



WELCOME TO BIBLE HOUSE OF GRACE

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Snippets

(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. When viewing the world on a global level people (especially intellectual people) can have polar opposite world views and yet both can be correct in their particular perspective. This is because we are all infected and influenced by sin at some level, in some it is almost impossible to find because of their goodness while in others it is grossly apparent and because of this the world is a mixture of honesty and deceit of self-sacrifice and narcissistic selfishness and of humble goodness and prideful corruptness. This means if one is focused on the goodness in the world and another on what is corrupt though their opinions and world view will be totally opposite, both views will contain a truth. This reality should highlight to us all that we should never dismiss a person simply because they have a different opinion or worldview, without trying to understand why they think the way they do since it is almost certain that both views will contain a certain amount of truth (this principal especially applies to those who are religious).

2. Some say that to endure in Christian fellowship we must see each other on a regular basis truly this is beautiful when circumstance allow it, but Christian fellowship is not dependent upon it. Why some might wonder? Simply this, Christian fellowship is global, eternal and spiritual. This is because love is not bound by time meaning it matters not whether we see each other on a weekly basis or not when we know another brother or sister's heart is connected to the Lord in honest faithfulness they hold a special place in our heart (this principal is true whether we personally know them or not) and no matter how much time passes our endearment and love toward them never fades. Christians all over the world have had heartfelt endearing friendships with faithful men and women in the global body of Christ who they do not see any more on a regular basis since circumstance of life have moved them away and others are so busy with the demands of their work and surviving the financial struggles of life that the very limited leisure time they do have is best spent with their spouses and families rather than getting together with others on set time every week. Nevertheless though they do not see these people on a regular basis they are engraved on their mind and hold a very dear and real place in their heart because they know that no matter where they are in life their heart is connected in faithfulness and love to the same Lord that they love. Though the perfect ideal is to fellowship together on a regular basis, fellowship is not dependent upon it since it matters not whether we see those who are bonded in love to the Lord every-day or once a year or only have contact on Face Book they hold a very real place of fellowship in the heart and when we do see them it is like no time has passed. This is because Christian fellowship is having a common love in the Lord Jesus Christ and his love is eternal and not bound by walls or time.

3. Christ surrendered his will to his heavenly Father and surrendered his mortal life to his enemies and sinners are called to yield, submit and surrender their life to obeying God. In today's competitive culture we are taught to never give up and never give in, so we don't hear much about surrendering, because if winning is everything, surrendering is unthinkable. It is such an unpopular word that it is disliked almost as much as the word submission, because it implies losing, and no one wants to be a loser, surrender evokes the unpleasant images of admitting defeat in battle, forfeiting a game, or yielding to a stronger opponent. The word is almost always used in a negative context (i.e., captured criminals surrender to authorities). We would rather talk about winning, succeeding overcoming and conquering than yielding, submitting, obeying and surrendering, but surrendering to God is the heart of worship, it is the natural response to God's amazing love and mercy. Paul wrote, "God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8) those who know this love surrender themselves to Lord not out of fear, weakness or duty, but from love, because he first loved us.

4. Often people say, "I loved the worship today, I got a lot out of it," this is a misconception about worship, it is true that in true worship the ones worshipping will spiritually benefit, but worship isn't primarily for the believers' benefit, worship is for God's benefit. When we come together to worship our goal should be to bring glory and delight to the heart of God, not to ourselves. When a person says, "They never got anything out of the worship" maybe it is because they worshipped for the wrong reason, those who belong to Christ should not be worshipping to please themselves, but to delight God. Biblical worship is about bringing glory and pleasure to Christ and to His heavenly Father for His abundant and undeserved grace that comes to us through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Worship is not a part of a Christian's life, it is their life, worship is not just for church services it is an ongoing attitude of thankfulness and gratitude toward God for His grace, mercy and love and the free gift of righteousness all those who trust in Christ receive through faith Jesus. In the collective gathering at a church service this inward thankfulness is expressed outwardly in various ways, but individually worship is that deep heartfelt gratitude that flows silently through the thoughts of the mind toward God in thankfulness.

5. Those who have managed to leave their homeland to escape oppressive dictatorships not only say that they will never forget the oppression of a dictatorship, but also that they will never forget the three principals of life, bread, freedom and social justice all things they never had. Those who have escaped such oppression say that the goal of all government worldwide should be that everyone has food, everyone is free of oppression and that justice (doing what is right and fair) is available to

all. Those who have escaped such dictatorships say they will never go back to their homeland while its government is being ruled by a dictator. Yet when Christ returns the Bible says that he will rule as King of kings and Lord of lords which means he will be the greatest dictator of all mankind, but there is a vast difference to his dictatorship to all other dictators who have come before him and that difference is that Christ will rule not from the lust for power, but from compassion and justice for all mankind. Remember this King not only laid his life down for those who follow him, but also delivered them from the condemnation of the law and death and brought freedom not bondage.

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. The Old Testament prophets and those who belonged to God saw everything even death as from the hand of the LORD, there was no such thing as luck. In their faith they credited God for everything that affected their lives whether it was positive or negative. In many circles today's Christianity so badly wants God to be the nice guy that bad things don't fit in with the modern Christian Gospel, because a nice guy does not do harmful things so much of today's Christian faith is reduced to believing in a God that only controls good. The Old Testament believer's faith was not like this, they did not judge God by niceness or badness, good circumstances or bad ones, there was no division for them God controlled everything positive or negative. To those that were faithful and totally yielded to the LORD God was not a nice guy or a bad guy to them He was the majestic and awesome God who controlled nations, creation and the sovereign power controlling their lives in both the good and the bad circumstances. It appears, if they were in conscious rebellion to God, they accepted it as discipline, but if it was circumstances beyond their control, they simply believed God had a higher or eternal purpose that was beyond their limited human understanding. David throughout the Psalm's often credits God for his depression, despair, anxiety sickness and asked the LORD, "Why is your hand heavy on me?" he did not try to flatter God or make Him appear the nice guy. David and all the others who wrote Psalms spoke from the honesty of their heart, they did not fear God was going to withdraw His love or be disappointed with them just because they were having a down moment, in fact God delighted in David so much he calls him a man after his own heart.

8. According to Australian statistics Christianity in our country is diminishing, clearly much of this would be because of religious formalism, tradition and the hypocrisy of child sex abuse, but I wonder if much of it can be credited to the rise over the last twenty years of churches proclaiming a Gospel of success, prosperity and well-being. This type of message has a great appeal to self, pride and ego, so these churches grow very quickly, but the dropout rate is also very high. Overtime followers who have embraced this positive prosperity message eventually discover that what they have been taught does not accord with real life. The true message of Christ will not only bring life to people in third world countries who have nothing and to people who have everything, but will also bring life to the noble and to the most lowly of society because the message of Christ is spiritual and heavenly not worldly and materialistic.

9. The title, "The Sons of God" is often used in the Bible in generally carries the idea of believers who are spiritually strong and able to support themselves (it embraces males and females) in contrast the title, "Daughters of God" generally carries the idea of needing protection. Every father who loves his children will clearly relate to this since even though a father will of course help their sons if they are in need and able there is a deeper concern for the daughters. It's not a question of one being loved more than another, but of one being more vulnerable than the other. As we get older we clearly see that life is often difficult, partly because we in our youthful years are all victims of our lack of knowledge and lack of wisdom and because of this lack are victims of our own emotions and make choices we later regret, youthful dreams crash and the hopes people who loved us wished for us don't come to pass, but despite all this fathers when able are always there to lift his children up and give a helping hand in times of great need. I guess this is why the main title for God is, "Father." No one no matter how much of the Bible they may know and understand or how brilliant there mind is scientifically can explain the appearance and form of God, but we can all know that spiritually His heart is that of a Father and all who have faith in His Son the Lord Jesus Christ and faithfully following him are the apple of his heavenly Fathers eye.

10. The key to being a servant of Christ is to care about the well-being of others in contrast to looking to peers for a pat on the back. When we are seeking strokes of approval from others it shows that we are only in the ministry to feed our pride and ego and not to serve the Lord.

11. There is a great danger that those in ministry who have faithfully made sacrifices and served God (especially if it's been for many years) to feel (consciously or unconsciously) that God owes them because they have served Him. They feel when a crisis comes into their life God should and will take care of it. To give an example: if a loved one gets seriously

sick those with this attitude expect God is bound to heal their loved one, because God owes them. If the loved one dies, they turn bitter and resentful toward Him, because they reason, "I have done all this for you Lord and you do nothing for me." Though they may not realize it until they are tested the underlying thought of this attitude is, "I'll do this for you God, if you'll do something for me," but God cannot be bargained with. No one can use their service as a bargaining tool with God for the following two reasons, firstly, God cannot be bargained with and secondly, God has sacrifice His only beloved Son that we might be saved to eternal life by grace and not by self-effort or having to strictly adhere to ceremonial rites, holy days and keep religious customs and traditions. Every servant of the Lord should have the glorious faith of Habakkuk who said, "Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD; I will take joy in the God of my salvation (Habakkuk 3:17-18). Habakkuk's faith was not dependent upon worldly circumstances good or bad, but upon the faithfulness and love of God.

12. The power of belief is that what is believed does not have to be true to affect emotions and behavior, people whip and cut themselves because of what they believe. I have seen an attractive young woman howl like wolves and other men and woman crawl around like animals and do ridiculous things in front of a religious assembly of thousands because they believed they were following the voice of God. Worse than this, others kill innocent people because of what they believe and what they believe is grossly wrong. This is because outward behavior will be affected by inward belief whether that belief is true or false. Think this is not a true statement, just consider all the young men and women who strap bombs to their bodies and not only kill themselves, but kill hundreds of innocent men, woman and children believing they are doing it in the will of God. Such is the power of belief, true or false. I would go as far as to say that belief (true or false) is the most powerful force on earth for good and for evil. The foundation of the Christian faith should be love. John said, "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 them" (1 John 4:16). Paul wrote, "Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law (Rom. 13:10). These verses shine a brilliant spotlight on the truth that anything done against the law of love is also against the will of God.

13. The general principal concerning women becoming wives in the Old Testament appears to be when a man had intercourse with the intention of having children the woman automatically became his wife. This principal did not apply to prostitutes or concubines since there was no

intention to have children. Nevertheless, if a man had concubines under the Law of Moses, he still had to treat them as he would a wife. He was expected to perform a husband's duty toward his concubines and provide for them financially (i.e., give them protection, food and shelter). This is probably why only kings had concubines, who else could afford them?

14. Some of the atheist groups have Sunday assembly worship services run in exactly the same way as a Christian church service. Why? They say because in this way they can get the best things the church has without the worst. They can celebrate as a bonded community without the bad. The only rule is that the G word...God must not be mentioned. It is certain some Christians will say that these people just want to do their own thing, (maybe some do), but many began believing something was missing in their life and started by seeking God and tried all sorts of religions and Christian churches and though they loved them at first, said, "Eventually there was religion," meaning eventually there was church control and this aspect turned them away. Many Christians who once were faithful church goers that I have met who are now outside of church walls are not outside of them because of the Lord Jesus Christ, but because those in religious authority (who cannot see the heart or the inward struggles of their followers) forget God's grace and put laws and demands on their followers that they cannot attain to (at least for that time of their life). Clearly I believe denying God is foolishness, but in saying that I fully understand why many would deny Him especially if they have only known the God as a legalistic, dogmatic and demanding God and have never known His love and abundant grace.

15. Most of us would have to attend a university to learn all the rules and laws recorded in the Bible, luckily for us Jesus reduced them all down to the following two: "Love God with all your heart and mind" and "Love your neighbour as yourself" (Mark 12:30-31). James the brother of Jesus calls the law, "Love your neighbour as yourself," the Royal Law (James 2:8). Our neighbour embraces every human and not just those who attend Christian churches. No sane man or woman deliberately inflicts harm on themselves in fact sane people not only do whatever they can to avoid being hurt, but also do everything they can to protect themselves from pain and loss it is in this sense that Christians are called to love their neighbour as themselves. It means respecting a person's right of life (thou shalt not kill), their home and family (thou shalt not commit adultery), their property and possessions (thou shalt not steal). Respecting their reputation (thou shalt not bear false witness) and in thought respecting their right of life, home, family, property, possessions and reputation (thou shalt not covet), but it goes beyond these because it also embraces doing whatever we can to protect others from pain and harm as we endeavour to protect ourselves. Any religion of any nation or religious

institution that claims to believe in God, but behaves contrary to these two laws is not acting in the Spirit of God or according to His will even though they maybe claiming to be acting in his name.

16. Many in the secular world claim that the Christian faith is a great illusion of the mind, because God is spiritual and invisible, and no-one has seen him or touched him. Added to this God can only communicate through the human mind by our belief in Him. Since no one can prove God exists there certainly seems to be a strong case to support the unbeliever's claim, belief in God is a great illusion of the mind. But this statement could be said of any faith including evolution and atheism since no one can prove that we came from a big bang and no one can prove God does not exist so it matters little whose minds we are accusing of being influenced by a great illusion because whether we are Christians, evolutionist or atheist we all have to have faith to believe what we believe. Certainly Christianity, evolution and atheism all have their evidences, but all these evidences only hold true by having faith in the teachings of men and woman who have never seen God or by having faith in the suppositions of those who have never seen life created by a big bang or by having faith in the theories of those who have never returned from the dead to prove that God does not exist. So, should anyone stand in superior arrogant pride and point a finger and accuse all Christians of believing an illusion (in the sense God cannot be proven) they should always remember there are three fingers pointing back at themselves since they also cannot prove what they believe.

17. The Bible speaks of four women Tamar, Ruth, Rahab and Bathsheba whose names were in some way tainted by scandal. Tamar was a widow without children who dressed up as a prostitute so that she could trick her father-in-law into sleeping with her in order to claim her legal right to continue the family line of her deceased husband. Ruth was not Jewish by birth, but her Jewish mother-in-law Naomi helped her into a marriage with Naomi's wealthy relative, Boaz, so that Ruth could also perpetuate her family line. Rahab was a prostitute, but she put her efforts toward helping the Jews enter the Promised Land. Bathsheba bathed naked on her rooftop and King David lusted after her to such an extent that he gave orders that she be brought to his palace and he committed adultery with her. Why am I shining a spotlight on these four women? Simply to say this, "All of these women used unconventional methods to accomplish extraordinary things that profoundly affected the history of God's people. Now I am not suggesting any woman should use such methods to advance God's Kingdom, but if a woman's life has been badly tainted it clearly does not mean that God cannot use them for His purposes.

