a member of the congregation got a group from the church together in their

home to question what their minister was teaching they would be called up before the elders to be disciplined and told that if they are going to hold such meetings its best they leave the church. This idea is contrary to the early church, they in contrast would no-doubt with great excitement go home and question what they had been taught. Added to this the teacher would join them in a in a spirit of humbleness (not superiority) to see if there was any truth in what the group were questioning and examining. In this way everyone was entering the fellowship and contributing to each other's spiritual growth. This type of church meeting would limit the spread of false teaching since everyone was invited to test the teaching of each other in contrast to exalting and trusting in one man.

94. Paul wrote, "In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight (Ephes. 1:7-8). The word lavish carries the idea of something superabounding in excess and exceling in quantity, quality and abundance. It carries the thought of overflowing and being far more than enough needed to achieve the task and the words, wisdom and insight in this context refer to God's insight into the heart of mankind and the obvious fact that God is fully aware that it is impossible for any man or woman to fulfil the perfect standard of, His Holy Law. Because of this God from the foundations of the world and in His eternal wisdom and foreknowledge predestined an eternal plan to save fallen mankind to eternal life that would not be dependent on self-effort and religious works, but on faith and His abundant grace. This is the reason God could guarantee His promise of salvation to everlasting glory with an oath because it is not subject to us attaining to the, Holy standard of God, but on our faith in Christ and God's abundant grace that he lavishes upon those faithfully devoted to His Son.

95. Over the years of my Christian life I have observed the following two things, firstly that good people who do not know God and who rarely consider the Lord during their life when facing death do find a certain mental and emotional comfort by believing that they are going to an eternal celestial place called heaven even though they have lived indifferently to God their entire life. Secondly, that the primary motivation, excitement and joy of those facing death who have known God and who have mindfully meditated on the Lord during their daily life is not so much motivated by the celestial place that they are going to after death, but by the thrill of spending eternity with the humble man who laid his life down to a brutal, bloody and cruel death so that they could be saved by faith and by God's grace from their sin apart from self-effort and adhering to ceremonial rites and holy days and keeping religious customs and traditions.

96. Jesus said, "When he returns, he will dress himself for service and have those servants who have been faithful in seeking the Kingdom of God recline at his table, and he will come and serve them" (Luke 12:37). How humbling and beautiful are these words of the Lord Jesus Christ, truly he sees those who love him as his brothers and sisters, he is the true Shepherd of the flock, he does not exalt himself above those who are faithful to him, but rather happily humbles himself to serve them as they have served him. These words truly reveal the humbleness and glory of the eternal Shepherd that every faithful brother and sister in Christ follows.

97. Prior to the death and resurrection of Christ the focus of biblical writers is on the Kingdom of God, but after his resurrection the focus is on the King of the Kingdom and on the resurrection to eternal glory. This is because Jesus is the royal path to salvation whereas the Kingdom is the inheritance of those who belong to the King. The New Testament gives very little detail of where eternal glory will be except to say that those who attain to the first resurrection (Rev 20:5) will be clothed with an immortal body and be eternally with the Lord and for those who know the love of Christ this is enough.

98. The following words of John show how glorious the language of the Bible and the description of Christ is; when John the Baptist saw Jesus coming he said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world" then we read that, "John bore witness of Christ because he saw the Spirit descend upon him from heaven like a dove." The lamb and a dove are amongst the most harmless of all creatures living on our planet earth and it is these two gentlest of living creatures that John uses to depict the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. This shines a brilliant spotlight on the following three truths, firstly, the Spirit of Christ is gentle, secondly, whoever belongs to the Lords family and are spiritually mature will be manifesting the same Spirit of gentleness toward others and thirdly those who confess to believe in God and aggressively harm and kill the innocent in the name of God are not only deceiving themselves, but deceiving everyone who follows their religion.

99. The Scriptures states, "The eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him (2 Chron. 16:9). Blameless here does not mean without sin, since there has only ever been one man who has been able to attain to that most glorious state and he was the Son of God the Lord Jesus Christ. Blameless in this context carries the idea of being a person of honesty integrity and compassion. Today we would say they are a decent, kind and honest person. This shines a spotlight on the truth that the person God's eyes are seeking after throughout the earth is for those

who fulfil the Royal law, "Love your neighbour as yourself," meaning God's eyes are searching for people who manifest the fruits of the Spirit (i.e., honesty, integrity, love, compassion, kindness mercy forgiveness and such like things) and who do-good and do not deliberately harm others. This is because at this present time, in this present age God is seeking out a Bride for his Son to dwell with him throughout eternity and what Father wants a wife for his son who has a heart full of malice, corruptness and dishonesty.

100. We are not told what clothes Jesus appeared to his disciples in after his resurrection, but we do know he never appeared to them in his grave-clothes, as ghosts are supposed to do; no, he laid them aside because he arose to die no more; unlike Lazarus who came out with his grave-clothes on and was to use them again, but Christ in contrast to Lazarus was rising to immortal life and came out of the Tomb to be clothed with the robes of glory and set free from his graveclothes. Perhaps symbolising the majestic truth that when we arise from the death of sin our perishable body will put on the imperishable, and this mortal body will put on immortality and when the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor. 15:53-54) and our grave-clothes are left behind us with all their corruptions.

101. Sin is different to the law. Sin indwells our members (i.e., selfishness, ego, pride, greed, lustful thoughts, jealousies, anger etc.), while breaking the law is about outwardly acting on the sin that is dwelling inwardly. This is why before God not one of us can claim to be holy and why before God we are always sinners even though we are not always breaking the law. There are men in the Bible that God calls righteous and blameless because they were faithful and did what was right and treated others with kindness and respect, but each one of these good men who lived in faith toward God knew that they were sinners when they stood by faith in the presence of the perfect Holiness of God. One of the reasons Christ came was to reveal this hidden inward serpent like sin nature of self, pride, ego, greed, jealousies, lustful thoughts and such like things so that no one would think they can stand before God and boast that they are holy or without sin and should be counted worthy of eternal life apart from believing in God's eternal plan of salvation by faith and God's grace (James 2:10) and (John 1:8-10).

102. There is laid up for all who look to the Lord's return with anticipated excitement a crown of righteousness. It is called a crown of righteousness, because it comes through the righteousness of Christ; it is his righteousness that gives those in the Lord the right to it. Without Christ's righteousness that is obtained and possessed by faith and not by works

and self-effort it cannot be enjoyed, because this crown can only be possessed by faith and God's grace. It cannot be usurped (as crowns sometimes are) by self-righteousness or by self-effort or by trusting in ceremonial rites, holy days and religious customs and traditions. It is God the Father's free gift to His children; it is what they are born heirs into and through their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and God's grace have the legal title to it. This righteousness signified by a crown, is not only laid up in the covenant of grace for every faithful brother and sister in Christ, but is also promised by God with an oath and therefore guaranteed to all those in Christ in who their life of glory is hidden until that glorious day of his return.

103. The apostle Paul skilfully and with compassion tells the citizens of Athens who worship idols and false gods that God is not an image formed by art and the imagination of man's mind (Acts 17:29). When a person worships an idol their imagination is involved, the powerless idol is simply the object that links their mind to the god of their imagination. Though there is no power in idols there is power in human imagination. This is because the human nervous system does not have a mind of its own, but simply responds to the mental movie played out on the screen of the imagination and affects the emotions and outward behaviour accordingly. If the idol they are worshipping is a symbol of a benevolent god they will naturally feel good emotions when worshipping that illusionary god, but if the idol is a symbol of a vengeful and wrathful god their emotions will naturally respond in fear and terror. This is the reason why emotions cannot be used as evidence that the God we believe in is the God of the Bible, but this does not mean emotions should be ignored. Providing the faith of those who confess to believe in Christ is based on the words of Christ they should fully embrace the wonderful emotions the Good News of the Gospel produces in the heart of those who fully believe and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for their righteousness and eternal salvation. Emotions only become dangerous when we trust that, because we feel emotionally good it is proof that what we believe must be right.