18. Today atheists are just as aggressive at promote their belief that there is no God as Christians are in promoting their belief that there is a God. I wonder if the atheist realises, they are actually a religion that has just as strong a faith in their belief that there is no God as Christians do in the belief that there is a God. There is no doubt (in my mind at least) that both groups can present very logical and sound arguments why they are right and the other group is in error, but at the end of all human reasoning neither group has any real tangible and absolute proof that what they believe is true. This means that whether a person is an atheist or a Christian what both of them are promoting is a belief and a faith for the atheists it their faith that there is no God while the Christian's faith proclaims there is. So, in this sense the atheist movement is a religion since what they believe is based on faith and not absolute scientific fact.

19. Faith for the Christian is a firm persuasion, expectation and confidence that God will perform all that he has promised to us in Christ. This persuasion is so strong that it not only gives the heart a kind of possession and present reality of things unseen and hoped for, but also gives spiritual enjoyment of them now in this present time and a very real subsistence and reality of them in the heart and the mind. Since Christian faith deals with spiritual and invisible things exclusively, faith is the faculty needed to grasp hold of these invisible things. The word of God states; God created the universe and by faith we believe what cannot be proven it is with this same unquestionable faith in the word of God that Christians place their eternal future on. Faith not only continues whether what it is set upon is true or false, well-founded or not, but will also give all the force of reality to what is believed. Since Christian mean throughout history have killed others believing they were acting in the name of God and Muslims believe in Allah and Hindus believe in Buddha with the same faith that we believe in Christ we should always be open to examine what we believe is actually what the word of God is teaching. The reason for study is not to support faith since faith does not need proof rather the purpose of study is to make sure our faith is founded on a solid foundation.

20. The wonderful glory of Christian salvation is that: "Sinners are saved by grace and not by their own self-effort." Some think that this means everyone who believes in Christ can sin as much as they wish and use grace as an excuse, but this thinking is simply not true for the following two reasons, firstly, no one who loves another deliberately does things to hurt or offend the one they love, likewise no faithful Christian who loves the Lord who laid his life down to a brutal, bloody and cruel death for them and experiences this love in their heart and mind deliberately lives a corrupt and wicked lifestyle, because they know that it will offend the one they deeply love and because they from the heart do not want to bring a bad testimony to his name. Secondly, God sees

the true intentions, motivations, hurts and struggles within our mind and our heart that underlie all our actions and behaviour in everything we do so whoever consciously and deliberately uses his grace as an excuse to sin or for their own gain and own advantage will be judged accordingly.

21. Christians are called to defend their faith against false religious teaching, but they are not called to defend their faith to protect pride and ego (there is a massive difference). The first is concerned about Christ's good name and always acts in a manner that will protect his good character and bring a good testimony to his good name. The second always acts in a manner that will protect self, pride and ego; this type of prideful religion not only leads to strife, divisions and even wars, but also brings a bad testimony to the Lord Jesus Christ, to God and to the Christian faith.

22. Religious buildings especially opulent ones are visible and clearly seen whereas acts of kindness and compassion are often hidden and unseen. This principal can distort religious thinking in that we put more value on bricks and mortar than we do on acts of kindness and charity. It should always be kept in mind that God's greatest heartfelt concern is in saving people from death to eternal life and helping the poor and those in desperate need and that His eyes see every act of kindness and charity carried out on earth that is done for the benefit of others. It is possible that a church that meets in homes or a rented hall who help the poor and the less fortunate are building a far greater memorial before God's throne in heaven than those who meet in an opulent religious buildings (no matter how magnificent) if all the money of the faithful is sucked up in the bricks and mortar of the building and paying off a mega loan to a worldly bank.

23. The statement his/her excitement is infectious is a common expression, this is a true statement, emotion is contagious. No one needs science to prove this truth, "Why some might wonder?" Simply this; consider all the people you know that have an abundance of friends, I'll guarantee they have a spirit of joyful excitement toward life and toward others. Still have doubts that emotion is contagious, try watching a movie where professional actors are in grief or joy, and notice how you feel that same grief or that same joy, yet they are acting, pretending and getting paid big \$\$\$ for it yet we feel the emotion in our hearts so much so that we can be brought to tears or overwhelming joy. Once we understand the reality of this principle it becomes very clear how easily we can be emotionally and mentally deceived by skilful orators (religious or secular) who speak good messages with confidence and authority, but who have hidden agenda's behind the good messages they are speaking. The moral

of this message: "Never accept anything as absolute truth until you have proven it for yourself."

24. Paul said, "While bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come (1 Tim. 4:8). These words of Paul contain two great principals the first I am sure is clear to all, physical exercise is good, but godliness is better so what is the other great principal? Simply this: Paul acknowledges what is good even though it may not be the best. This principal (I think) should apply to everything. Why? Because many secular spiritual writers and religions that are contrary to Christianity do contain certain truths that are good and can enhance our thinking and our minds and therefore rather than focus on the negative and speak evil of them and annihilate everything they do just because they are different to our fundamental beliefs, we should acknowledge what is good reject what is not and then proclaim what we can offer that is better.

25. When the Lord returns the scenario will be very similar to when he first appeared. When Christ first appeared the religious system of his era saw that they were losing their power and control over the people to Christ, so they enticed Rome to have him killed. When Jesus returns the false religious system of the world titled in the book of Revelation, "Babylon the great, mother of prostitutes and of earth's abominations" will entice the world's political leader and the Ten Horned Beast nations (being Rome resurrected and the nations in league with them) to send their armies against Lord at Jerusalem. But! The difference this time is that Christ is returning as the King of kings and Lord of lords and not as the Lamb of God to be slain. Christ will defeat the Ten Horned Beast nations and establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth during his millennial reign. As glorious as this majestic hope is here is another glorious truth, no-one needs to understand any of this to be saved to eternal life. 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 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 we will be given an immortal body and be eternally with the Lord in everlasting glory and for those who know the love of Christ this is enough. Almost all the detail of Christ's millennial rule as King of kings and Lord of lords comes from the Old Testament.

26. David is a good example of how we can all be confident that God will not withdraw His love when we are honestly telling Him how we feel.

Many times in prayer David tells God that he feels He has abandoned him, he is, disappointed, depressed in despair, and it appears to him that God treats all mankind as a mere shadow (as though humans have no feeling, emotion or pain). Even though David belongs to the LORD he still suffers, he tells God that it appears to him as though the LORD is not concerned with who He afflicts or who He destroys. When David looks at his own suffering and the multitude of suffering in the world, it seems to him that the LORD treats everyone as a though they are simply a breath. This is not David's belief about God, but what God appears to be like during his times of suffering. David does not hid anything he even tells the LORD that he feels that God has withdrawn His love from him, that he has no value, his life is nothing before God and that the LORD is treating him simply as a breath. David is not speaking against the LORD, David would never do that, but it is his perception of things around him. It is an authentic heart-rending expression of how he is feeling while he is in distress. David is so confident in God's love he does not try to flatter the LORD, but simply speaks from the honesty of how he is feeling at the time and expresses the thoughts (good or bad) of his heart to the LORD. Obviously David was fully aware that God wants honesty not flattery and pretence (Psalms 39).

27. Paul told Christians to conduct themselves wisely toward outsiders (Col. 4:5-6) there is perhaps no other more important instruction in the New Testament than this regarding Christian behaviour for the following four reasons, firstly, people of the world judge Christianity not from preaching or from books or from the conduct of its founder and his apostles, but from what they see in the lives and hear in the conversations of those who confess to believe in Christ. Those outside the Kingdom of God understand the nature of Christianity so well that they know when its members are not consistent with it. Secondly, those who do not know Christ set a much higher value on honesty and integrity than they do on the doctrines and duties of religion and if the professed friends of religion are destitute of the principles of Christ and honesty, they think they have nothing of any value. Thirdly, though Christians may be very devout on the Sabbath; very regular at prayer-meetings; very strict in the observance of ceremonial rites, holy days and religious customs and traditions they are of little worth in the estimation of the world, unless accompanied with a life of integrity and honesty. Fourthly, if a person confessing Christ cheats someone (no matter how small), it is vain for them to endeavour to introduce that person to be a Christian because they will feel, (even though they may not say it) that they want nothing to do with a religion that does not make a person honest. The honour of Christianity is dependent on its adherents and their interaction with others and the lives they lead. Clearly no one is going to live a perfect life the idea underlying Paul's words telling Christians to conduct themselves

wisely toward outsiders is that those in the kingdom of God should live a life of integrity and honesty and treat those outside the Kingdom of God with respect and decency so that the God we worship will be well spoken of.

28. Consider for a moment how the world treats God, yet Jesus tells us: "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). This shines a brilliant spotlight on the truth that the forgiveness of Christ and his heavenly Father is forever flowing it is always readily available to those who seek it. Despite the world's blatant denial of God and total lack of any care toward what God values, His forgiveness is ever flowing toward them, but for them to be united in fellowship with the Lord they must humble themselves and come to him in honest heartfelt repentance. Now applying this principal to men and woman forgiving each other it means that our hearts should always be filled with forgiveness and always be ready to forgive, but the relationship cannot be mended until the offending party has come with an honest heart of repentance to the one they have injured and done everything they can to heal the hurt (in most cases this might just be saying sorry). Forgiveness is always difficult because it is about forgiving someone who has hurt us certainly it helps if the person who has hurt us comes to us and says "Look I'm so terribly sorry that I hurt you". But if that doesn't happen and the hurt is great some might wonder, "Why must I forgive?" Simply this, if we don't, we remain mentally and emotionally controlled by the one who has injured us, by our craving for revenge and by our anger, resentment, bitterness and hatred toward them and as long as these attitudes have power in our hearts and minds they will rob us of mental peace and heartfelt joy. Even worse than this if the hatred and lust for revenge grows strong enough it can lead to murder. This is why we must forgive it is the power that sets our minds and inner most being free to put the hurt behind us and begin living a new life afresh. Some may think, "It is just too hard," yes no one would ever say forgiveness is easy in fact the greater the hurt the harder it will be, but if we don't forgive then we are choosing to give the one who has injured us the power to continue to injure us mentally, emotionally and spiritually. Perhaps the following testimony might help: I remember watching and listening to the testimony of a middle-aged woman (one of Doctor Phil's family members) sharing how a man had thrown a bucket of hydrochloric acid into her face, her entire face was grossly scared and deformed (it still is). She told Doctor Phil, "I made the choice to forgive, because I was not going to allow my grandchildren to grow up knowing a grandmother full of bitterness, hurt and resentment. What a tremendous influence of good and strength this grandmother would have imparted to her grandchildren. To make such a choice clearly takes enormous fortitude and strength of character, but there is no personal value or

benefit in holding onto resentment and anger? Now trust is a totally different thing to forgiveness, a woman who has been raped will have to find forgiveness in her own mind and heart to overcome bitterness, hatred and the lust for revenge, but it would be totally foolish for her to have a relationship with the man, until he had proven his honest heartfelt remorse and done whatever is needed to heal the deep wound he has inflicted on his innocent victim and proven he can be trusted.

29. The apostle Paul, afraid that those he loved had turned away from grace asked them, "Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? (Gal. 3:2-3). There is a great danger for those who have been saved by the grace of God in Christ to fall back under some form of self-effort and trust in their own works to earn righteous that leads to eternal life since the flesh (pride and ego) prefers self-effort to grace. This is because self-effort produces self-righteousness and self-righteousness allows pride to rise up and exalt itself above others which in turn produces a heightened sense of spiritual superiority (howbeit a false one). Religious self-effort often takes the form of strictly adhering to ceremonial rites and holy days and keeping religious customs, practices and traditions in the belief that by doing so one will be counted righteous and worthy of eternal life. Though some of these maybe good and spiritually healthy practices in themselves the moment we think they have any power to make us righteous before God and thereby deserving and worthy of eternal life is the moment we not only nullify the grace Christ achieved for us on the cross, but we also make his brutal, bloody and cruel death serve no purpose and thereby disqualify ourselves from being saved.

30. Some who do not understand think the apostle Paul was being extremely harsh and unloving toward those who do not yet know Christ when he said, "If anyone has no love for the Lord, let them be accursed" (1 Cor. 16:22), but Paul is not referring to those who have never heard of God's love and grace in Christ, but to religious men and woman who confess to believe in Christ, but have no love which means they have a form of belief in God and in the Lord Jesus Christ, but are self-serving, legalistic, formal, dogmatic and lack love, compassion mercy and grace toward those who follow them. It is to these types of people Paul is saying, "Let them be accursed" meaning "Let them be excommunicated from the church." This is because the entire foundation of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life is founded upon love as the following words of Jesus show, "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). Added to this God himself is love (1 John 4:16) so any form of legalism, formalism and dogma devoid of love is totally contrary to the

Spirit of Christ and the Spirit of God. Even in the secular world no CEO of any company wants people who have a destructive and totally different spirit to the goals of their company working in their business.

31. The meaning and history of the word Amen is fascinating, it means, verily, firm, so it is, so be it, may it be fulfilled. It is used at the beginning of a discourse to proclaim that what is being said is, surely a truth and when used at the end of a discourse carries the thought of what has been said is certain and asking for it to come to pass and be fulfilled. It was a custom, which passed over from the synagogues to the Christian assemblies, that when he who had read or offered up solemn prayer to God, the others responded by saying, "Amen" and thus made the substance of what was uttered their own. The word Amen is a most remarkable word translated directly from the Hebrew into the Greek of the New Testament then into Latin and into English and many other languages, so that Amen is practically a universal word. It has been called the best-known word in human speech. Amen is directly related and almost identical to the Hebrew word for believe (aman) or faithful, thus, it came to mean sure or truly and to be an expression of absolute trust and confidence. At the end of a discourse, conversation and dialogue Amen signifies the end of that discourse or subject, similarly Amen at the end of a paragraph tells the reader this is the end of the previous subject now the story will bring a new subject into focus.

32. Perhaps now that modern society is globally saturated with biblical information readily available twenty-four hours a day, every day of the week at the press of a key no matter where a person is there maybe a need to make a transition in our churches from lecture format to discussion-based sharing. Six good things would result from this kind of teaching, firstly, people would have their questions answered, secondly, people would be fellowshiping with each other and as a result would be spiritually growing together since they would be learning not only the Scriptures, but about each other while doing it. Thirdly people's needs would be revealed while discussing the Scriptures so those within the meeting would be able to respond accordingly and fourthly people would see that we can all have different ideas, views and understandings of certain Scriptures and yet still be faithful brothers and sisters in the body of Christ and fellowship together in the common bond of our faith in Christ. Fifthly this kind of format would produce a spirit of grace and understanding that not every doctrine of the Bible has to be perfectly ticked to be saved to eternal life and to be in a devoted union with the Lord Jesus Christ and his heavenly Father in contrast to producing legalistic dogma and dividing. Finally, the congregation would not be putting all their trust in one man, but rather would be learning and growing together which means there would be far less chance of false

teaching being spread over the masses since everyone would be motivated to check what is being discussed. The only real enemy to this kind of format would be pride and ego, but these are also a problem in the format that already exists.

33. The primary and central emphasis of most spiritual teachings on this planet is focused on the human mind entering into a place of mental bliss through various religious or spiritual meditations and mental exercises and techniques which if practiced can; not only bring the mind into a beautiful place that surpasses much of what is ugly in this world, but also has the power to change the negative thought patterns of the human mortal mind and enhance a person's life (if these teaching didn't have such power millions worldwide would not be embracing them with such passion). In contrast to these types of spiritual teachings the central focus of Jesus, the apostles and Paul's teaching and the core of the Good News of the Gospel of Christ is not upon the human mind, but upon reconciling men and women who are separated from the most majestic God on High the eternal heavenly Father, because of sin back into a love relationship with Him through faith in His Son the Lord Jesus Christ. Naturally when Christians fully enter into this eternal relationship with the Almighty God through faith in His Son and fully understand that they are crowned with His love and clothed in the royal robes of His abundant grace their mind is automatically lifted into spiritual heavenly places. No man or woman who falls in love has to concentrate on uplifting the mind since love that is overflowing with grace automatically floods the human mind and the emotions with elevated levels of joy, peace and contentment. This is why the apostle Paul earnestly prayed that all those in the family of God would know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge and be filled with all the fullness of God (Ephes. 3:19) which in this context is to be filled with His love.

34. Jesus said, "Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him." (John 14:21). These words of Jesus clearly show that simply confessing that one believes in Christ does necessarily mean that they love him. The commandments of Jesus are summed up in his words, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength and you shall love your neighbour as yourself" (Mark 12:31). Jesus said there is no other commandment greater than these two. No sane person deliberately sets about to harm themselves in fact they do all they can to protect themselves from hurt and harm; this is what it means to love others as we love ourselves it is treating others as we treat ourselves. Jesus is saying that a person confessing to have faith in him, but who lives contrary to the fruits of the Spirit (love, kindness,

compassion, mercy, grace, forgiveness and such like things) has no love for the Lord. Loving Christ is outwardly evidenced by behaviour that is in accordance to the commandments and character of Christ and a lifestyle that honours God and brings a good testimony to the name of Jesus and the Christian faith. Doing what pleases the one that is loved and what they desire outwardly manifests a person's love for that person, if there is no action to please the one loved then love is a fantasy and an illusion of the mind because for love to be real there must be action evidencing it. This is why doing the commandments of Christ is an outward manifestation of God's love dwelling in the human heart. If a husband verbally praises his wife and constantly tells her he loves her while having a secret affair with another woman he is deceiving himself and deceiving his wife since true love does no harm to another (Rom. 13:10) 1 Cor. 13:2-7) (1 John 4:8). This does not mean that the faithful who do love Christ will live a perfect life or never offend anyone, but it does mean that their primary desire and consciousness in live a lifestyle that honours God and brings a good testimony to the name of Jesus and the Christian faith. Jesus statement he will manifest himself to those who love him" means two things, firstly that those who keep these two greatest of all commandments will be given wisdom, insight and understanding of his word and spiritually know his love dwelling within their heart and mind and secondly at the resurrection he will appear and say, "Well done, good and faithful servant" (Matt 25:21) (Matt 25) (Luke 19:17) and dwell with them in eternal glory for all eternity. Notice whoever loves Jesus and follows his ways is loved by his heavenly Father.

35. James (the brother of Jesus) wrote, "True religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction (carrying the idea of helping the poor and less fortunate) and to keeping oneself unstained from the corruptness, dishonesty and deceit of the world (James 1:27). The great prophets Micah, Isaiah and Jeremiah clearly show us that the people the LORD loves are not only those who acknowledge God, but who also uphold justice, do not lie, deceive or make promises they do not intend to keep, but speak the truth, do what is right, show respect to others and give help when they are able and make choices that lead to peace. These are the things the LORD delights in and that bring His favour (Micah 6:5-10) (Isaiah 61:8) (Jer. 9:24). The apostle Paul teaches that being spiritual before God is living in the Spirit of God (i.e., love, compassion, kindness, mercy, peace, forgiveness and such like things). Those who manifest these in their life Paul calls mature spiritual Christians and those who live contrary to these he calls spiritual infants acting in a human manner and worldly ways who need to be feed on milk not meat (babies feed on milk) (1 Corinthians 3:1-3).

36. Jesus said that he is the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for his sheep. He didn't take from anyone, but constantly gave even to surrendering his life to his enemies to suffer a brutal, bloody and cruel death and this not for himself, but for his sheep. Sheep is a perfect picture of those who believe in Christ since sheep follow without question their Shepherd wherever he leads them. But if the Shepherd the sheep are following are religious priests who believe righteousness that leads to salvation is in religious pomp and ceremony or Shepherds who teach their followers to kill the innocent so they can be rewarded with seventy virgins (talk about a faith of the flesh) or Shepherds who use their followers as merchandise to achieve their own religious global empire then being sheep is the most dangerous thing followers of Christ can be. There is only one Shepherd the sheep are called to surrender their minds and life to and trust and follow with all their heart and that is the Shepherd who laid down his life down for the sheep not human shepherds since though there are those who are truly faithful there are others that have their own selfish agendas, others who are fully deceived themselves and others who though they may teach the Scriptures correctly have no understanding of what is truly important to the heart of God and therefore are legalistic and dogmatic and though what they teach maybe right because of their lack of mercy, grace and love they bring heartache and bondage to those who follow them.

37. The personal and devotional relationship between a Christian and Christ should always be a separate issue to the Gospel. This is because even though all faithful Christians worldwide come to Christ through the one Gospel not all will have the same spiritual and devotional relationship with him since the global body of Christ is made up of people from different nations, languages and cultures, different mindsets, different emotions, different levels of education (especially religious) and different levels of past baggage and habits to overcome and the list goes on. For this reason there will be many different personal experiences and spiritual and devotional relationships amongst the body of Christ worldwide even though we all come to God in the same way through faith in His Son the Lord Jesus Christ and even though we are all called to live in the fruits of the Spirit when it comes to relationship with Christ and his heavenly Father God has no interest in turning us all into clones of each other. Just as earthly parents have no interest in forcing their children to relate to them in the same manner and deal with them according to their own unique personality and character, God loves and deals with those in His family in the same way. He allows each to have their own unique and individual and personal heartfelt spiritual relationship with Him and His Son. This is why what God does in one person's life should never be made a blanket' teaching that this is what God will do in every other believers life (as often happens). When it comes to relationship God deals with each

one as an individual according to His eternal purposes, but when it comes to salvation there is only one Gospel that leads to eternal life in everlasting glory.

38. When the early church came together after Christ's death and resurrection it was made up of Jews who had been indoctrinated with Moses Law for nearly four-thousand years, Samaritans who had married foreign wife's and adopted their pagan practises, and Gentiles who knew nothing about God or the Old Testament Scriptures. These groups of vastly different mindsets were coming together in-home churches to worship God. Though there was amongst their meetings a multitude of different views all had one thing in common, Jesus was central in their lives; he was the one that they were coming together for. They no-doubt loved talking about Christ and studying the Scriptures together, I suspect much like university students who when given an assignment get together in a spirit of friendship so they can learn from each other by sharing their thoughts, ideas and discoveries to improve their knowledge and their marks. They don't argue and impose their thoughts onto the group, but simply share in a spirit of discovery their ideas, and all have the knowledge and awareness that some ideas will be accepted and others may end up in the bin, but they have learnt through their school years that to improve their knowledge, enhances what they are studying and enriches their learning they need to be with others who have an interest in the same thing. Thus, the reason the early church gathered together in homes in the towns, villages and cities they lived in.

39. Jesus said, "The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge them on the last day" (John 12:48). These words not only shine a spotlight on the truth that he did not come into the world to judge the world, but also that he did not come into the world to judge those who reject him. Jesus simply spoke the words of God that lead to eternal life and allowed those who heard them to freely respond in whatever manner they freely chose. Since it is the words that Jesus spoke that determine a person's eternal standing and not Jesus himself, he could continue to show love, compassion and mercy regardless of how a person chose to respond to him because he wasn't judging anyone. He simply left the messages he spoke to do the judging for him. Jesus sole ministry and purpose until the end of this age is to save to eternal life those who do not know God's love and God's grace. He did not come to judge anyone. Those who hear the words of Jesus and choose to reject them bring judgment upon themselves by their rejection of the Gospel that saves to eternal life. Many religious people's concept of God's judgment is of everyone lining up in a queue before God and waiting their turn to be judged, but Christ in these verses is saying everyone who hears his words and rejects them is already judged

according to the words they have heard and rejected. We are the ones who determine whether we will be judged or accepted by our own response to the words Jesus spoke. It should be mentioned here that doing the words of Jesus is not about adhering to ceremonial rites and holy days or keeping religious customs and traditions. The words of Jesus that we are called to do are firstly accepting the Gospel and secondly it is about walking in the fruits of the Spirit (i.e., love, mercy, compassion, kindness and forgiveness) and helping those in need when able. Those that hear the words of Christ and reject them are judged by their own actions since they are rejecting messages that have the power to give eternal life.

40. At the Grecian games, only one could obtain the highest prize all the rest who contended in those games, no matter how numerous they were, or how skilfully they contended, or how much effort they made, were of course subjected to missing out on the highest prize and the greatest reward. But not so in the Christian faith, here is the excitement the joy the thrill and the glory of running in the Christian race, no matter how numerous the competitors, or how worthy, talented and skilled any one of them maybe all may obtain the highest prize and all may be crowned with a diadem of eternal life of equal brilliancy. No one is excluded of eternal life because another is successful; no one loses the reward because another obtains it. Such is the wonder and splendour of God's love, grace and mercy in Christ and the joy of running alongside our brothers and sisters having the knowledge that all who faithfully reach the finish-line receive the highest prize of an immortal and eternal crown and not just the first to cross over it. In this race every brother and sister who runs may obtain the crown. The struggle is not between each other as a competitor in such a sense that, if one obtains the crown, all others must be excluded; but it is a crown which all can obtain. As many as run; as many as fight the good fight; as many as keep the faith; as many as love his appearing, may win the crown. Such is the beauty and glory in which the highest prize of this race differs from all other races. The reward is great, but it is a reward not of debt, but of grace for it is only by the grace of God that even an apostle is fitted for glory and this reward is common to every faithful brother and sister; it is given, not only to apostles, but to all those who love his appearing. This crown is laid up it is in view, but not in possession.

41. There is in the secular global world today a mindset that the church is a Sunday meeting in a religious building, but the church should never be limited to the established religious institutions, denominations or church buildings though they may form a part of the body of Christ they are not the only part. There are many individual Christians in all countries of the world who meet in coffee bars, social outings and mostly their own homes to give thanks to Christ and share their discoveries of God's word

and their spiritual experiences with him. Many of these people are helping others and simply manifesting the reality of their faith to the people that come into their lives. God is not limited to any one pattern or religious organisation; He is far too creative for that. Jesus church is global and is manifested in a vast variety of ways across the face of the earth. In many third world countries church is held outside under a tree (for shade) with its members sitting on the dusty ground often with dogs, chooks and other animals roaming around. New Testament Christianity is not restricted to a particular building or even a special day. The Christianity Christ taught is so exciting and real, it cannot be contained. It has no limitations and overflows into every moment of a Christian's life; thus, the New Testament church is global, moving and manifested in love and compassion toward others in the lives of all those who are faithful and who are devoted in love to the Lord Jesus Christ.

42. Sadly it is true that throughout history there has always been amongst the worldwide Christian faith certain religious men who have grossly abused the teachings of the humble man who God sent to lay the foundation of His spiritual and eternal Kingdom and also certain religious ministers who have turned the glorious spiritual and eternal teachings of Christ into a Gospel of achieving and attaining self-indulgent worldly riches in this mortal and temporal life here and now. But it should always be remembered in every living organism on planet earth that there are parasites, leeches and bloodsuckers that increase their own well-being by feeding off healthy living organisms and the Scriptures do warn that such will be the way of God's Kingdom until Christ returns in glory.

43. Today many churches use entertainment and excitement to entice people to hear the Good News of the Gospel people's emotions are aroused and they feel a spiritual presence of God's love and joy produced in the heart, mind and emotions by the exciting collective worship of believers. In our fallen world of suffering and sorrow this is good, but there is a very real danger. What you might wonder? Simply this, many who sense this spiritual presence and feel the emotions of excitement and joy automatically believe that the teaching they have heard must be the truth, because of the wonderful emotions they are feeling. This is a mistake because beautiful emotions (however nice) are not proof that a teaching is right. Embracing something spiritual based on good emotions is like a teenage boy and girl who upon seeing each other are immediately attracted and feel emotions of joy warmth and excitement and based on these emotions immediately get married without examining the character of each other. It is certain that almost everyone would say this is foolish. There is nothing wrong with emotions in love or in the church especially during worship, but it should be always remembered that good emotions

are not proof that something is right or what is being taught is actually the truth.