104. Paul told the Romans that he is not ashamed of the Gospel because it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes to the Jew first and also to the Gentiles (Rom. 1:13). This verse is majestic, "Why some might wonder?" Simply this: amongst some Christian churches congregations are lead to believe that they must hold fast to a certain set of doctrines (these will vary depending on what church they are in) to be saved to eternal life and that should they move away from believing this fixed set of doctrines they will lose their salvation. Now this is why these words of Paul are so glorious they shine a brilliant spotlight on the truth that all anyone needs to know to be saved to eternal life and reconciled to God is the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Since everyone is saved by

grace which covers both the limitations of the flesh and the limitations of our intellectual knowledge no one has to know the Bible from cover to cover to be saved to eternal life, but they do need to understand the Gospel because it is the Gospel that has the power to save not a list of doctrines or having a head full of Scriptural knowledge from Genesis to Revelation (even though this is a wonderful blessing).

105. Paul wrote, "Although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"— yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist (1 Cor. 8:5-6). Since the Bible very clearly teaches that there is only ONE God, some might wonder what Paul's statement, "There may be many so-called gods in heaven or on earth" means. To gain some insight it helps to understand a little bit about the human imagination. When a person strongly believes in a thing such as an idol which symbolises some form of god, the imagination develops an image on the screen of the mind of that god that the person believes in. It is like a small child who after going to bed and having the light turned off believes there is a monster in the room, if that belief is strong enough the child's nervous system will react in fear accordingly, since the human nervous system does not have a mind of its own and therefore responds to whatever mental movies we play in our minds whether they are true or imaginary. This same principle applies to the belief in idols or other gods, and the reason why Paul is able to say that there are many gods, meaning many gods people believe in, but in reality they are gods of superstition and fantasy and though very real to those who believe in them they have not real form, no substance and no real existence except in the imagination of the mind of those who strongly believe in them since as the Bible clearly teaches there is only one true God.

106. Ever wondered what the spirit and heart of God desires from us? What the most valued spirit and the highest goal God yearns that all in the global family of Christ would seek after? Some might say, Scriptural knowledge, others spiritual gifts, while some might say the ability to teach, obviously these are all good to seek after, but what does God consider the highest gift? Consider the following words of Paul, "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal and if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing (1 Cor. 13:1-3). These words of Paul shine a brilliant spotlight on the truth that love is the highest gift and the gift we should all earnestly seek after. To highlight God's attitude toward love even more Paul finishes his

message with the words, faith, hope and love abide, but the greatest of these is love (1 Cor. 13:13). This means that the royal path to have our Lord say "Well done good and faithful servant" is the path of love. Whoever is in God's Kingdom and magnifies and enlarges love so that it swells to overflowing in the heart will not only honour God and bring a good testimony to the name of Jesus and the Christian faith since everything spoken or done in love results in some form of kindness and goodness, but will at the resurrection also hear those comforting words, "Well done good and faithful servant."

107. The apostle Paul wrote: "We all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another (2 Cor. 3:18), but what is the glory of the Lord we are to behold?" Some might think the glory of Christ was his miracles and wonders, but as spectacular as these were, they are not what his heavenly Father considered his glory. In God's eyes the glory of Christ was the unselfish life of love that he lived for others especially the poor and the less fortunate and his willingness to lay down his life to a brutal, bloody and cruel death so that even the lowest of sinners who seeks God could be saved to eternal life by faith and God's grace. It is not spectacular achievements, success or miraculous power that God considers glorious, but a life lived in love and compassion toward others. Paul is saying that as we behold the life of Christ in our minds, we will be changed from being driven by self, ego and pride to being humble and serving, we will be changed from being self-focused to others-focused. Being changed into the glory of Christ means we will take on deeper levels of love. The glory of Christ is that, "While we were sinners, he laid down his life for us (Rom. 5:8). His glory in the eyes of his heavenly Father is his love.

108. When the human heart by faith receives Christ's love and grace a spiritual veil of darkness over the mind is taken away and God's light shines in brilliant colour. Until then the beauty, wonder and splendour of the Gospel that leads to eternal life and the glorious spiritual message of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation cannot be perceived in its full glory since faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the key to unlocking its spiritual mysteries. Whoever attempts to unlock the wonders of the Bible without Christ dwelling in the mind and the heart is like a man standing at the door of Fort Knox trying to access all its gold and not knowing the combination.

109. Psychologists say that we can become consciously or unconsciously moulded in character and moral emotions to those with whom we envision and exalt on the screen of our imaginations and who we think and meditate about in our minds. This means that as we behold in our minds the person we exalt and give ourselves over to the image

that we have established of them we can be consciously or unconsciously moulded into conformity to them and in this way our own opinions, feelings, views, thoughts, ideas, attitudes and emotions undergo a gradual change so that we are gradually formed (to some degree) into their image (good or bad). It is on this same great principle that the Bible says that by contemplating the glory of Christ in the Gospel his image will be reflected on us, meaning we will catch and absorb his opinions, feelings, views, thoughts, ideas attitudes and emotions and be moulded into the image of his character. It is on this principle and by this means that God has designed that we should be made like Christ and conformed into his image of love, grace, mercy, compassion, kindness and forgiveness etc.

110. The apostle Paul makes the following glorious statement: "If anyone loves God, they are known by God (1 Cor. 8:3). These words of Paul should bring tremendous comfort to every faithful brother and sister in Christ, Why, you might ask? Simply this: though the faithful deeply desire to honour God, not one of us live a perfect life before God and not one of us attain to the perfect holiness the law demands and not one of us is without sin (1 John 1:8-10). Added to this not one of us has perfect knowledge of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. Now here is the comfort, in all our lack God not only understands, but His eyes perceive the love in our hearts toward Him, and because of this love in our hearts toward Him we are favourably and graciously known by Him. This means that God's grace, mercy and kindness is toward all who have love in their hearts toward Him.

111. Throughout history there has been much controversy over who killed Jesus, some say, Judas, others say the prideful, hypocritical religious leaders, many blame the entire Jewish nation, while others worldwide say it was Pilate and the Romans, obviously they all had a part in Christ's death, but the following Scripture: "Jesus gave himself for our sins" (Gal 1:4). Shines a brilliant spotlight on the truth that we were all involved in his death, since not one of us can stand before the perfect Holiness of God and claim we are without sin and therefore it was for all of us that Jesus laid his life down to a brutal, bloody and cruel death which means we all had part in nailing him to the cross.

112. The apostle Paul prayed that those who belong to the family of Christ would know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge (Ephes. 3:19). It was love which led the Son of God to be a man of sorrows, to be brutally persecuted and cruelly put to death in the most shameful manner, an innocent man on a cross as a common criminal; and nailed there not for himself, but for others. Who could understand that? Where else has there been anything like that? What is there with which such love can be

compared? And how could it be fully understood? Yet Paul knew something of its immeasurable magnitude can be known and felt it in our inner most being. Paul desired that as far as possible everyone would not only understand, but also experience this great love which the Lord Jesus Christ had manifested for a dying world.