44. The apostle Paul wrote, "Stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by our spoken word or by our letter" (2 Thess. 2:15). This clearly shows that when the apostles used the word traditions it did not refer to traditions as most think of traditions today, but refers to doctrines and precepts the apostles had taught and not traditions that had come down from ancient times or any Jewish religious traditions of the church since there is no evidence that any of these types of religious traditions were given or taught by the apostles or by Paul. Paul only speaks of what had been delivered by himself and the apostles, whether orally or by letter, thus the word traditions refers to anything delivered in the way of teaching by the apostles whether in their preaching, private conversation, or by their letters. The traditions that Paul and the apostles taught refer to doctrines and rules such as respecting the good order of the Lord's supper; water baptism, respect for woman, godly behaviour, not being lazy, but working to support ourselves (when able), helping the poor, showing honour to those who faithfully labour for Christ and such like things these are the kind of traditions that Paul and the apostles had in mind when they used the word traditions and not religious customs and rites. The apostle's use of the word traditions cannot be used to support traditions the Church of Rome holds or any other similar church traditions since they are not taught in the New Testament or by the apostles or Paul.

45. Paul wrote, "What have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? God judges those outside, purge the evil person from among you" (1 Cor. 5:13-13). This shines a brilliant spotlight on two things, firstly, it is not the churches job to judge those outside of its walls, but to leave that judgment to God and secondly, is not the churches job to impose or force its will, its morals, and its ethics onto those outside the church. That would be like going into a strangers home and telling them how to raise their children or worse still going into an enemies house and telling them the way they are doing something is completely wrong.

All this is going to do is make these parents and our enemies even more hostile toward us. The only message we have for the world is the Good News of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ which states, "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 the only people we should be imposing God's standards on are those in our own family who are bringing dishonour to God and disgrace to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Christian faith.

46. It is said that a French man named Blondin who was famous for his daring performances and outstanding feats as an acrobat and tightrope walker (1824-1897) (Microsoft Encarta 2006) at one of his amazing performances asked the crowd if they believed he could safely cross the Niagara Falls on a tightrope pushing a wheel barrow with someone in it, the crowd with roaring cheer and excitement shouted "Yes" they believed that he and his passenger would safely reach the other side. Once the crowd's excited cheer died down, Blondin asked, "Who will volunteer to be the passenger in the wheel barrow?" There was a deadly silence, no-one raised their hand, clearly they all had doubts otherwise there would be no fear to trust the man who was asking for a volunteer. This story beautifully shines highlight on two things, firstly the difference between saying something with our mouth and believing something in our heart and secondly it should prompt all who confess to being a Christian to ask the question, "Is my trust for my eternal future solely upon the suffering, bloody and bleeding man who was cruelly and brutally nailed to the cross and rose again by the power of God or is my trust upon self-effort (i.e., adhering to ceremonial rites, holy days and keeping religious customs and traditions and such like things)". Is my faith simply a confession of the mouth or a deep seated belief in the heart upon which my life is surrendered to?

47. Paul wrote, "God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us (Rom 5:8). This glorious statement shines a brilliant spotlight on the truth that God's love toward us and the gift of eternal life is not dependent on our works, but on God's love and the grace He lavishes upon all who are devoted to his Son in faith and in love. The strength of God's love in the heart and experiencing its comfort is dependent upon believing that God loves us not because of our righteousness (since even in our best moments we fall far short of God's perfect Holiness), but because of Christ's righteousness. It is having the faith and the confidence that there is nothing we can do to earn salvation except believe in His Son the Lord Jesus Christ and walk with him in a spiritual relationship of love all the while trusting in God's grace that He showers upon all who are devoted to the Lord Jesus Christ and faithfully follow him.

48. The Kingdom of God literally existed in the Old Testament under the Judges, David and Solomon and the many kings of Israel in different shapes and forms. It was not a perfect Kingdom and many of the kings that did reign were far from godly, nevertheless it was God's Kingdom because God was the King. In the New Testament the Kingdom of God is spiritual and has taken on an entirely different shape and form to that of the Old Testament Kingdom and when Christ returns as King of kings and Lords of lords to establish God literal Kingdom on earth the Kingdom will

change its shape and form again. But even this is not the final shape of God's Kingdom since it will change its shape and form once more when God Himself descends to earth and fills ALL in ALL and eternity in all its wonder and splendor begins in all its majestic royal and perfect fullness of glory.

49. Prior to Christ's death and resurrection, the Jews focus was on the promised literal Kingdom of Israel to be restored on earth rather than upon the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and upon the Jews and Gentiles being saved to eternal life through faith in Christ and trust in God's grace. Obviously, their focus could not be anything else prior to Christ being crucified. But after Christ's death and resurrection the focus of the New Testament writers dramatically changed from the literal Kingdom of Israel to salvation in Jesus name and resurrection to everlasting life and eternal glory. This is because Christ's resurrection ushered in a global worldwide spiritual kingdom that exists in the heart, mind and conscience of all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. The King of the Kingdom became the central focus and not the Kingdom itself, because whoever belongs to the Kings family naturally becomes a heir to the Kings eternal inheritance and the eternal Kingdom.

50. It is easy to lose sight of the difference between the church as an organism and the church as an organization. Jesus tells us that the seed is sown and brings forth growth of itself. Sadly as the Kingdom of God passed from being an organism to an organization there developed the passion for prominence, power and position, men motivated by worldly principles sought supremacy in the Kingdom of God. Had Christianity continued humble and unpretentious its ministry would never have been sought as a profession changing the emphasis from seed sowing to tree growing. Instead of scattering the seed in all lowliness the church became more concerned with building larger denominations, institutions and orders. History shows that the outward growth of the Kingdom of God to its shame sheltered evil and even today, shelters much that is foreign to its true nature.

51. It is interesting to notice when David and many of the writers of the Psalms are down they speak to their Soul, telling it to arise out of its despair and negativity. They talk to their Soul as though it is a separate person to themselves that is controlling their mental well-being. The common language used in these circumstances are, "Why are you cast down O' My Soul", meaning why are you so gloomy, and "Arise O' My Soul and sing for joy", meaning stop being so negative and change your way of thinking, meditate on what is good. The Old Testament believers may not have used the language we use today to teach that the way we think has power over how we feel or how positive mental attitudes can lift our

minds out of gloom, but they understood the principle of positive thinking. They mentally rose above themselves and spoke to their depressed soul telling it (with great authority) to stand up and get out of its despair and its depression.

52. In certain circles of Christianity adhering to ceremonial rites, holy days and maintaining religious customs and traditions has such a strong influence on the minds of those in these churches that God's grace is thought to come from self-effort rather than grace and so the dominant focus of these religions has naturally become a matter of externals and not a faith of the heart.

53. There are many who have been involved in Christianity who have turned away from their Christian faith to other spiritual teachings. This I believe is because they have only known God as a religious rule keeper, meaning if they do certain religious things (these will vary depending on what church they have been in) they will be accepted by God. They have not been taught that God will lavish His grace upon those who love His Son regardless of religious rule keeping and keeping religious customs and traditions. They have not been told that God wants to invade their heart and mind with His love and walk with them in their everyday life. True Christianity is living with Christ in our hearts and minds in the same manner as we would allow a partner, we are deeply in love with to invade our heart, our mind and our thoughts. Devoted married couples do not just love each other in the intimate moments of the bedroom, rather the love continues to flow throughout all the mundane chores of life. Likewise it is with God certainly there are spiritual highs as a married couple experience in the privacy of their bedroom, but there are also many lows, but like the devoted married couple the love continues to flow even in the lows and difficulties of life (maybe not as noticeable, but it is still there). Likewise, true Christianity is not something that is turned on and off it is spiritual fluid, forever flowing in the heart and mind no matter how secular the environment a believer is in or how religious.

54. Many people have the mistaken idea that the King James Bible is the only Bible that contains the inspired word of God. This is because they have been wrongly taught that every single word contained in the Scriptures is inspired, but this is a mistaken idea, certainly the Bible contains the inspired word of God, but it is the messages the individual words teach that is inspired not the individual words themselves. Individual words form sentences and paragraphs etc., it is the messages that are taught by these sentences and paragraphs that are inspired. Though there are many Bibles in the world today that use different words they nevertheless teach the same message and it is these messages that are inspired by God. If it was the individual words that were inspired

people from other nations (i.e., China, Thailand, Mexico, Russia etc.), could never read the inspired word of God because these languages do not have the same individual words that the English language does, added to this the original Manuscripts are written in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek, so none of us would be reading the inspired word of God, but the Good News is that every language on planet earth can use their own language and individual words to translate the inspired messages that God has spoken.

55. For anyone who has ever wondered what great faith looks like simply look at the life of Moses. He was raised in the house of the Pharaoh of Egypt he had all the riches of the world available to him, yet he rejected it all rather than deny God's people and God Himself. This is not only true faith, but great faith at its best. This world held nothing that could hold Moses from following God no-matter what the loss or what the cost. Moses choice manifests in spectacular glory the love of God and the love for his people he had dwelling in his heart. This shines a brilliant spotlight on the truth that it is God's love that changes the human heart and not imposing religious rules and laws upon a person. Paul wrote, "When the goodness and loving kindness of God our Saviour appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life (Titus 3:4-7) and that, "God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Rom 5:8). Salvation to eternal life is through God's love and grace in Christ. This is the spiritual and eternal riches of God's glory in heaven. It is not laws and rules imposed on people that changes the heart but love. No-one lays down their life down, because a rule says they should, but many will willingly lay it down for love.

56. The Scriptures state: "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love" (1 John 4:18). This means that they are either living from the flesh and using others to gratify self, ego, pride and greed, or oppressing others for their own gain or they harbour hatred, bitterness and resentment in their hearts toward others and such like things and in this manner they are grossly imperfect in love and therefore have every reason to fear judgment. This is because we will all be judged not by how perfectly we did or didn't adhere to ceremonial rites, holy days, religious customs and traditions or even against religious intellectual knowledge, but against the Law of love. John to highlight this truth wrote; "Whoever keeps love in their heart abide in God and God abides in them." Evidence of love in the heart is outwardly manifested by good-deeds and kind and

compassionate actions toward others. This means that to escape any fear toward judgment we should do all we can to let love be the supreme king of our heart, mind, thoughts, speech and actions.

57. The Scriptures proclaim that all those in Christ should purge their conscience from dead works to serve the living God. Though the expression dead works can embrace works which are acknowledged as sinful, in this context it primarily refers to works which go under the name of religious services and duties which are performed in a merely legal spirit and to religious works done to be justified and to earn righteousness that leads to eternal life. These are called dead works because they do not stem from living faith and they cannot save to eternal life. In the same way as contact with a dead body ceremonially defiled the Hebrews under the Levitical law so dead works spiritually defile the inner consciousness of those who practise them to earn righteousness and justification. This is because they are not an act of faith, but of law and trust in self-effort. Since Christianity is pre-eminently the religion of faith the severest and most radical of tests should be applied to these kind of legal works since it is these that prevent a believer moving from the Holy Place (the place of legal religious service and duty) to entering into the Most Holy Place the place of mercy and grace and the very presence of God. The severest test of Christ's power to redeem is his ability to lose the bonds springing out of a legal religion, by which many are bound even though they have escaped the dominion of gross sinful habits. Under the Levitical law the ceremonially unclean could not serve God in the outward service of His people; likewise, those who trust in the performing of religious works (dead works) cannot serve God or His people in spiritual communion nor can they impart spiritual life. No matter how lifelike a person religious works may look outwardly if they are performed to earn justification, they are dead and cannot therefore be accepted by God since they nullify the work of Christ and make his death serve no purpose.

58. Here is the love the grace and glory of Christ's Spirit; the Scriptures proclaim that the blood of Christ speaks a better word than the blood of Abel who was murdered by his brother Cain. In Genesis the LORD asked Cain, "What have you done, the voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground, you are cursed you will be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth," and Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is greater than I can bear." The blood of Abel cried out from the grave for justice, revenge and punishment. In contrast Jesus said of those crucifying him and casting lots for his garments, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." The blood of Jesus in sharp contrast to the blood of Abel cries to his heavenly Father for forgiveness and mercy. Here is comfort for even the greatest of sinners; no-matter how loud the condemning voice of the mind speaks or how gross the sin, whoever in

honest humble repentance approaches God and accepts Christ as their Saviour will be forgiven why? Because the cleansing power of Christ's blood cries for mercy and forgiveness. Sceptics reading this will no-doubt will say, "Yes, but what about those who are not genuine?" Clearly people can fool us, but no-one can fool God, since His eternal eyes cut straight past our flesh and penetrate into the deepest and most hidden areas of our hearts, God sees the motives, intents and thoughts of our inner most being and He responds to these accordingly.

59. Since God loves those in the family of Christ with unconditional love, they should love one another with the same love. Here is a key to having God's Spirit dwell in us; simply love each other. When we show compassion, kindness, grace, forgiveness and help we can be certain that God abides in us and that God's love is being perfected in us. This is the glory the splendour and wonder of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is not only spiritual, eternal and reconciles a believer to the very heart of God, but is also very practical in that it calls us to love not only those in in the family of Christ, but also those outside of it. Sadly, instead of turning a brilliant floodlight on love certain religious ministers and teachers throughout the history of Christianity have turned the floodlight in the opposite direction so that instead of its light shining on love it has shone upon dogmatic and legalistic doctrines or the strict adherence to pompous ceremonial rites, religious customs and traditions. In pointing the light in this direction those sitting under their ministry have been robbed from the majestic beauty and glorious Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love and grace of God. Added to this sadness those who have turned the floodlight upon legalistic doctrines and pompous ceremonial rites and traditions have instilled in those who sat under their ministry and many of those outside of God's Kingdom a mindset that Christianity is all about going to a majestically built cathedral every week and adhering to religious rules, customs and traditions rather than about love i.e. loving God and his Son, loving each other and loving our neighbour as ourselves.

60. Adam and Eve lived in a paradise we can only dream of, they had all they would ever need to live, a beautiful happy safe healthy life together as a family, yet even with all God's abundant blessing and an intimate fellowship with the LORD, self still wanted more. In our abounding materialistic world it is very easy for the voice of the serpent to entice us so subtly that our names change from Mr. and Mrs. Christian to Mr. and Mrs. Adam and Eve without us even noticing it because we are so busy with obtaining the abundant inventions of this world or so deep in debt that finding contentment, peace and joy in knowing our life is hid in Christ seems like an elusive Christian fantasy.