113. Paul's said, I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound in any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need (Philip. 4:12). This implies not everyone who has faith in Christ will learn this secret. Paul does not speak of this as a secret in the sense that it is hidden, but in the sense that not everyone in Christ attains to it. The key to the secret Paul is talking about is to be far more attached to Christ than we are attached to the things of this world. The secret for a Christian attaining to mental contentment and peace in this world or lacking it is in direct proportion to the love and attachment we have for this world and to the love and attachment we have for Christ (i.e., the greater the thing we are attached to the greater the power it has over us.

114. Paul's said, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philip 4:13). This verse has been used to teach that whatever those in Christ choose to do they will succeed because they can do all things through Christ who strengthens them," but this is not what Paul is saying. The context of Paul's statement is in the context of contentment and having a peaceful mind. Paul is saying, "No matter whether he is rich or poor, has plenty or lacks he is always content and at peace since he can cope with any situation or circumstance (good or bad) through Christ who spiritually and mentally strengthens him.

115. Paul said: "My God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. (Philip 4:19). The glorious royal and majestic riches Paul has in mind by far surpass any riches this world can offer since anything the world gives can not only be taken in a moment, but are also only temporary whereas God's riches in Christ are eternal and no-one can rob them nor can anything or anyone take them from the heart and mind of a faithful believer. God's riches in glory in Christ Jesus refer to those in Christ having their sins forgiven, having favour and fellowship with God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, having been adopted into the eternal family of God and given the free gift of righteousness by faith and God's grace and Gods promise that they will be resurrected to eternal life and everlasting glory. These are the riches that God supplies in Christ Jesus. The expression, "God's riches in Christ" carries the idea that everything needed for eternal salvation can be found in the Lord Jesus Christ.

116. Anyone can be a servant, all it requires is humbleness and character, sadly the world we live in does not give awards to people who do the mundane things of life, but God does, our world exalts the rich and famous simply because they are rich and famous, but God does not. Jesus said whoever gives a glass of water to a thirsty person will be rewarded. God's reward system works on us doing-good to other humans, no matter how small or mundane. When a Christian does a kind act to another human the Bible calls that act treasure in heaven.

117. Scripture states that those who have faith in Christ are sons and daughters of God and that God has sent the Spirit of his Son into their hearts crying, "Abba! Father!" (Gal. 4:6). The Spirit in this verse refers to the Spirit of love it is the Spirit of Christ's love that God has sent into the heart of every faithful brother and sister in Christ that cries, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit that motivates anyone to praise and exalt another with such heartfelt endearment is love. God through Christ's horrific, cruel, brutal and bloody death has produced in the heart of all who have faith in Christ such great love for God that they are by this love and their faith in Christ adopted by God as His sons and daughters and thereby heirs of everlasting life and eternal glory. Added to this they are not only delivered from the bondage of the law and the need to keep ceremonial rites, holy days religious customs and traditions, but also delivered from works and any other form of self-effort as a means to know God and to attain to righteousness that leads to salvation and eternal life. Thus the reason why every son and daughter of God who understand Christ's love and God's grace cry from their heart, "Abba! Father!" And why Paul wrote "We are no longer slaves, but sons and daughters and an heir through God (Gal. 4:7).

118. The apostle Paul wrote: "I have fought the good fight I have finished the race; I have kept the faith (2 Tim. 4:7). The Christian faith (as proclaimed in the Bible) is called the good fight because it is not fought with arguments, fist or weapons of war, but with love, mercy and grace and the end result of those who surrender to it, is joy, peace, contentment and eternal life in everlasting glory.

119. Jesus said, "You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. 5:48), but how can mere mortals be perfect as God is perfect?" Just prior to these words Jesus said, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the just and on the unjust" and then said, "You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." Being perfect in this context is about being perfect in love. During Christ's generation the Jews saw themselves as the holy race with God and the

Gentiles as an unclean race without God because of this the Jews considered the Gentiles to be an inferior race and generally did not mix with them. Sadly, some religions develop this type of mental attitude, a, "Them and Us" attitude to such an extent that they (consciously or unconsciously) view those outside their religion and those in the secular world as inferior and in some cases as enemies. Jesus in this verse is saying don't do this, don't show only those who are your friends or who belong to our religion kindness and goodness, treat everyone the same as we would treat our friends. Being perfect as God is perfect in this context is not only about treating everyone with kindness, compassion, decency and respect whether they are our friends or not and whether they belong to our faith or not, but is also about showing love toward people even if they dislike us.

120. John wrote, "Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness" (1 John 3:4). This verse is about outward actions and behaviour and shines a spotlight on the truth that sin is breaking the law. This means whoever lives a lifestyle of sin is also living a lifestyle of breaking the law which means if we are not breaking the law we are not sinning. Nevertheless, we are still a sinner this is because outward sin is a result of a corruption that dwells within. We are always a sinner because it is the nature of the flesh (self, ego, pride, greed, jealousies, anger, lustful thoughts envy, coveting and such like things), but this does not mean we are always sinning. The sinful aberrations and dysfunctions of the flesh and the sinful thoughts of the mind that we have inherited from our earthly father Adam make us all a sinner by nature, but until we actually break the law we are not sinning, this means even though a person is not sinning they are still a sinner. This shines a brilliant spotlight on two things firstly, why not one of us can attain to God's Holiness and the righteousness that leads to eternal life by works and self-effort, because no matter how good we are outwardly this sin nature remains lurking within. Secondly, the glory of God's grace and the beauty of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ that proclaims we are all saved by grace apart from self-effort, works of the law and adhering to ceremonial rites and holy days and keeping religious customs and traditions. (Secular psychologists rightfully refer to the nature of the flesh as the lower nature of humanity).

121. A young apprentice starts a new job, on his first day a fellow worker approaches him and says, "All the boys are buying ecstasy drugs how many do you want?" The young lad says, "Sorry I don't take drugs it is against what I believe." This man is a serpent to the boy by tempting him to compromise his principals. The man goes and tells the rest of the workers, "Hey guys this new apprentice is a wowser a self-righteous

religious nut." Now the man is a devil by being an accuser and slander. Then later in the same day one of the stronger men gets the boy by himself and says, "Listen you little runt of a kid, don't pull that religious stuff on us. I'll mess your face up good." This man is a Satan to the boy by being an opposer to what the young apprentice believes. The poor kid has confronted the serpent, the devil and Satan all on his first day of work.

122. Most people think they have to beg God to forgive them. Instead, God has already forgiven. We only have to look at the bloodstained cross to see the truth in this statement. To forgive was His idea done on His own initiative (whether we accept God's forgiveness and benefit from it is another question). No matter what we have done God has already forgiven us! God is not mad at us. Instead He loves us and desires to have a heartfelt relationship with us. Yes, God is against sin, because sin is harmful to humans. But He has already made provision for us to be forgiven. The Son of God paid the price for all our sins and God is no longer holding any sin against us! We have been forgiven. When we accept that, we can begin to receive the benefit of God's grace that Jesus brought to us all as he hung bleeding and suffering on the cross of Calvary.

123. The apostle Paul wrote, "There are many teachers in the Kingdom of God, but very few fathers." This shines a spotlight on the truth that Paul saw himself as a spiritual father to those he brought into the faith and to those he taught. It is often said that brothers and sisters in Christ should encourage one another in the faith, but very rarely taught that we should encourage those in Christ to become spiritual fathers (not in the Catholic sense), but with the idea of attaining to a place of fatherhood were we can stand alone in Christ whether we are encouraged by others or not. By standing alone in Christ I do not mean without fellowship, but without being dependant on the support of others for our faith and our joy in the Lord. Truly natural fathers do not expect their children to encourage and strengthen them in their struggles of life, yet I never hear it taught that God's desire is to raise up spiritual fathers who are so strong in their faith and relationship with the Lord that they can stand alone in Christ and give out to others not expecting anything in return, yet surly this should be the ultimate goal of every brother and sister in Christ.