61. Sometimes Christians may find themselves wondering what the best action might be for a certain situation since not everything in life is clearly black and white (especially if we are emotionally involved). Added to this the Bible does not give us detailed answers for every circumstance that we maybe faced with, i.e., how should Christian parents treat a son or daughter who is gay? How should a divorced parent treat the children of their new spouse? Or how should Christian parents treat a child who lives with their partner outside of marriage? Though the Bible does not give specific detail on how to cope with these kinds of circumstances it does present an overall principle that can be applied to them all. When we are faced with these kinds of decisions (and many others like them) our best guide is to fulfil the royal law and show love if we do this James says we are doing well (James 2:8), this is because love covers a multitude of sins (1 Peter 4:8). When facing these kinds of dilemmas, it should always be kept in mind that God showed his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8). Based on these Scriptures when in doubt it is always a good idea to ask ourselves the following questions, "What it the loving action to take?" and "What action will show kindness and grace toward those affected?" When taking any action, we are unsure of we should always remember that God is a God of love, compassion and mercy which means that though we do not want to compromise the standards of God whatever we do should always be done in love and with compassion and mercy.

62. Scripture calls those in Christ's family to be of one mind this does not mean that we all have to be clones of each other, but rather that we that our mindset should be one of showing patience, grace and forgiveness toward each other in contrast to being jealous and envious. Being of one mind carries the idea that we understand that many brothers and sisters in the global family of Christ come from different nations, cultural backgrounds and have different levels of education (especially religious). It is about understanding that many are battling to overcome various past habits or deep emotional hurts while some are struggling to support their families and others are coping with persecutions or the emotional hurts of divorce and broken families and such like things. Being of one mind is about setting our minds to work together in a kindred spirit to encourage, support and strengthen each other in the faith with the understanding that not one of us stands perfect before the Lord and that each faithful brother and sister in the family of Christ has their own particular troubles to cope with and all are on a spiritual journey growing in the fruits of the Spirit and growing in knowledge. Being of one mind is not about all being forced to believe a fixed set of doctrines, but rather is about companionship of like-mindedness and enjoyment of belonging to the same family of which love for Christ is the cement that binds us together.

63. Scripture proclaims; “We all followed the prince of the power of the air.” Though all may clearly see the destructive effects of this power (wars, rape, murder theft etc.), not all understand the source of it. This is because it is a power that has not only deeply penetrated us all, but blinds us to recognising its subtle and deceptive workings. This power has been by far the most powerful force in the world throughout every historic age and continues to be the most powerful force in this present age. It maybe a surprise too many that this power does not refer to an enormously powerful evil god named Satan nor does it refer to many hundreds of millions of invisible evil entities flying about in the air called devils as some believe. Rather this power that by far supersedes all other powers (except the power of God) refers to a power that dwells within us all. This power is self-will, ego, pride and greed. These are the unseen spiritual destructive muscle in the world since they are always in rebellion to God. These four not only have universal influence over the individual mind, but also over the collective mind of the world that denies God.

64. Something amazing and spectacular: the commentators of the grand opening of the London 2012 Summer Olympics Games gave a great amount of time to exalting the city of Jerusalem and describing her as a symbol of a better age to come and a light amongst a darkened world. Why would this be so amazing and spectacular some might ask?” Simply this: Jerusalem is the only city on planet earth that God has put his name upon, the only city that is personified as the mother of God’s Children and the only city that songwriters have exalted throughout history with hymns of heavenly glory. There is no other city under heaven exalted by God and His prophets in such a majestic manner and given such royal honour. Added to this Jerusalem’s’ real glory will be seen when her eternal King takes his promised royal throne and those who have run the race toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus are gathered together to their King with the same, heartfelt excitement and uncontrollable joy as those who marched to honour the country they felt so proud to be an ambassador for.

65. The Christian Gospel proclaims that love is the only spiritual thing in the entire universe that Christians should owe to others. No-one needs to memorise a list of do’s and don’ts or even know the law to please and honour God and the Lord Jesus Christ all they have to do is give away love. The Gospel calls those in Christ to do everything in love this means, “Do what is best for the well-being of others and not harm.” Have you ever wondered how to put a definition on love? Paul beautifully sums it up in four simple words, “Love does no wrong.” Sadly, much of the secular world thinks the central focus of Christianity is about keeping a set of rules and religious customs and traditions, but God’s concept of true Christianity is about acting and responding from love it is not only about

doing no harm to another human, but also about showing compassion and kindness to them.

66. No faithful Christian should ever think they cannot serve Christ unless they enter into full time ministry (though this is a privileged and heavenly calling for many). This is because the Gospel message states that the Kingdom of God is about walking in a heartfelt devotional union with Christ; living a good lifestyle before God and before others; keeping peace as much as it is in our power to do so and having joy in good and wholesome things. When a faithful brother or sister in Christ lives in this manner, they are not only serving Christ and are acceptable and pleasing to God, but are also a good testimony to the Lord they follow and to those who do not yet know the love and grace of God. Added to this the humble who live their daily life in this manner are serving Christ (and will be rewarded accordingly) far more than a certain few who are in full time ministry (no matter how successful worldwide) who do not have the same integrity of heart toward God, but are serving their own selfish ambition, ego and pride.

67. Jesus said, "If anyone loves me, they will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them" (John 14:23) Here we discover that the Gospel is not about rule keeping, but responding from love this is how the Christian faith works. Though the faithful who belong to the family of Christ are saved by grace and set free from the condemnation of the law they do not deliberately abuse the law. They like any one in love desire to please from their heart the one they love. True Christians are driven, controlled and obsessed by the same spirit as a man and woman in love have toward each other, which is not a spirit of rule keeping, but of love that fills their heart and their mind and naturally flows out in joy and a deep desire to honour the one they love. Likewise, Christians who know the love of God endeavour to bring a good testimony to Christ (howbeit not perfectly) who laid down his life to a brutal, bloody and cruel death not for himself, but so that we may be reconciled to God in a relationship of love and grace and saved to eternal life.

68. Sex (now that got your attention) is an enormously powerful force in fact next to food probably the most powerful, I expect most are already thinking, "Give me sex any day," but go and ask anyone in a third world country who has not had food for a week and ask them whether they would prefer food or sex, their answer is a no brainer. But putting food aside there is an even greater power than sex and that is affection the human heart wants to be loved, both men and woman want to know they are special and valued. If affection wasn't more powerful than sex, why would there be such a craving for a steady partner when it is a lot cheaper

for a man to visit a prostitute than keeping a wife and most woman could quiet easily find a man who is willing to share their bed. All this just proves one thing, affection is more powerful that sex. Since affection carries the idea of caring for the one we are with more than ourselves it can be summed up in the word, love. Jesus said, "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lays down his life for his friends" and later in the same letter he said, "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." Jesus surrendered his life to a brutal, bloody and cruel death because he cares about our eternal well-being. This I think is why; despite persecutions, corrupt ministers, dogmatic and legalistic teachers, religious institutions and worldly enemies who have attempted to destroy the Christian faith it has not only survived throughout its thousands of years of history, but is still growing worldwide. The entire message of Christ is one of his heavenly Fathers affection, love and grace certainly in some religious circles it may not have been presented as a message of love, but there is no-doubt the founder of it did establish it in love so much so he gave his life for us, can there be any greater love than this? (John 3:16) (John 15:13).

69. In the TV series titled: Once Upon A Time the mother said to her son, "Just because you believe something does not make it true" her son replied, "That is exactly what makes it true." Both the mother and the boy's statement contain a certain truth. Obviously, the mother is right in saying, "Believing something does not mean it is true," but her sons' statement also contains a certain truth howbeit of a different kind. Though no faith on planet earth can be proven by scientific truth or material fact they are made true to the person following them by belief it is in this sense that the son's statement is a true one. Belief is the power that makes a faith real to the mind of the person who believes it. So the son is right in that it is belief that makes faith true to the mind of the one believing in the faith, but the mothers statement that believing something does not mean it is actually true is also a very true statement (i.e., consider father Christmas or the tooth fairy they are very real to the mind of a child who believes in them). More than this whether what is believed is fiction, fantasy or truth matters little since if belief has enough muscle and mental power it will affect a person's life accordingly. Why do I highlight this truth? Simply so I can say that the Christian faith though it is still a belief is not a totally blind faith since it does have an enormous amount of evidence to support it. Its history, archaeology, God's dealings and prophecies concerning the tiny nation of Israel spoken of from Genesis to Revelation (the fact it still exists is a miracle), many Bible prophecies which have stunningly come to pass and others that are still to be fulfilled, the ethical teachings for all humanity, the brilliant description of the two conflicting natures dwelling within human heart and

mind, Christianity's growth throughout the global world despite extreme persecution and opposition to destroy it and the glorious transformation of the life of millions of men and women of every generation throughout history who have truly experienced God's love and grace. Deception is a most powerful force, probably the most powerful on planet earth, not only in religion, but also of governments over the nations they rule since it is certain all leaders of the world today know that not only a person's life, but an entire nation can be controlled by what the mind believes whether what it is believing is real, fiction or fantasy. This is why Jesus and the apostles constantly warn of being deceived. All who understand psychology are not only aware of the power of global propaganda through the media, but also know that those who control it can change the thinking of an entire nation by cleverly using it to their advantage since if we believe a thing the human mind will accept it as truth and it will affect our behaviour, thinking and emotions accordingly. Such is the power of belief whether what we believe is true or not.

70. Job asks God to leave mankind alone so that they can enjoy their days; it appears that Job's perspective of all suffering on earth is that it is a result of God's wrath toward the collective sin and evil of all humanity across the face of the earth. Job sees the denial of God and all the cruelty, evil, sin and oppression committed by mankind as one massive gigantic global black cloud ascending up before the throne of God. The repercussion of this is that God's wrath rather than God's favour descends upon earth. The book of Revelations tells us one day this black global cloud of iniquity will be so dark that seven Angels will be released to pour out God's wrath without restraint. This event will usher in a New Age of righteousness, justice, joy and peace.

71. Because national statistics show that historic Cathedrals and traditional church building are not as full as they used to be and national census forms show that the percentage of people who state they do not belong to any Christian denomination, church or religious institution is increasing atheist claim that in our modern world God is dead. Certainly, these statistics are evidence of the following two things, firstly, traditional Christianity as we have known it maybe dying and secondly, we are living in an age of religious institutional diminishment. But does this mean that God is dead in our modern world or does it simply mean that Christianity is taking on a different form worldwide." Globally, Christians today are finding that they do not need buildings, professional ministers or stained-glass windows to be in fellowship with God and saved to eternal life so it is not that God is dead, but that Christianity is changing its shape and its form. Christian friends are meeting in homes and simply fellowshiping together wherever they can and sharing their faith amongst those they come in contact with in their everyday life. Many today are finding that

Christianity is not only fluid meaning it is not limited to a building or even a special day, but also discovering (because of global communication and religious chat sites) they don't need a priest or religious leader to teach them the Gospel they can seek out God for themselves since all the knowledge of the Bible and every Scripture is readily available to them in the palm of their hand, because of the internet which means they can gather together with their Christian friends in their homes, coffee bars or on the riverside as the early church did and learn from each other.

72. Some people find it difficult to comprehend God raising the dead, but think of it this way, we have super computers today that have in their memories literally trillions of bits of information and at the touch of a key any one of those individual bits (no matter how unimportant or how insignificant) is instantly resurrected to us on a brightly coloured screen in vivid colour, then with another touch of the key it vanishes into the memory and is gone, until we resurrect it again. Knowing that God has given his creation the mind to be able to build such amazing super computers should make it very easy to understand how God keeps us all in His eternal memory waiting for the right time to touch the supernatural keyboard of heaven and raise us again from the grave. Added to this very few who believe in God have any trouble believing he created the universe that we live in so in comparison raising the dead from the grave is not such a difficult task for such an awesome, powerful and majestic God (Heb. 11:3).

73. Paul wrote: "If anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, they will receive a reward, but if anyone's work is burned up, they will suffer loss, though they themselves will be saved, but only as through fire (1 Cor. 3:11-15). When Christians stand before Christ at judgment their acceptance or rewards or lack of them will not be based on intellectual head knowledge. No one will be ushered into a room to complete a doctrinal exam rather acceptance, rewards or lack of them will be based on their devotion and faithfulness toward God's Son the Lord Jesus Christ and how they have treated other humans according to the royal law of love and Jesus command to, "Love our neighbour as ourselves" (Matt. 22:39). It will not be a high score on an exam paper that God will favour, but what has been done in love.

74. When the high priest and the council wanted to put Peter and the apostles with him to death a Pharisee named Gamaliel said, "Leave them alone, because if what they are doing is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them." This clearly implies that if something is of God it will

succeed, but if it is of man it will fail. Though this is true on an eternal and heavenly level and certainly true concerning Peter and the apostles it's not always true on a mortal and worldly level since the underlying premise is that what succeeds is good and what fails is evil, but this is contrary to Scripture which points out that the wicked do prosper and the godly are often destitute showing that worldly success or failure cannot be used as evidence that God is involved in a thing (Acts 5:33-39) (Ps 73:12) (Ps 109:22-26).

75. A religious teacher or minister who is gifted with oratory and is skilful in writing speeches and able to speak with eloquence and authority and understands the psychology of manipulating a crowd and the power of contagious emotion through music and telling stories that touch the human heart has enormous persuasive power over naïve and innocent minds who are seeking God. This in no doubt one of the reason Jesus said religious teachers will be held to a higher accountability than the sheep.

76. The pure Gospel of Christ has power to spiritually bless the life of those in wealthy western countries and the poor in third world countries because the message of Jesus is spiritual and eternal not materialistic and worldly. There are some churches today that even though they teach the message of the cross and the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ their messages only appeal to those living in wealthy countries because the underlying current of their message, is success, prosperity and a charmed life. Perhaps a good test for our faith would be to ask, "If I taught what I believe to a starving family in a third world country who have nothing of this world's riches would it enhance their life spiritually?" If our answer is no, there is something radically wrong with our perception of God and our understanding of the message of the cross.

77. Sometimes church leaders and Christian parents are deeply grieved because one of their family members has left the church, but leaving a church does not always mean rejecting God or rejecting Christ, sometimes it can be the most spiritually healthy and faith building thing a man or woman honestly seeking God can do.

78. Throughout history the question has always been asked, "Who killed Jesus?" Was it the Jews, Rome or the prideful, hypocritical self-serving religious leaders? Clearly each of these groups had a part to play in Christ's death. But in the light of the following words of Paul, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23) and these words of Jesus: "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) who do you think God considers killed Jesus? For anyone in doubt the following will not only help answer this question, but will also shine a

brilliant spotlight upon who is really is guilty of Christ having to lay his life down to such a brutal, bloody and cruel death. In the Old Testament it was the sinner who slit the throat of the sacrificial lamb for the forgiveness of sin. Since we are all descendants of our earthly father Adam and are therefore all sinners, we are all tainted with the blood-guilt of Christ being nailed to the cross.

79. There are only two commandments in the entire universe that God calls all humanity to live by, the first: "Love God with all your heart, mind and strength," the second, "Love your neighbour as yourself." I believe if a person does not fulfil the first commandment, but does fulfil the second commandment God still rejoices. They may not have eternal life, but I believe God rejoices in any act of self-sacrifice and kindness whether it is coming from a person who has eternal life or one who doesn't, especially when I consider the following words of Jesus, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son" and the truth that "Christ died for us even while we were sinners," how much more will the Lord love when people do-good and especially when they love him (Deut. 6:5) (Matt 22:37) (Mark 12:30) (Luke 10:27) (Romans 5:8).

80. The Christian faith should be least materialistic faith on earth, but sadly in some circles has become the most materialistic of faiths. Jesus said, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God. In this story Jesus is not only teaching his disciples that no-one needs money to enter the Kingdom of God, but also that the less people have the easier it will be for them to enter the Kingdom of God. This does not mean it is wrong for a Christian to be rich the focus of this story is a man whose wealth is enthroned as the god of his heart. It is not a sin to become rich through honest business in fact it can be a great blessing to the Kingdom of God since it can be used to help the poor, those in need and to extend the Kingdom of God, whoever uses their wealth in this way is storing up treasure in heaven.

81. There is no mention of church buildings in the New Testament the early church was held in the homes of faithful brothers and sisters. The door of Jesus family home was always open to people who wanted to hear the Gospel. It was the headquarters of much of Jesus ministry people of all walks of life came to the home of his mother to eat meals and listen to him and the disciples teach.

82. When a man and women deeply love each other with all their heart, mind and all their affections, emotions and feelings it could be rightly said that they have become one in love, mind and unity. This is the relationship Jesus has with his heavenly Father and the relationship

he desires to have with those who belong to his global family so that we are one in him and he is one in us by love.

83. Some Christians find it difficult to receive free grace from God. Though their mind may understand that God needs nothing self can do in return it cannot communicate this fact to the heart so their life becomes something like a guilt filled torture. This is because God's love and grace is only experienced when we receive His grace first therefore it is the role of a Christian in their relationship with God to humbly receive His unconditional love and grace, because if they don't receive or accept God's love, they cannot love Him in return.

84. Paul prayed, "May God's love grant you to be strengthened in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith that you, being rooted and grounded in love may have strength to comprehend and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. It seems that though Paul had perfect revelation and perfect knowledge of the Scriptures he was also aware that knowing and experiencing the love and grace of God and living in it could not be taught since a relationship of love is not only dependent on the unique faith and individual personality, character and mindset of each faithful believer, but also dependant on their commitment and spiritual relationship of heartfelt passion and love toward the Lord (taken from Ephesians 3:16-19).

85. Jesus sums up the Ten Commandments concerning mankind with the words, "Love your neighbour as yourself." This is called the Royal Law in the New Testament and in simple words means, "Do good to others and not harm" but love does not deny justice. Those who trade in human trafficking or deliberately harm and hurt others in any way for their own selfish gain are to be brought to justice and punished accordingly to protect the innocent. God is a God of love, but He is also equally a God of justice (meaning doing that which is fair, right and just). Love and justice are not only two of the greatest pillars of God's heavenly throne, but should also be two of the greatest pillars of God's Kingdom on earth and of the lives and hearts of those who confess to be Christian.

86. Both married and single Christians live in Christ, but single Christians are free to give all their free time to the Lord, but that does not mean that the single person is more favoured by the Lord, rather it simply means because of the lack of duties and responsibilities the single person has there is more free time to give to God. A married couple maybe attending to the work of the Lord far less than a single person, but that does not mean the single person is more dedicated or even more favoured by the Lord. A married person may have a far greater heart that is devoted

to the Lord, but just doesn't have the free time available that the single person has, added to this the single person may simply be serving God to escape their singleness and the loneliness that comes with it, only God knows the true motive of the heart, so married or single neither can judge the other in regards to service and devotion.

87. Jesus was condemned by the religious leaders of his generation for healing a man on the Sabbath Day they had no idea of what was important to the heart of God. Their legalistic attitude today would be like a Christian driving to church and passing an accident in which a person is lying badly injured on the road. The heart of God would be crying out for that Christian to forget the church, stop the car and help the injured person. The religious leaders of Jesus era were so twisted by legalism that if they were the ones driving the car they would continue on their way to the synagogue.

88. Worldwide many new converts come to Christ with purely innocent and honest hearts and begin their walk in Christ as spiritual infants in the midst of churches that though they teach the message of the cross, the message of salvation and the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ correctly outside of these fundamental truths there are other teaching that are not correct. However the Lord is gracious and sees the sincerity of the heart and overshadows the error with grace for a time, but as the new born who is truly seeking to know the Lord grows in knowledge and toward maturity (a lifetime process) the Lord begins to bring doubts and questions about certain things they have been taught into their mind. Some assume that this doubt is from Satan because they have been taught that all doubt is the work of the devil and therefore fear not only never lets them consider the idea that certain things they may have been taught maybe wrong, but also stops them from entertaining the idea that it maybe the Spirit of the Lord who is causing them to doubt because he wants to take them further into understanding his word and into a greater depth of his light and teach them to lean on him rather than some great orator standing behind a pulpit or books written by famous religious authors.

89. Just because a spiritual leader may have tremendous intellectual knowledge of the Scriptures and be gifted in oratory and highly skilled in speech-making does not automatically mean that they know what is important to the heart of God. Being able to quote Scripture and give an amazing message from the Bible is not a guarantee that a person understands what God's values most.

90. Even though the Bible assures the faithful Christian that their life is in God's eternal plan there will always be things that are beyond their

control, things they do not understand and things they would like to change, thus the need for faith.

91. In most cases when Christians speak of the return of the Lord Jesus Christ they will be labelled as fanatics. I guess in that sense I am a fanatic, as much as I would love to be accepted as normal to my family and the people I work with I find it impossible to deny what I believe, but for me the important thing is never to impose or force it onto others who are not interested and obviously never to argue quarrel or go to war too prove it. Ultimately when Christ returns my faith will be vindicated, so I have no need to harm or destroy others to prove it and if he doesn't then those who denied it and said I was wrong will be vindicated so my stand is to remain faithful to what I believe, but let time prove who of us is right rather than argue, quarrel kill and go to war.

92. I am often humbled when I see men and woman (secular and religious) who have spent years of their life giving all their leisure time to helping others, how thrilled God must be when He sees such kind-hearted people on planet earth that put the need of others before their own pleasure. I can almost hear the sceptics say, "Yes, but they do it because it makes them feel good emotionally," of course it does God has made us this way, but it still involves a sacrifice that most are not willing to make. The spiritual truth that most do not find is that if you truly want to enhance your life and feel great put the need of others before your own. We may not all be able to achieve magnificent things or help a multitude of others, but when our heart is moved to compassion by the suffering of others God notices, like a pebble cast into a still lake the ripple of our emotion for another's suffering is heard, but when we add action to the emotion the angels rejoice.

93. It is interesting to notice that God's will is often not what we as Christians think it should be, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and a worshipper of pagan gods was not only given one of the greatest visions of the Bible, but the LORD also used him (a pagan king) as His servant to bring judgment on God's own people. This shines a spotlight on the truth that just because something many not appear in the way we might like or think it should does not mean that it is not God's will.

94. The people of Israel were slaughtered and Jerusalem God's Holy City destroyed by Babylon (a secular Empire that worshipped other gods). If we were living at that time, most of us would say, "Horrors of horrors" and yet it was all in God's will. God even gave Nebuchadnezzar Egypt as wages for labouring for Him. Often, we think God's will has to line up with our will, but for many it rarely does.

95. Some people appear to be straight out cruel in nature, while others may do extremely horrible things, but hidden underneath the horror of the outward behaviour can be a good person who has never in their life experienced or known what it is like to be valued and loved by another human. Some (obviously not all) monsters are simply a result of never having had anyone love them, is it any wonder Jesus not only said, "All God's six commandments concerning mankind can be summed up in the words, "Love your neighbour as yourself," but also commanded all Christians to live by this law. Cruel behaviour (certainly not all) can be a result of an extremely hurt heart, the monster inside the heart is often created within a person who has only known rejection and who has never experienced in their life someone caring for them or the warmth of being loved by another human, such is the power of love or the lack of it. No-doubt this is why the New Testament calls Jesus commandment "Love your neighbour as yourself" the Royal Law.

96. Hate for an extremely emotionally hurt person it is very easy to live in. This is because hate protects the heart from hurt, thus the saying, love and hate go together. A heart that loves and is wounded hurts, so to protect itself from further hurt it turns to hate (or simply shuts people out). Hate builds a wall of protection from future hurt, but it robs of real joy. Hate is the emotionally protective path, the refuge and a shelter for a hurt heart, but its fruit is anger and every other destructive attitude that flows from this. The only real way back to true joy and real emotional freedom is forgiveness. Such is the tremendous power of hate and forgiveness and no-doubt why God calls all those who love Him to forgive.

97. As Christians we often feel we can only acknowledge good events in our lives as being from the hand of God, but Job's faith was not like this. He saw every event that came to him as being from the hand of God. He even says it was from God's hand that the wicked strike him and speak evil of him. To Job there was not a moment or event in his life that God was not in control of. Job lived in God, he had this enormous faith that whether a situation was good or bad God was implementing it and in control of it which means that there was never a moment in Job's life that he was without God.

98. When I consider the following words of John, "Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love" (1 John 4:8) and his words, "God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him (1 John 4:16) and consider Jesus command that we love our neighbour as ourselves (Mark 12:28-31) (meaning we do-good to others and not harm as we do-good to ourselves and do everything we can to avoid any form of physical, mental and emotional hurt. It makes me wonder if God concerned with the superficial things that worry us and

whether God cares 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 to other humans have any meaning to God? Especially since in the resurrection all Christians become as the angels and there is, no marriage in eternity.

99. Throughout Christian history there has always been differing ideas of where faithful believers are going to spend eternity. Obviously to understand correctly what the Bible teaches is the perfect ideal, but the excitement and joy of every faithful Christian I have known over the last forty-five years from various denominations and outside of them has not been motivated by where they are going to spend eternity, but by their heartfelt, love devotion and passion toward the Lord who suffered and died a brutal, bloody and cruel death for them and the knowledge that they are going to spend eternity with him. Nearly all faithful Christians I have had the joy of knowing really don't care where eternity is as long as they are with the Lord that is missing from the bloodstained cross and he is King they will be eternally happy.

100. Since Christ is the only man who has ever lived on earth without sin and is the founder of the Christian faith there is a danger in Christianity that we spend all our time examining our own fallen condition that we have inherited from our earthly father Adam and spend excessive amounts of time condemning ourselves because of our shortcomings. When we do this, we are setting up our own sinful-self upon the throne of our hearts and minds and making it the centre of our life. Certainly it is spiritually healthy to check our lifestyle, but to spend all our focus upon the sinful dysfunctions and aberrations of our fallen nature that dwell within until they blind us to God's glorious grace manifested on the bloodstained cross of Calvary is to turn our back on Christ and make his death count for nothing.

101. The following is a common expression amongst the secular world, "The reason Christians spend their life devoted to and loving God," is because they are emotionally weak and need a crutch in life to hang onto, but if this principle is true, it could be said that the reason husbands and wives love each other is because they are both emotionally weak and need a crutch in life to hold them up. No one ever accuses loving husbands and wives or boyfriends and girlfriends of staying together because they need a crutch in life to hold them up (of course there are exceptions there always is), but on the most part we accept they are together because they actually love each other. Likewise, Christians believe in Christ not because they need a crutch in life to hold them up, but because they actually love

the man who is missing from the bloodstained cross. In fact the real truth is quite the opposite since for many their life would be far easier if they were not Christians. Think this is not true consider the life of the apostles and of Paul they all suffered tremendous persecution because of their faith and there are still many today in various countries who are suffering in a similar way. In the same way as love binds a husband and wife together it is the love of God displayed to all mankind through Christ that dwells in the heart and mind of every honest and faithful Christian that keeps them in the faith.

102. If our life is charmed and trouble free and we are enjoying life there is small excitement in knowing a King is coming who will bring justice, joy and peace, to earth and certainly no sense of urgency, but if we forget ourselves and the good life we maybe having and think of the global suffering of innocent children (especially in third world countries), teenage girls sold on the black market, the hurt of good people suffering with sicknesses and illnesses beyond their control and the millions of workers who are being oppressed by multinational companies etc., then the promise of a future King to come in glory to our troubled planet who has the power to solve these problems and bring justice, joy and peace to earth stirs up enormous joy and excitement in the heart.

103. When buying something a common expression is, "It is only money," but money is time and time is valuable, it gives us moments to do the things we enjoy and spend time with the people we value, so the next time the thought, "It's only money," pops into the mind take a moment to think, "How much time do I have to work to earn that money," and remember that the money spent is time robbed from the things we enjoy and the people we love.

104. In the secular world and in many modern-day churches there is a message being proclaimed today that states that, "Everyone can achieve their dream." Certainly, there is a truth contained in these words, but often what is needed to bring the dream to pass is not spoken of and people are left thinking providing they believe and have faith their dream will come to pass, but this is fantasy. Jess Watson (Australia's golden sixteen-year old girl who sailed around the world) brought the balance to the expression, "Everyone can achieve their dream" by adding the words effort and sacrifice so that it reads, "Everyone can achieve their dream if they are willing to put in the effort and make the sacrifices." Without these two pillars dreams remain dreams.

105. Sadly there are those in the global body of Christ who suffer judgmental self-condemning thoughts even though they have good hearts and would never talk so destructively and negatively about their

neighbour the way they self-talk to themselves in the silent thoughts of their minds, because they know it is wrong to kick other people around, yet they allow the noiseless voices in their minds to do it to themselves all the time. When we listen to these silent voices and allow ourselves to be treated like a muddy football to be kicked around, we are insulting the love and grace of God that was shown to us on the blood-stained cross of Calvary.