124. No man or woman should give all their life to chasing after the things of this world and never consider God and eternal life, why? Because no one gets out alive and no matter how great the riches, wealth and possessions we have acquired in this mortal world or the importance and fame we have attained to it well all count for nothing when we are being lowered into the darkness of the grave. Added to this when we approach

the end of our mortal lifespan and reflect back over our life: time is as though it has passed as a blink of the eye and the riches that God will value when we reach our darkest hour is the richness the thoughts of the mind have given toward Him and the love, goodness, compassion and kindness that has been manifested toward others.

125. The church in Laodicea was very wealthy (according to worldly standards), but the Lord said that they were spiritually poor to the extreme (Rev. 3:14-17). In contrast to this the church of Smyrna was suffering great poverty (according to worldly standards), yet the Lord said that they were very rich (Rev. 2:8-9). This shines a brilliant spotlight on the truth that the spiritual well-being of a Christian church cannot be measured by how opulent and magnificent their building is, how high its steeple or how beautiful the stain glassed windows might be. The only way the spiritual well-being of any church can be measured is by how well faithfulness, devotion, honesty and integrity is manifested by its leaders and by their followers before God and by how well compassion, kindness, mercy, love and forgiveness is manifested toward each other and toward those outside the walls of their church.

126. The prophet Malachi wrote, "When those who are faithful before God speak with each other esteeming God's name, God not only pays attention and a book of remembrance is written of them before Him, but they will also become His treasured possession" (Malachi 3:16-17). One of the greatest struggles for faithful Christians to overcome is the thought that they are not doing enough for the Lord, but here is the beauty of God, every time we talk with each other esteeming God's name or even think about the Lord it is recorded in a book of remembrance (meaning God hears it and remembers it). It is not legalistic outward religious works God pays attention to and remembers, but the conversations we have with each other glorifying his name and the hidden and unspoken conversations we have with him in our hearts and our minds especially those conversations that are filled with gratitude, praise thankfulness and that exalt his name. God says He will make those who have this indwelling heartfelt attitude His treasured possession.

127. Much of the secular world have the idea that church is about Christians being in a religious building on a certain day of the week for a couple of hours, though the church maybe in that building the church is certainly not limited to this concept. Let me explain by sharing a great testimony: A teenage boy who had been raised in a third world country in a family who had never owned a place they could call home and who had endured years of famine as a child and seen death all around him, because of the most brutal wars, had with great courage overcome tremendous

sorrow and heartache was asked how he survived such horror and living all his life without place to call home? The boy gave the most beautiful answer, he said, "When you are with people you love home is anywhere you are." This same perceptive and insightful principal applies to the faithful church meaning anywhere Christians are gathered together in love for Christ the church is. It matters not whether they are gathered in a religious building, a home, a coffee bar or a riverside nor does it matter what day they gather, because wherever they are gathered in love the church is. This is because Christ's true church and the temple he is building is spiritual and the bricks and mortar it is being built with is people.

128. Many secular men and women who give absolutely no thought to God during their life, suddenly do so when death takes the life of someone they have deeply loved (especially if death has taken them long before their life should end). All of a sudden the eternal God not only becomes their highest thought, but also the comforting warmth of their heart in the belief that the one they have so deeply loved and lost to death is in an eternal place called heaven with God or with the angels (same thing really since you cannot have angels without God). I have never yet met anyone who has said, "Well that's it for them, the grave and darkness has swallowed them up, they are gone forever, extinct never to see light again." Everyone I have known when standing at a hospital deathbed or at the graveside of the one they have deeply loved has always comforted their overwhelming heartfelt grief and sorrow by believing and telling those with them that they have been taken to a better place with God and the angels even though they have never considered God during their life in this world. This mystery evidences to me that even though many worldwide never give any serious thought to God (some may have fleeting moments) until death and eternity is confronting them face to face (especially if it is a loved one that is taken) that somewhere deep in the human heart is the belief that there is a God and an existence of eternal life that is far more glorious than the mortal and temporal life of the world we live in here and now and that is beyond anything our mortal, finite human mind can comprehend.

129. Though David believed the LORD'S eternal promise that God would make him a great name through his seed he could never have imagined that it would come about as it did (i.e., though the death and resurrection of Christ), but it was not important for him to know every detail of God's eternal promise for it to comfort him and for it to come to pass. Likewise every brother and sister in Christ believes God's promise that Jesus will return in majestic glory, but not one of us fully understands every detail of this promise or how Christ will return in such glory and what his eternal

Kingdom will look like, but having a clear understanding of these things is not important to being saved or to the promise coming to pass since it is having faith in God's promise and trusting that God will bring it to pass that the Lord honours.

130. When sharing the Christian faith, the mental focus should never be upon changing people to become Christians, rather the mindset should be upon introducing them to the love and grace of God in Christ and upon trusting him to transform them in his time. This is because the global family of God on earth is made up of wounded children there is no faithful brother or sister in Christ that does not walk without a holy crutch. All faithful Christians know that as much as the heart desires to live a lifestyle that honors God their earthly nature remain in the miry clay of sin (i.e., selfishness, ego, pride, envy, jealousy, lustful thoughts, anger and such like things). This is because we are all descendants of Adam our earthy father. The glory of those who know God's love is that they know who's got the eternal bloodstained soap that through faith washes every stain of dirt as white as snow.

131. Though there are all sorts of religions in the world today everyone seeking the God of all creation and of eternal life should know that the Bible's message of the cross and the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is very easy to understand, so easy in fact that Jesus himself summed it up in the words, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16). Everything that is learned of the Scriptures beyond the message of the cross and the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ should be counted as spiritual treasures and though these treasures maybe counted as gold to those in Christ who have found them these spiritual treasure should never be thought of as being necessary for everyone seeking God to find to be in a heartfelt union of love and grace with God the Father and His Son the Lord Jesus Christ and to be saved to eternal life and everlasting glory.

132. The Bible speaks of a faithful eighty-four-year-old widowed woman named Anna who day and night (in her widowhood) gave her heart and mind to worshipping the Lord. Many grey haired, aged and frail Christian men and women who are in their advanced years of life and who obviously do not have the same physical ability or energy they had of youthful years gone by can like Anna delight and thrill not only their own hearts and minds, but also thrill and delight the heart of God and arouse stirring hallelujahs amongst all the angels in heaven. How some might wonder? By spending meditative time in prayerful thought and in thankful and heartfelt spiritual communion with the bloodstained Lord who has spiritually walked with them through their many faithful years of holding fast to their faith and their devotion to him.

133. There is no doubt (in my mind at least) that the story of God calling Abraham to sacrifice his only son Isaac brings a sense of horror and bewilderment to the natural mind that God would call a human father who is totally devoted by love to his only son to do such a horrific thing, but God's angel stopped Abraham from sacrificing Isaac. Obviously, God in His eternal foreknowledge never intended to allow Abraham to actually go through with it, so what was the point of all the horrific emotional drama inflicted upon Abraham and His son? Perhaps (this is not biblical, but only my thoughts) God thought the emotional expected horror we feel in our hearts and minds toward this story is giving us a spiritual insight that we can all relate to of what it cost God the Father to sacrifice His own beloved Son, so that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

134. The LORD came to Abraham when he was ninety-nine and his barren wife Sarah was eighty-nine and promised him that in the following year he would have a son by his wife Sarah upon hearing this both Sarah and Abraham laughed, Sarah no doubt at the thought, a woman of her age would conceive and give birth and Abraham probably with joy at the thought he would have a son from his own loins to become heir to all the promises God had made to him. Now here is the fun part, Sarah gave birth to a son and Abraham named him Isaac which means "He laughed," perhaps a little glimpse of Abraham's humour.