106. Those who belong to God reflect God in their lives to others they can be either a good reflection or a bad one. Israel became so grossly corrupt God was forced to judge them because they were profaning His Name and degrading who He is. God has to protect His name and His character so that those who do not know Him will know him by the reflection of those who do and see that God is Holy, loves justice, cares for the poor and despises those who deliberately harm other humans and oppress the less fortunate for their own selfish gain.

107. God has never changed, but the political environment has, and global cultures are different from one another. Today's Christians don't face the same problems the early patriarchs faced, nor were New Testament Christians encumbered with things believers have to deal with today. Each generation and each culture is different, nevertheless in spite of political and cultural differences, Jesus gave us two laws to live our lives by that apply to all generations and to all political environments, cultures and human differences no matter how much the face of the world changes. What are these two laws some might be wondering? Simply this: "You shall love God with all your heart and all your mind" and, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself" (Mark 12:28-31) meaning God should have the highest place in our mind and heart and we are to do-good to other humans as we do-good to ourselves. It matters, not what culture we live in, what the political environments is or how much the morals, the values, the ethics and the integrity of the world declines or how much technology changes the world these two laws will always apply to every faithful brother and sister in Christ of every generation.

108. A key to understanding many prophecies of the Bible is to know that the verses are not always written in chronological order. It is almost as though the prophet is so inspired that he immediately speaks the words as they come to him. They are then recorded in the order that the prophet spoke them, but that does not always mean they are in the actual chronological order that they will unfold throughout history. Sometimes the latter verses of a chapter may actually be the first events to take place in God's foreordained plan of events. This principal is especially true in the book of Revelation. Often a prophecy is spoken in the present tense as though the event has already happened when in actual reality the

fulfilment of it may still be many years away. This is because the prophet is seeing the vision in the present moment and speaks it as he sees it in present time. The people the prophet is speaking to know when the prophecy is a future event, but sometimes it can be difficult for those reading it thousands of years later to realise, because of the tense it is written in. When a prophet speaks, he is often speaking as the voice of God, therefore the words he speaks are guaranteed to come to pass. This is why the prophet sometimes will speak future predictions in the present moment because they are certain to happen at the right time in the future. Many future prophecies are spoken in the present tense, because the prophet is speaking the words of God or the vision as they come to him in his time. The prophet himself may not always be aware of the echoes contained in his prophecy or that the words he is speaking, actually have contained within them the ability to transcend time and travel thousands of years through history to a future age or a future person.

109. Every faithful brother and sister in Christ should always allow Christ's love to move them to such extremes that his love has the first and last word in everything they say and do. The Gospel message is not mere human optimism that is received by strictly adhering to ceremonial rites, holy days or by keeping religious customs and traditions, but a free gift given by God to those who have faith in the reality of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is a great danger for the faithful in Christ to become so absorbed in God missions, tasks and religious habits that they don't notice God Himself.

110. It is interesting to notice when Jesus and the apostles were referring to the Old Testament their primary focus is not upon teaching it, but using it to prove to unbelieving and doubtful Jews that Jesus is the fulfilment of it and that he is the Messiah the Christ who the prophets proclaimed was to come. In contrast to this when they witnessed to the Gentiles, they used parables and stories the Gentiles could relate to rather than Old Testament history and prophecies. This is because Gentiles knew nothing of God's dealings with Israel or Old Testament history and prophecy so it would have very little meaning to them regarding Christ especially since the only gods, they had believed in were pagan gods. The apostles and Paul when sharing the faith spoke to each group according to what he knew they could relate to. To the Jews he used their history, and to the Gentiles he spoke about things regarding their daily lives.

111. It is true that we should focus on and appreciate the good things we have in the present moment, but this truth does not diminish the truth that focusing on future glory is healthy to the mind and the heart. Focusing on a joyful future hope strengthens the mind to cope with the sufferings of the present moment. Added to this, expectations based on

a glorious hope in the future will produce emotions of joy in the present moment. Think this is not a true statement, consider this: hundreds of people buy lottery tickets because of the hope it gives them of a better life in the future, as their mind in the present moment dreams of the glorious hope winning could bring when the lottery is drawn at a future time it brings in the present moment joyful excitement to their mind in the present moment. The stronger the belief is in winning at some future time the greater the joy and excitement is experienced in the present moment. This is because the human nervous system responds to a joyful future hope (whether it is real or false) and also one of the reasons why we lose joy when we spend all our time imagining what we are missing.

112. When Christ prayed in extreme heartfelt agony in the garden of Gethsemane, "Father take this cup (of suffering) from me, but not my will but yours be done." He chose the way of suffering. Why some might ask? The Bible says, "Because he focused on the eternal joy and glory that was set before him." The practical application of this for us today is that if we like Christ truly believe God's promise as Jesus did and have a vision in our mind of the future and eternal glory God has promised for us that future vision will not only give us strength through the struggles, hardships and sorrows of life, but will also produce joy in the heart and the mind in the present moment.

113. Over the years I have met faithful Christians who have questioned whether it is wrong for their mind and their thoughts to be more occupied with Christ than they are with his heavenly Father. They experience a mental dilemma between who in prayer, thought and heartfelt worship they should give the highest esteem and exaltation to and mentally wonder if it is wrong to love and esteem Christ more than God his heavenly Father? Consider this: Adam fully loved Eve, and God was not jealous of Adam's love it was proper and right. A wife fully loves her children and her husband is not Jealous it is proper and right. Likewise, Christians can fully love and worship Christ and be confident that God his heavenly Father is not jealous of their devotion toward His Son because Christ is the glory of God and God's magnificence and love is seen in the character and nature of Christ.

114. When past sins and bad memories limit a person from sharing the Gospel, they should be encouraged by Paul's life. While proclaiming Christ it is almost certain Paul would have been mentally aware that he had persecuted faithful brothers and sisters in Christ and given his approval for having Christian families put in prison and even killed. There would be no way Paul could preach with a clear conscience, if he did not know the grace of God. Today many have been called later in life, to share the Gospel, but while proclaiming it to others, memories of past gross sins

can often be present. These dark memories can hinder a person's ability to share the Gospel. Perhaps this is one of the reasons God called Paul and one of the reasons why Paul not only tells us that he was aware of this in his own life, but also said to overcome it he put his past life under the grace found in Christ Jesus so that all those mentally suffering in the same way or with past guilt could find freedom by following his example (Ephes. 3:8) (Philip. 3:15-16).

115. Job said to his three friends (Bildad, Eliphaz and Zophar) "If indeed you magnify yourselves against me and make my disgrace an argument against me, know then that God has put me in the wrong and closed his net about me (Job 19:5-6). Job suspects the underlying reason his three friends are so determined to argue with him over theology is to exalt themselves by their clever words and superior knowledge. Job tells them even if this is the case, they should know that it is God Himself who has put Job in the position he is in. There is a danger even today that some with vast Biblical knowledge can fall into the trap of doing what Bildad, Eliphaz and Zophar are doing. They can attend Bible meetings not because they are interested in comforting those that might be hurting or interested in bringing people from the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of light (thought it may appear they do), but like Bildad, Eliphaz and Zophar their primary purpose is to show off their knowledge. The way to discern the motive is look at their spirit is it manifesting love, compassion mercy and kindness when they speak, or are they aggressive, argumentative, determined and forceful. What they are saying maybe right, but the spirit they are saying it in can be totally wrong.

116. Those who love God can be alone in prayer with Him in their mind and their heart. This is because the human emotion of love can be so strong that you can be alone with the one you love in your heart and your mind even though you are not with them. This principal of love applies whether the one loved is a sweetheart, an idol (spiritual or human) or a man or woman that is exalted and worshipped in the heart and mind, a false god or the true God the Bible reveals. This is why deception is so powerful, love creates the same emotions whether the one we love is a man or woman, a brilliant musician or someone famous that we have set our hearts upon, or a false god or the true God love produces the same feelings and emotions in the heart and the mind.

117. Jesus knew Peter was going to betray him to his enemies, yet Jesus prays for Peter. Jesus knows we are going to fall short yet his eyes see past the weakness of human nature (as he did with Peter) and into the struggle of the heart and the mind. The interesting thing is to notice in this story is what Jesus prayed for Peter. Jesus did not pray that Peter would not deny Him, but that his faith would not fail. The most important thing

to Christ for Peter was that after he had rejected the Lord and was convicted, he would put it behind him and continue in his faith. Faith that does not fail does not mean that we will never doubt, but that after the doubting and the questioning it rises up and endures even when a believer has horrific moments of failure (as Peter did). It should always be kept in mind that it is because of human limitations and moments of human fear and weakness that the Lord Jesus Christ laid his life down to a brutal, bloody and cruel death so that whoever faithfully follows him would be counted righteous not by their perfect life (something we can only dream of), but by his.

118. It is a Christian's calling to share the Gospel, but it is not a Christian's right to use guilt or fear to steer a person to a particular decision, nor is it a Christian's job to use emotion, clever oratory or mood shifting music to manipulate others to believe what they believe. The decision to choose to accept or reject is to be left to their conscious informed mind and their free will and if anyone is using violence and war to force people to believe the same way as they do, they are not believing in the God of heaven that faithful Christians worldwide believe in. Christian witnessing is sharing information (in our case the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ) and allowing the listener to make their own conscious choice and continuing to show love and compassion even if they chose to reject what we believe. Everyone should know that whoever is committing acts of violence in the name of God do not have the Spirit of Christ or the Spirit of God who created all things and who is the source of all life.

119. Grace means unmerited favor over the years I have heard it said by some who have been raised in Christian homes that a part of them wishes they had lived in the world as gross sinners so they could then experience God's grace, but no one has to live a grossly corrupt and ungodly life in the world before they find grace and experience excitement, passion, and love for God. This is because excitement, passion, and love for God comes from understanding how unworthy we are of the gift since it matters not how much we have attended church, read our Bibles or kept religious customs and traditions when we stand before the awesome Holiness of God not one of us is without sin.

120. Experiencing the wonder and beauty of God's grace come from understanding this truth and understanding how unworthy we all are of God's gift and understanding the painful cost to the heart of God in sacrificing His most beloved Son and understanding the brutal, bloody and cruel death Christ paid that we could be saved by such wonderful grace. Whoever thinks they cannot experience God's grace has never stood before the cross covered in the redeeming blood of their Saviour.

121. Moses proclaims the LORD existed before the earth was formed; God is from everlasting to everlasting, past, present and future. Moses is not saying God is from eternal beginning to eternal end, because in God there is no beginning, neither is there an end in the eternal God, that is why everlasting to everlasting is such an appropriate term.

122. As Moses takes an overall view of humanity it appears to him that humans are like a dream to God, because man's life generally withers and maxes out in old age. To God who is eternal human life is like a blink of the eye when held up against eternity. Moses says human life ends as a tale that is told, because humans have strength in the day, but it fades in the evening but is strengthened again for the next day only to wither again and all of these days and years are filled with toil and trouble and when a man or women's days are ended God sends them to the grave. This why Solomon says without God and eternal life human life is but vanity meaning empty and pointless since it withers away never to return.

123. David said the one who has no deceit, meaning they do not deceive themselves believing they have no sin and therefore 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. John wrote, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9). These are great eternal truths, but for those who have acknowledged their sin and been forgiven to experience the joy and the beauty of such forgiveness in their heart and minds they must believe they have been forgiven.

124. The following Old Testament prayer: "If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its skill! Let my tongue stick to the roof of my mouth, if I do not remember you, if I do not set Jerusalem above my highest joy! (Psalm 137:4-6). Beautifully express the great love the Jews have for God's Holy City Jerusalem and what it means to their heart. If this prayer was being written by a faithful Christian today it would read: "If I do not set the Lord Jesus Christ above my highest joy!" Let me be as one who fails in what I do and as one who cannot speak. For those who know the love and grace of Christ he is their best thought, their highest desire and their greatest joy.

125. How amazing is this: God told Moses that before He gave birth to Israel, He knew they were a stubborn and rebellious people and that after Moses death Israel would forsake God. It appears to me that God deliberately chose Israel to show every other human the wonder and greatness of His love, mercy, compassion and abundant grace. Every time Israel returned to the LORD in honest repentance, He always accepted

them with open arms and abundantly forgave all their rebellion and sin. Each time they returned; God began with them afresh as though they had never turned away. God does not hold resentment or bitterness in His heart (these are foreign entities to God). Israel's past rebellion in God's mind was cast into the deep of the ocean and a new beginning began for them.....likewise it is with anyone who surrenders their life to Christ or returns to him in honest heartfelt repentance.

126. When talking of human nature, the Bible uses the following two words, the spirit and the flesh. The term spirit in relation to human nature has two aspects, firstly it can refer to the collective total of the person's, affections, emotions, desires, thoughts, and actions together producing who that person is as a total whole, who they really are when they are their authentic self (this could be good or bad). Secondly it can refer to the higher nature of the human heart meaning to that nature that is always good in the sense that it is filled with love, kindness, mercy, grace and forgiveness and such like things. In contrast to the spirit this the flesh always refers to the lower nature of mankind (i.e., self, ego, pride, greed, jealousies, anger etc.). Though all humans have dwelling within them the nature of the spirit and the flesh not all live from the flesh or from the spirit in the same way. This is why our world is filled with a mixture of glorious acts of love and courageous acts of self-sacrificing kindness and horrific acts or brutal cruelty.

127. Paul wrote: "If anyone builds on the foundation (being the Lord Jesus Christ) with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will test what sort of work each one has done, if the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, they will receive a reward, but if anyone's work is burned up they will suffer loss, though they themselves will be saved (1 Cor. 3:11-15). Future spiritual blessings are still in heaven, they are rewards to come and will be realised when Christ returns in glory and his Kingdom is established on earth when this happens the believer's joy and peace will not be dependent on belief because it will be the true nature of their heart.

128. God the eternal immortal invisible heavenly Father has an inheritance in those who belong by faith, grace and love to His most beloved Son. The apostle Paul earnestly prayed that God would give the faithful in Christ a revelation of the glorious and majestic hope of the knowledge of God's riches in Christ. Paul prayed this prayer so that those in Christ would know that the riches of God's inheritance is not success, money and material possessions, but that all who belong to Christ will be resurrected to immortal and eternal life and become part of God's everlasting family in eternal glory. This does not mean that it is wrong for Christians to succeed and honestly achieve their goals, dreams and desires

in this mortal world and enjoy the good things of this temporal life, but it does mean that succeeding and achieving worldly riches and possessions should not be the supreme goal of their lives or the highest desire of their minds and hearts.