135. The greatest motivating power on earth is love people will, willing lay down their lives for someone they love. There is no greater power that influences the human heart to do-good than love. This of course is why God in his eternal mind and eternal wisdom purposed before the world began that salvation would be in his Son and not in intellectual head knowledge or legalistically adhering to ceremonial rites, holy days or strictly keeping religious customs and traditions. God who created the human nervous system, the emotions and the heart obviously knows that our emotions do not need to be told or commanded to respond to love (especially unconditional love) they just automatically do. God being love and knowing the motivating power of love in His great and eternal wisdom gave his only Son so that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life (John 3:16). When a person understands the unconditional love and grace God has toward them, they willingly from the heart desire to faithfully follow the Lord and live in a manner that honours God and brings a good testimony to the name of Christ and the Christian faith. God has designed salvation to be in His Son and not in intellectual head knowledge so that our faith would flow up to Him as a sweet-smelling fragrance of love that spontaneously springs from the uttermost depth of our heart.

136. In the book of Revelations it is written: "All that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8) and Peter wrote: "You were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot foreordained before the foundation of the world and manifest in these last times for you (1 Peter 1:18-20). These verses shine a brilliant spotlight on the truth that Jesus was not only the central focus of God's eternal mind and of His eternal plans and purposes for mankind's salvation and for eternity, but also the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. The cleansing power of Jesus blood shed on the cross of Calvary doesn't just cover and cleanse only those who have come to the Lord after his death and resurrection, but flows all the way back to the foundations of the earth to Adam and Eve like a spiritual invisible river cleansing all the faithful of the Old Testament from the fall of Adam onward who by faith looked to the appearing of the promised Messiah the Christ. The faithful of the Old Testament were saved by their faith that the blood of their sin sacrifices (shadows of Christ) covered their sin and by their faith in the promised seed of the woman spoken of in (Genesis 3:15), in the prophet Moses said was to come like him, in God's promise to Abraham that from his seed a deliver would come and by their faith in the promised seed of David the Messiah and Saviour. Whereas the faithful of the New Testament are saved by their faith in looking back to the bloodstained cross of Calvary and by looking forward to the glorious return of the Lord Jesus Christ. This shines a glorious eternal floodlight on the truth that whether a man or woman is of the Old or New Testament we are all saved by the same cleansing power, the same cleansing blood and the same deliver and Saviour. This is because God in his eternal mind planned and purposed before time began that His Son the Lord Jesus Christ would be the Saviour of all mankind for all eternity.

137. Perhaps an easy way to understand certain laws and rules of the Bible is to start from the foundational truth that God is absolute Holy, He is pure light, and since the Bible is a reflection of Him it can only be expected that any law or rule is going to be spoken and given in the light of absolute holiness. But God is also love and grace and understands we fall far short of His Holiness so perhaps when we read the Bible instead of viewing God's law and His rules as dogmatic legalistic laws to be used to judge and condemn others by it might be better to view them as teaching the ideal and always remember that the Law of God was placed under the Mercy Seat of the Ark of God (a symbol of God's holiness) which means no one could access the Law of God without passing through mercy first. Though God is Holy and pure light Himself, His laws given to us are always clothed with mercy.

138. The closer we spiritually grow toward God in love the greater the light we enter into and therefore the more we see how far we fall short of His Holiness not only in behaviour and attitude, but also in our thoughts. Now here is the Good News this results in a greater love for God. This is because we also enter into greater light of how much God lavishes His grace upon us and how boundless it is. Added to this glory it also magnifies the following two truths firstly, the truth Christ surrendered his life to a brutal bloody and cruel death not so that we could attain to God's Holiness, but because we couldn't and secondly, it results in us having a greater empathy toward those who we might once have harshly judged in our hearts and minds simply because they did not reach up to our self-righteous standard. This spiritual cycle of growing closer to God in love and gaining greater insights into our own sinful dysfunctions and aberrations in behaviour, attitudes and thoughts will go on until we enter the grave and are raised to immortality and eternal glory. But the Good News of all this is that on this side of eternity we learn to live in God's grace and God's love and learn to have far more empathy in our hearts and minds toward those who we once might have judged and condemned.

139. The world defines greatness in terms of power, possessions, prestige, position and fame, if you have others serving you; you have arrived in the eyes of the world. In our self-serving culture with its me-first mentality, acting like a servant is not a popular concept. In contrast to this worldly attitude Jesus never measured greatness in terms of power, possessions, prestige, and position. His idea of greatness is not based on status. This is because his heavenly Father determines greatness by how many people we serve and not by how many people serve us this is so contrary to the world's idea of greatness that we have a hard time understanding it, much less doing it. Even the Lords own disciples argued about who deserved the most prominent position and thousands of books worldwide have been written on leadership, but very few on servant-hood this is because everyone wants to lead, but very few want to be a servant.

140. Throughout history there has been much confusion over the following words of Jesus, "Unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood, you have no life in you whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, because my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink (John 6:52-60). Because of our lack of understanding the language of Jesus generation these words sound extremely cultish and almost satanic too many today. Even Jesus disciples when they heard Jesus say this, said, "This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?" But every Roman soldier knew that when a Roman king said to those who would follow him that they must be prepared to eat and drink the blood of their king to be a

loyal Roman soldier it meant they must not only be prepared to make him pre-eminent in their lives, but also be prepared to lay their lives down for him. This is what it means to eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Lord and the reason Jesus disciples said that it was a hard saying.

141. Some people pay hundreds of dollars to buy a Bible with a real leather cover the most glorious artwork and gold trimmed rice paper with the Scriptures written in a most majestic font. While others buy a second hand Bible from a Life-Line store for a couple of bucks, both these Bibles have the same power. This is because it is not how beautiful or expensive a Bible is that gives it power, but the faith of the person reading it. A two dollar Bible read with faith will have far more power than the most beautiful ancient Bible with the most exquisite cover and brilliant craftsmanship and flawless artwork on its pages that a man or woman will pay thousands of dollars for, but only read it as they would read any other book. It is not the beauty and expense of a Bible that gives it power, but the humble heart condition and faith of the person reading it.

142. A faithful brother or sister's primary ministry should be in the area of their talents, skill, abilities and gifts, but their secondary service is wherever they are needed at the moment. A person's shape, talents and gifts reveal their ministry, but their servant's heart will reveal their maturity and understanding of the Spirit of Christ. Christians should desire to be servant-leaders not just leaders, God often tests our hearts by asking us to serve in ways that do not fit the gift or ministry we are specifically called to or are shaped for. A leader may not be gifted for a particular task, but they may be called to do it if no one else is around.

143. Some who believe in God measure His love toward them by the circumstances of their life. When their life is blessed, they feel God loves them, but when they are suffering or in hardship, they feel God's has withdrawn his love, but this type of thinking is not only superstition and fantasy, but also judging God according to the fickle circumstances of life. The only way any faithful brother or sister in Christ should ever judge how much God loves them is to look at God's most beloved Son on the cross of Calvary with a crown of thorns stabbing his bleeding head, his bloodstained body pierced with nails and his arms outstretched saying, I love you this much!

144. When Jesus breathed his last breath on the cross God tore the curtain of the temple that prevented the common people from entering the Most Holy Place of God from the top to the bottom symbolising that the way into the Most Holy Place of God is now open to everyone and not just the High Priest. Now here is something truly amazing concerning the curtain. It was made of scarlet coloured thread. In Hebrew the word

scarlet can refer to the colour red or the worm the colour red comes from. Now here is the interesting thing: when the female of this species is ready to give birth to her young, it attaches its body to the trunk of a tree and fastens itself so firmly that it never leaves that place again. The eggs are deposited beneath its body and are protected by it until the larvae hatch and are able to enter their own life cycle. As the mother dies, the scarlet fluid stains her body and the surrounding wood. It is from the dead bodies of these female scarlet worms that the commercial scarlet dyes were extracted (Ungers Bible Dictionary). This gives us a very clear image of Jesus dying on the tree and shedding his blood that we may have life eternal. Thousands of years ago the prophet Isaiah wrote, "Come now, and let us reason together, "Says the Lord, "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like scarlet, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah 1:18).

145. In the book of Psalms, it is written, "From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the LORD is to be praised! This means Christians should praise God throughout the entire day, which means they are to praise Him at work, at home while working or watching TV, when they are enjoying times of leisure and when they are in bed. It means that worship is not limited to something that is done once a week, but is a heartfelt attitude that continually flows through the thoughts and silent voices of the mind in thankfulness and gratitude toward Christ and his heavenly Father. Worship that truly ascends before the throne of God is that worship that only God sees since it is taking place in the heart and mind of those who comprehend His abundant love displayed on the bloodstained cross of Calvary and the grace, He daily lavishes upon them. Worshipping together as a collective group is a beautiful thing when the assembly is filled with believers who in their hearts and minds daily praise God from the rising of the sun to its setting, but it should always be remembered worship is a heartfelt lifestyle it does not stop simply because the worship meeting has ended.

146. Some faithful brother's and sisters in Christ wonder if it is wrong to love, esteem and worship Christ more than God his heavenly Father. It could be likened to a child asking the question, "Who should I love more, Mum or Dad?" Obviously, the child is to love both Mum and Dad and have the same heartfelt gratitude toward both parents and neither parent is jealous of the child loving their spouse in fact it is quite the opposite they are thrilled that they do. Likewise Christians should love, esteem and worship God as their creator and heavenly Father and love, esteem and worship Christ as His most loved Son and as their redeemer, their perfect High Priest and eternal brother who laid his life down to a brutal, bloody and cruel death so that they could be saved to eternal life and everlasting glory. Since God's love for His Son is perfect and Christ's love for his

heavenly Father is perfect and both are of one mind and in perfect harmony and union having the same goals for us all the question, "Who should I love more?" should never enter the mind since God is not jealous of our love for his Son and Jesus is certainly not jealous of our love for His heavenly Father in fact both the Father and the Son are overjoyed when our love flows into their heavenly Kingdom and it is certain all the angels rejoice when they see it.

147. God through the prophet Hosea said, "I don't want your sacrifices, I want your love, I don't want your offerings, I want you to know me." These words of Hosea shine a brilliant spotlight on the most astounding truth that our Creator wants to fellowship with humans and that He made humans to love and is seeking for humans to love Him back. God deeply loves us and desires our love in return. God longs for us to know Him and spend time with Him. This is why seeking the love of God and being loved by Him should be the greatest goal of a human's life, nothing else comes close in heartfelt fulfillment and importance especially since such love leads to eternal life and everlasting glory.

148. People may not realise how much God wants to love them and be in fellowship with them because they think God is a Father without love, mercy and grace, and that He is all about judgment and rules. It is difficult for them to surrender to God because of the fear they have of Him. A person won't surrender to God unless they trust God, but they can't trust God until they know Him better. Trusting God is an essential ingredient to surrender, but fear keeps many from completely surrendering. John wrote, "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear, because fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love) (1 John 4:18). The more a person understands how much God loves them the less fear they will have of Him, Paul said, "Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law (Rom 13:10) this means that love does no harm, therefore knowing God's love means, knowing that God will not do harm, that is why love cast out fear. Many have friends who they know love them regardless of their human limitations to be perfect, so they are comfortable and honest with them because they know their friends love will cover any of their human imperfections. This is the spiritual friendship Christ wants to have with us.

149. It is interesting to notice that prior to the death and resurrection of Christ the focus of biblical writers is on the Kingdom of God, but after his resurrection the focus is on the King of the Kingdom and on the resurrection to eternal glory. This is because Jesus is the royal path to salvation whereas the Kingdom is the inheritance of those who belong to the King. The New Testament gives very little detail of where eternal glory

will be except to say that those who attain to the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-5) will be clothed with an immortal body and be eternally with the Lord in everlasting glory and for those who know the love of Christ this is enough.

150. Jesus said, the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you (John 14:17). The words of Christ are not only spoken of as being the truth, but are also personified as a person that dwells in the heart of all faithful believers this is because Jesus himself is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6). There are two ways in which the Spirit of truth dwells within, firstly by having a right understanding of the words and teachings of Christ and believing them and secondly, by love. Let me explain, consider, when a teenage girl and boy fall in love for the first time even though they are apart there are very few moments in the day when she and the boyfriends mind is not in some way thinking about each other, the one they love is always present in their heart and thoughts even as they go about their daily lives it could be rightly stated that they are spiritually dwelling within each other by love. Likewise, this is what the Bible means when it says, "You know him, for he dwells in you." Jesus dwells in those who love the truth and are faithful to him by love, it is by love that Christ dwells in a faithful brother or sister and if Christ is spiritually dwelling in the heart and mind of a believer then it is perfectly right and proper to personify the Spirit of truth as a person since the truth concerning God and eternal salvation is in Christ and the words he spoke so whoever has Christ spiritually dwelling within by love has eternal life.

151. John wrote, "Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love" (1 John 4:8) and, "whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him" (1 John 4:16) this not only shines a spotlight on the truth that God is love, but also upon the truth that love is the basis and underlying Spirit of all of God's Laws in the Old and New Testament since the laws of God protect the innocent from physical, emotional, mental and spiritual harm and hurt, therefore sin is the absence or distortion of love. Perhaps the answer to what is sin is not in whether what I am doing is right or wrong, but an issue of love. First and foremost am I encouraging other people's spiritual growth and their relationship with God?" And secondly is my relationship to others loving and healthy for them and for me? Sin is simply this if I do not love God and put Him first in my life, this is a sin and if I mistreat others or myself physically, financially, sexually, emotionally, or spiritually, it is a sin. Ponder the following Questions, "If in the resurrection all Christians become as the angels and there are no marriages in eternity is God concerned with the superficial things that worry us? Does God care what a person's, gender,

skin colour, or church affiliation is, if they are fulfilling the Royal Law of Love and are not bringing harm to any other human? If the code of a Christian life is to live under the New Testament law of love, do things that do not bring any harm other humans have any meaning to God?

152. Ten amazing plaques, the Red Sea parted and multitudes of God's amazing wonders, yet year's later Israel forgot the miracles God had done. How amazing is this Israel forgot! Their own craving became more important than what God had done for them in the past and they rebelled. Perhaps there is an important lesson to be learned in this, never let the present crisis cancel the memory God's past blessings or the promise of eternal life (Psalm 106:13-15).

153. David's love for God is never dependant on his outward circumstances or his inward condition (whether they are good or bad). David's faith always soars above his wealth or lack of it, his sickness, his sin, his defeats by his enemies, his despair and his depression etc. It does not matter what emotional or physical condition he is in it does not affect his faith and his love for God or God's love for him. True faith is not dependent on success, good feelings or emotions it soars above all circumstances, trails and troubles.

154. Asaph was a man with a deep, spiritual contemplative nature appointed over the service of the praise. He led the singing and sounded cymbals before the Ark and set up a school of music and wrote many Psalms. He accused God of being angry with His people and causing them great suffering and speaks his honest mind and thoughts before God. Asaph honestly expresses how he feels and how he perceives things to be, but none of this is from a lack of his love and devotion to God. He did not think God had stopped loving him simply because his outward circumstances were falling apart, or because he was suffering and in hardship. Asaph's faith was not dependent on his circumstances; his faith was much greater than that it was beyond circumstances, suffering, sickness, or poverty and the need to understanding everything. Enduring faith endures and remains steadfast in God simply because God is the Most High LORD, the Sovereign Almighty God and the Creator of all things.

155. Some of the writers of the Psalms whose life was in great turmoil, felt that the LORD had forsaken them, yet they declared that they will again praise the LORD. Just because a person is depressed or feels that God has abandoned them does not mean that the LORD has, it simply means they are in an external crisis that is almost too much for them to cope with, or they are in despair or feeling depressed in their emotions.

Many writers of the Psalm including David felt all of these troubles yet it did not affect their faith because they knew, even if they died that they would again arise to praise the LORD, their faith was greater than their feelings, their emotion and their troubles.

156. Night and day David had no peace with the LORD, he was in despair grief, pain and misery and felt the LORD'S hand was heavy upon him, his spirit, strength and joy was dried up, until he confessed his sin and stopped trying to hid his iniquity from the LORD, but confessing our sin only will have no power to bring healing and restore fellowship with the LORD, there is a second part to David's prayer. Once he had confessed and acknowledged his sin he knew the LORD forgave him, without this confidence acknowledging our transgression is stripped and robbed of its power to heal. In all reality it was pointless for David to cover his transgression, God knows about them and sees them long before we come to Him in prayer. There is nothing that is hidden from God's sight, yet because of shame, embarrassment and a sense of failure David tried to hid his iniquity from the LORD, but in doing so guilt robbed him from the abundant mercy, grace, love, joy and forgiveness the LORD wanted to bless him with. David said, the one who has no deceit, meaning they do not deceive themselves they do not remain silent about their transgressions but confess and acknowledge their sin to themselves and before the LORD, is blessed and happy because their transgressions are forgiven and LORD does not count their iniquity, but they themselves must have confidence they are forgiven. David wrote, "Let everyone who is godly pray to the LORD at a time when God may be found; surely in the rush of great waters, they shall not reach him". This simply means that God cannot be found in the rush of a busy life or a troubled mind. David's advice, find a quiet place, put the cares of the world aside, calm the mind, and then enter into the LORD'S presence (Psalms 32).

157. The Christian faith should be the least materialistic faith on earth, but sadly has in some circles today become one of the most materialistic faiths. Many of the writers of Psalms say, the LORD will satisfy the desire of the heart of all who love Him this does not mean the LORD will give us worldly riches, wealth and fame or an abundance of material possessions. He may, but God is not dependent on any of these worldly things to satisfy the human heart. This is because knowing and loving God is dependent upon spiritual things, not worldly things. The LORD does not need any worldly thing to give the human heart joy peace, contentment and love. God is not dependent on anything external to satisfy the heart, the only thing He is dependent on is for us to yield and surrender our life and our circumstance to Him and then for us to trust and love Him. This is why the Christian faith in its pure form meets the need of the poor and rich

alike, because its blessings are spiritual and meets every spiritual need of the human heart. God may bless those that belong to Him with worldly riches, but He is not dependent on worldly riches to fulfil our hearts with joy, peace contentment and His love.

158. David had a beautiful faith toward God and yet when we read the Psalms we discover when he was in a crisis or surrounded by his enemies he is often in fear and distress. Many Christians have this idea that if they have super faith they should never feel any negative emotion, but David often did. Yet David was a great man of faith. This shines a spotlight on the truth that feelings and emotions are not faith. Faith is not dependent on how we feel. Faith is belief, it is independent of emotions, faith may produce feelings, but faith is not the feeling it is producing. A person can be full of joy and yet have very little faith, while another may be in great distress or despair and yet have great faith, because faith is independent of joy or fear, faith may produce joy, but joy is not faith. How encouraging is this, we can all be constantly connected to God regardless of how we are feeling (Psalm 59).

159. The LORD through Isaiah comforts the faithful who are being cast out of the temple by their religious legalist priests who have the authority over the temple by telling them that it is actually those who are casting them out that the LORD will put to shame. The following story shines a beautiful light upon what the LORD is saying to those being cast out of the temple. Years ago I watched a movie in which a godly Negro family had to relocate to a new town for work, once they settled in the man's wife wanted to go to church, so they dressed appropriately and went to the closest church to their home. When they went to enter they were coldly told coloured people are not welcome in this church. The Negro man comforting his devastated and tearful wife, put his muscular black arm around her shoulders and in his broken English said, "Don't yah worries missie, eys a ben talking to da Lord and he said he can't get in that church either."

160. The message the world needs to hear, is that it is by faith, love and grace that sinners are saved and not by strictly adhering to ceremonial rites, holy days and keeping religious customs and traditions, but by being in a loving, forgiving, faithful and committed relationship with Christ. This is because in Christ are all the promises of God, if we attach ourselves to Christ by faith and love we have God's forgiveness, God's favour and will inherit all the eternal promises God made to Abraham because all these things are in Christ. Attach yourself to Christ and God will take you to everlasting and eternal glory.

161. The prophet Micah shines a brilliant spotlight upon what is really important to the heart of God. He wrote: we can bow and pray to God and give Him all our time and thousands of dollars and do all the outward religious stuff and even teach our own children about Him, but the thing that is really important to God's heart and what He really wants and absolutely loves is simply for people to do justice, love kindness, and to walk humbly with Him (Micah 6:6-8).

162. Jonah says those who believe in false gods, forsake their hope of steadfast love when trouble comes, meaning they doubt that the god they believe in loves them and so they forsake the god they have believed in. The Christian faith is the only faith that has a God who expressed His love through the sacrificing of His only beloved Son the Lord Jesus Christ. Whenever a Christian doubts God's love all we have to do is look at the bloodstained cross and see what it cost the Father's heart to save us and the horrific price Christ had to pay to redeem us. God's love toward us is manifested in Christ on the cross and not our immediate situation, mental disposition or outward circumstances.

163. While we live on this side of eternity in our mortal bodies' life brings across our path difficult circumstances and confusing times where there seems to be no reasonable purposes or reason for the troubles, sorrows and hardships that we maybe facing. In these moments of darkness we are called to be like Abraham who, not knowing where he was going, simply lived in the present moment, moving toward his goal living his life in faith, trusting God and looking forward to everlasting life and the eternal city whose builder is God (Heb. 11:8-10).

164. Some Christians have the idea that believing that leads to eternal life means affirming a set of claims, a set of statements to be true: believing that God exists, that the Bible is the word of God, that Jesus is the Son of God born of the Virgin Mary, that he died for our sins, that he rose from the dead, that he is the only way to salvation, that he will come again and so on and so forth, but believing in a set of claims has no power to save anyone. In the New Testament the object of belief that leads to eternal life is always set upon a person and not statements of truth. This is the difference between believing that and believing in. To believe in a person is quite different to believing a series of statements about that person. New Testament believing means believing in and thus a relationship of trust, loyalty, and love (i.e. to most to believe meant to believe). To the early Christians believing in God and Jesus did not mean "I believe that the following statements about God and Jesus are true" rather to believe in God and Jesus carried the following two meanings, firstly it meant trust in God and trust in Jesus not trust in statements

about God and Jesus for this would be believing that, but to trust in God as known in Jesus and secondly, to commit one's allegiance, loyalty and love to God and Jesus. It is this kind of believing faith that leads to eternal life it is about being faithful and loyal and commitment to God as known in Jesus in contrast to believing statements about God and Jesus. The two are very different, the first leads to an emphasis on believing right statements, the second leads to a transformed life. This does not mean that it is wrong to believe in statements about God, Jesus and the Bible, but believing in statements will not save a person rather the statements are to lead a person to Christ who is the only one who can save anyone to eternal life, it is trusting in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ that saves a person not trusting in statements about him.

165. There are many religions and faiths in the world today, all of them teach their followers that they can find God by doing good works and keeping religious rites, ceremonial customs and traditions or by attaining to a mental state of peace through different kinds of meditation techniques. Though both of these maybe good in themselves they are not the path to God (the God of creation). Jesus said, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16) and John wrote, "Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love (1 John 4:8) and that, "Whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him (1 John 4:16). This means that the foundation of the entire Christian faith is love. God who created us obviously knows that the greatest need of the human heart is love (i.e., to be loved). Almost all emotional problems are overcome if a person knows they are truly loved and accepted for who they are not only on the inside, but also on the outside. This is clearly the reason God has made the path to Him totally different to the teaching of all other religions. The royal and eternal path to God is a path of love, grace and faith. What other religion, faith or spiritual teachings proclaim such a majestic and glorious pathway to God. The power of the Christian Gospel lies in love? People will climb the highest mountains swim the deepest oceans for love even more than this almost everyone will without hesitation lay down their lives for a person who they know loves and cares for them unconditionally. This is how God loves those who devote themselves in love to His Son and how Christ loves those who come to him. Since love is the greatest need of the human heart and the royal path to God this should be made the highest focus of all Christian teaching not only to brothers and sisters in Christ, but to the unbelieving world.

166. Paul wrote, "Jesus gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works" (Titus 2:13-14). Here is the glory the beauty and wonder of the Christian faith, it is not about being united with an

overload of intellectual head knowledge, but being united in love with the Lord Jesus Christ himself who laid down his life to save us from sin and deliver us from death. Jesus himself said, "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lays down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). It is from this great love that Christ has for his brothers and sisters (his friends) that their zealousness and desire to live a life that honours his heavenly Father stems and not from the demand of the Law to obey. The greatest motivating power on earth is love, people will, willing lay down their lives for someone they love there is no other greater power that influences the human heart to do-good than love. This of course is why God in his eternal mind and eternal wisdom purposed before the world began that salvation would be in his Son the Lord Jesus Christ and not in intellectual head knowledge or in strictly adhering to ceremonial rites and holy days or legalistically keeping religious customs and traditions.

167. Some may wonder, how people who believe in Christ, who they have never seen develop a love relationship that is so great that they are prepared to die for him. With today's modern technology it's quite easy to understand. Men and women communicate with each other over the internet for months and sometime even years without ever meeting or having any physical contact with each other because they live thousands of miles apart and yet they became best friends because they get to know each other like no other person knows them and when they finally do meet in reality the joy is overwhelming. Likewise, faithful Christians develop the same relationship with the one who they have never seen and when he does appear, they like the men and women who have fallen in love with those they have never seen will also be overwhelmed with abundant joy.

168. Many may believe Christianity is simply a fantasy of the mind, on one level I agree with them 100%. Children (even some adults) believe in Santa Claus, certain adults are totally convinced they have aliens living in their houses and stalkers have a love fixation on a woman that does not even know they exist, so what is the difference? Why, is it that loving Christ is not simply a fantasy of the mind like many other fantasy's and illusions of the mind? The answer is this, there is no evidence Santa or aliens exist and clearly the stalker is totally misguided, but in contrast to this archaeology, history and prophecy proves much of the Bible. Added to this the Bible not only reveals the nature of mankind to a tee, but also perfectly exposes our flaws and greatest needs. So at a certain level it is easy to see Christianity as a fantasy or an illusion of the mind brought into existence by sheer belief and at one level this is a true statement. But for those who understand the glory of the Bible the fantasy is supported by overwhelming evidences of proof which transcend the fantasy to a level that becomes reality. Just as one plus one equals two

the evidence God has left us in the marvel of creation and through the history of Israel and the wisdom of proverbs, the writing of Ecclesiastes, the honest heart felt highs and lows of King David's relationship with God, the exposing wide open the true nature of mankind, the prophecies that have been fulfilled and are still yet to be fulfilled convinces every believer that what the world may consider fantasy is in actual fact far more real than what the scientists of this mortal world we live in tell us.

169. When salvation to eternal life is spoken of as the hope of the faithful in Christ, it is not called hope because it might or might not happen, but because it is unseen and yet future. The hope itself is guaranteed because it is based on God's promise and He cannot lie. The apostle Paul wrote; "In hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began" (Titus 1:2). The Christian hopes to be resurrected from the grave to be raised up to eternal life and everlasting glory, to be made perfectly free from sin and to be everlastingly happy. It is faith that gives these things a mental reality in the mind and it is under this influence of faith that those in Christ allow these unseen and yet future events to control their mind as if they were a reality now. The difference between faith and hope is that by faith alone we are sure of eternal salvation it is certain and guaranteed by faith whereas by hope we look forward with confidence that we will have eternal salvation. All Christian hope stands on faith since it is faith that secures and guarantees the promise of God. Faith and hope go together they are partners that complement each other since the same things that are the focus of our hope are the same things that our faith is trusting in. Faith secures while hope looks forward to what is secured by faith.

170. Paul wrote: "When they (the local leaders of the Jews at Rome) had appointed a day for him they came to him at his lodging in greater numbers. From morning till evening, he expounded to them, testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus both from the Law of Moses and from the prophets (Acts 28:23). The local Jewish leaders in Rome desired to hear Paul's views regarding the sect called Christians because they were spoken against by the Romans and the Jews who opposed the Christian faith so Paul holds meetings in his hired home (v30) and people in great numbers come to him. The Jewish authorities had not only meticulously kept the writings of the Old Testament Scriptures and of Moses and the prophets on scrolls and memorised and treasured them more than gold, but also read them every Sabbath in the synagogues. Paul being fully aware of this skilfully and brilliantly shines a spotlight on the Scriptures that speak of Moses telling the people that a prophet would come like him and the many verses that speak of the promised seed of Abraham and of promised seed of David and the one the prophets said was to come and the one the Old Testament Scriptures

speak off so it should have become very clear to them that Jesus was their Messiah the Christ, but instead they plotted to murder Jesus and aggressively set about persecuting Paul. This very clearly shows that if a person's heart is full of pride, ego and selfish ambition it matters little what a person says and no matter how skilfully and brilliantly they may say it, if people have a wrong heart attitude, they will not receive it. Paul was masterfully brilliant and skilful at using the Old Testament Scripture to prove to the unbelieving Jews that Jesus was the Christ and yet they reject both the Lord and Paul. This should be a great encouragement to every faithful brother and sister in Christ who find that after sharing the message of the cross and the Good News of the Gospel it is rejected, why some might wonder? Simply this: If Paul the master of Biblical knowledge could not persuade everyone, we certainly should not expect to be any different. It is interesting to notice that when Paul refers to the Old Testament Scriptures when talking to unbelieving and doubtful Jews, his primary focus is not upon teaching them the Old Testament, but using the Scriptures to prove that Jesus is their Messiah the Christ and the one the prophets said was to come and the Old Testament Scriptures speak of.

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