129. Throughout the Old Testament of the Bible there are pages and pages of religious and civil laws and in the New Testament a multitude of Scriptures that are focused upon teaching right behaviour to those who believe in God. The Son of God summed up all these pages of laws in the following eight words, "Love God and love your neighbour as yourself." No sane person deliberately sets about to hurt themselves so "Loving others as we love ourselves," means do not deliberately inflict harm and hurt upon others. James the brother of Jesus calls this the Royal Law because it means do-good to all humans not just those who go to our churches. Perhaps if this law was given the exalted esteem amongst the global Christian world that it should have and we who confess to believe in Christ made it our heartfelt prayer to grow in such love those in the secular world might have far more respect for the name of the Lord we confess to believe in and be far more open to hearing the glorious message of the Gospel.

130. David one of the world's greatest kings and a man after God's own heart 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." David had clearly learnt through his own troubled life of ruling a nation, dealing with wars, coping with the emotional hurt of a friend's betrayal and the difficulties of romance and through his heartfelt life of faith with the LORD that God cannot be found in the rush of life or in a head full of noisy thoughts racing around in a busy and troubled mind. David's advice, find a quiet place, put the cares of the world aside, calm the mind, and then enter by prayer and meditation into the LORD'S presence of love, peace, grace and calm.

131. At various times in history God's chosen people Israel were so spiritually blind that they did not realise that other than loving God, treating other humans with decency and respect is the foundation to spirituality and God's favour. Sadly Israel mistakenly thought doing outward religious acts was the key to spirituality and God's favour. Jesus said the greatest commandment is to, "Love your neighbour as yourself," meaning do-good to other humans as you do-good to yourself and treat them with respect. Jesus said other than loving God there is no greater commandment than this. The apostle James calls, loving our neighbour the royal law. Sadly; just like the religious leaders of Israel were blind to what truly pleases the heart of God certain religions throughout the world mistakenly think that strictly adhering to ceremonial rites and holy days

and keeping religious customs and traditions is the key to spirituality and God's favour rather than living a life of heartfelt love toward God and love toward our neighbours.

132. Ten mighty and miraculous plaques, the Red Sea parted and Israel was not only delivered from bondage, but continued to see amazing wonders, yet many years later they forgot the majestic and breathtaking miracles God had done, and the bondage He had delivered them from. How amazing is that; Israel forgot! For some it was their craving for the luxuries and indulgences of this world while for others it was the present crisis and hardships in their lives. These became the highest focus of their mind and heart rather than God's love and God's eternal promise and the past life He had delivered them from. Sadly, from this self-focused mindset they rebelled against God who had called them to be his chosen people. Perhaps the lesson in this for us all, is to never let the desire for the luxuries of this world or the present crisis and hardship cancel the memory of God's past eternal blessing namely, "He who hung on the cross" and His promise of eternal life in everlasting glory.

133. In the ancient years of the human race God looked upon mankind and said, "Behold, the people of the world are one people and nothing that they propose to do will be impossible for them. Today scientists can produce mortal life by using DNA, by cloning or by using artificial insemination and perhaps by many other various and different means in the future. Some think this will shake the faith of Christians because they believe God is the creator and source of all life, but it should always be kept in mind that our scientists as brilliant as they are (and all credit to them for such brilliance) can only produce this life because God has given them the intelligence and the materials to do so and that it is only mortal life that they are producing from the already existing building blocks God has created. God when He created Adam and Eve implanted the intelligence and power into the seed of the male and the ovary of the female to give mortal life. This is why every created thing that has life has the ability and power to produce more life, but only of its own kind. All humans, animals and plants have the power to produce mortal life and it should be remembered our scientists are not creating they are just playing around with the building blocks God has given us, much like children putting Lego blocks together. It is only when they can create something out of nothing (i.e., without using what is already existing) and create eternal life that Christians could be justified in doubting their faith and doubting the Bible (Gen. 11:6).

134. Zophar says to Job, "Do you not know this from of old, since man was placed on earth, that the exulting of the wicked is short, and the joy of the godless but for a moment? Though his height mounts up to the

heavens, and his head reach to the clouds, he will perish forever like his own dung; those who have seen him will say, 'Where is he?' (Job 20:4-7). It is helpful to understand when the Old Testament writers make comments like "The joy of the godless is but for a moment" the moment they have in mind is often a human lifetime. They are speaking in terms of mortal life and eternal life. It can often seem to those who are devoted to God that it is unfair that the wicked can be successful, wealthy, glorified and exulted in this world, while the faithful suffer, but it must be remembered that it is the lot God has given the unbeliever in this life. Ultimately, they perish forever while those who belong to God go on to eternal happiness, eternal peace and eternal glory.

135. The best thing Job's three friends did was sit in silence with him when they first saw him in his extreme suffering, but sadly they began to share with him their theology and opinions regarding Scriptures and even worse they were not using the Scriptures to comfort Job, but to convince him that his calamities must be a result of some gross sin in his life. Job, being harshly judged by Bildad, Eliphaz and Zophar asked them why they couldn't accept his suffering and troubles as judgment enough and comfort him. Poor Job he was in so much need for human comfort and simply wanted his friends to show him some compassion, instead of endlessly giving him their opinions and interpretations of Scripture. There is a lesson to learn in this, if we are with someone who is hurting, silence is better than dogmatic, forceful theology even if it is correct. Compassion love, mercy kindness is far better for someone in Job's circumstances than quoting doctrine or speaking Scriptural clichés.

136. Since all humans are descendants of Adam we all have a nature that is flawed and tainted with sin, but this nature may not look exactly like the Christian fundamentalists say it does, because there are a lot of non-believing men and women that do great and self-sacrificing acts of kindness for the benefit of others. This is especially true in light of all the good we see many caring people doing in all nations around the world for those suffering floods, earthquakes, famine and devastating storms. This shines a spotlight on the truth that no matter how faithful a Christian maybe to Christ they should never think that only the faithful who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and his heavenly Father have a heart that is filled with kindness, goodness and compassion for others.

137. Many believe that Jesus was a good man, lived a perfect life was the Son of God and that he died on the cross and rose again, but saving faith goes far beyond just having intellectual head knowledge of what is true. The biblical meaning of believe also carries the idea of trusting and relying on another with full confidence and full assurance that they will do what they have promised. Saving faith is not only about believing God's

word to be true, but also involves putting one's eternal fate in the hands of another this is because Christian salvation is not in intellectual head knowledge, but in being in a right relationship with the man missing from the bloodstained cross of Calvary.

138. Continuing in faith does not mean those who faithfully follow Christ will not sin, continuing in the faith means, always coming back to God in repentance. If we say that we have no sin, we make God a liar, but if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us; such is the majestic glory of the Good News of the Christian Gospel and the glory of the undeserving grace and abundant mercy God grants as a free and pure gift and lavishes upon all who are devoted to His Son and faithfully follow him (1 John 1:8-10).

139. When Jesus is talking about false Christs and false prophets coming with distorted and deceptive teachings that will led many astray, he does not mean we all have to know the exact detail of every doctrine and every detail of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation or even have them all correct. Jesus is not saying we have to be walking Bible encyclopaedia's to be saved. Teachings that led people astray in the New Testament refers to doctrines that lead people to ungodly living and doctrines that led people away from salvation by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. In other verses these distorted teachings are called doctrines of demons. One of Paul's greatest spiritual battles was against Jewish teachers who continually tried to pull those who had accepted Christ back under the Mosaic Law. Deceptive teaching primarily refers to teachings that produce disciples who trust in their own self-efforts and good works to be saved rather than in the Lord Jesus Christ. They are deceptive because relying on self-effort to be saved usually comes in the form of good things (i.e. daily reading the Bible, praying, regularly attending Church on Sunday, being faithful to Bible teaching classes, teaching Sunday School, being involved in Church activities and helping others in need etc.), these are all good things in themselves, but if a person is trusting in them to be saved to eternal life they have been led astray from the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is why the false teachers teaching is so deceptive it does not come clothed in evil, (i.e. telling people Jesus is an anti-Christ or that the Bible is full of error etc.), which would have no power to led the elect astray, rather the deception comes beautifully clothed in good things which the Lord delights in and which will benefit those who practise them, but which become destructive when those practising them are trusting in them to be saved rather than trusting in the saving grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

140. Paul intended to take the Gospel to some towns and countries, but the Holy Spirit showed him it was better for him not to go. In this

circumstance Paul says that he was shown by the Holy Spirit. Shown by the Holy Spirit in certain context (but not all) can refer to the collective attitude of a group of people, a crowd, or a nation. It can be likened to the secular world saying, "The spirit of Australia showed me I had to love sport to be a true Australian, here the spirit is a term given to the collective attitude of the people of a nation or saying, "The spirit of the party said, if I don't drink and dance they will think me square and snobbish, here the unspoken voice of the spirit refers to the collective attitude of the mind and thinking of people at the party and finally, "The spirit of Christianity accepts most people, obviously this does not mean that there is a spirit named Christianity, rather the expression applies to the collective spirit and attitude of all Christians. Likewise shown by the Holy Spirit can in some contexts mean that the Holy Spirit dwelling within a believer discerns the collective spirit (attitude) of a crowd, group or nation, if it discerns that it is one of hostility toward Christ it will warn accordingly, but if one of acceptance it will most likely say, "Go hither." The results (good or bad) that the Gospel has had on a collective group of people can be spoken of as the attitude of the crowd or the spirit of the people. The following are two simple examples of the spirit of a group, firstly, the purpose of the school is to give people as much opportunity as they can to succeed in life, thus the collective spirit of the school is education, help and encouragement and secondly, the purpose of a church is to witness, worship and fellowship, thus the collective spirit of the church is to honour and please God. If the collective spirit of a crowd, group or nation is a righteous one it can be spoken of as the Holy Spirit of the crowd (this is especially true in worship). If the collective spirit of the people is hostile toward Christ then it would of course be spoken of as the evil spirit of the crowd. In Paul's case the result of preaching the Gospel was tribulation and persecution that is why Paul was able to say, the Holy Spirit (the collective spirit or attitude of the people that heard God's Holy Word) witnesses (shows Paul) in every city affliction await him (Acts 20:23).

141. The words, those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires (Gal 5:24) does not refer to the natural physical body, nor does it mean we should starve or afflict our bodies with lashings as a certain few do in some religions. The word flesh in this context refers to the corruption of the old nature, the old man and carnal heart (the secular world calls it the lower nature). The phrase, crucified the flesh with its passions and desires means that the power of the flesh to dominate and control our lives has been broken, since the supreme desire of the faithful who are in Christ is to honour God and the name of their Lord, thus all the affections, passions and lusts and the disorderly wishes and desires that we may feel and desire contrary to love and moderation have lost the governing and controlling dominating power that

they once had. But this does not mean that we are totally free from the flesh (the corrupt nature) with its sinful dysfunctions and aberrations since it is still alive, but it's alive as a person fastened to a cross may be alive, though they cannot act and move as before, being under restraints, so the flesh though crucified and under the restraints of God's love and grace cannot dominate, reign and govern as before, yet it is alive, and acts, and operates, and oftentimes has great sway and influence thus it is in the sense that the flesh is deprived of its reigning power that it is said to be crucified. Paul being fully aware of this principle wrote earlier in this letter to the Galatians, "I have been crucified with Christ it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not nullify the grace of God, for if justification were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose. (Gal 2:19-21). This means when the flesh did get the victory over Paul he did not condemn himself or mentally beat himself up, but rather embraced the grace of God in Christ Jesus. Paul's deepest desire was to live perfectly before God, but he knew because of the flesh this noble and high desire of the heart was unattainable, so he chose to trust in the Good News of the Gospel of Christ that states that those in Christ are counted righteous by God because of their faith in His Son who laid his life down for them and therefore Paul's trust and dependence for righteous was not in his own self-effort to attain to it, but in his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. This is what Paul means when he said, "I do not nullify the grace of God" (Gal 2:21). Paul the perfect example for all who faithfully followed Christ is gloriously shining a floodlight on the fact that he does not condemn himself in those moments the flesh gains a victory and thereby make the grace of God that Christ achieved for him on the cross serve no purpose. Paul statement, "If justification was attainable through the law, then Christ died for no purpose" (Gal. 2:21) means if any one of us could attain to the high standard of the law then Christ death was pointless since there would be no need for it which clearly shows that the flesh though crucified in that it has lost its reigning power and governing control over us will in certain circumstances and weak moment still seize the opportunity to raise its ugly head, thus, the reason Paul lives his life by faith and in God's grace as we all should.

142. A lot of good people with a tender and decent heart can be outwardly destructive, emotionally or spiritually to themselves or to others simply because in their mind they are trapped by the unmovable prison bars of distorted thinking, and an erroneous and false perspective of life and of themselves. This destructive captivity of the mind is caused by the conditioning and harmful influence of powerful and deceptive authorities that a person has been forced or deceived into submitting their minds to. Change that wrong thinking and false perspective in the mind

and the good heart that was trapped inside the captivity of mistaken belief by being imprisoned in a deceived mind is freed to burst forth and become one of the flourishing and colourful flowers that blossom in the Kingdom of God.

143. Paul's words, "I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me" (v29) shine a spotlight on the following two truths, firstly, just because a person maybe faithfully serving the Lord it does not mean that their life or their ministry will be free of difficulty and secondly, that Christ energizes those who do faithfully serve him, but how does the Lord energize them some might ask?. The answer to this is by love. This is because love generates an energy that transcends natural energy and the greater the love the greater the passion and the greater the passion the greater the energy (if anyone doubts this statement just talk to someone who has fallen in love). Paul was so filled with the love for Christ that he not only considered death to be gain for him (2 Cor. 5:8) but, preferred to be with the Lord rather than remain here on earth (Philip. 1:23) such was the love of Christ dwelling in him, is it any wonder he was so powerfully energized by the Spirit of Christ working in him? This is not to say that there is not a supernatural energy that the Lord imparts by his Spirit to those who faithfully follow him, but on a natural level honest heartfelt love for a person is so powerful that we will not only do everything in our power to please the one we love, but will also willing lay our lives down for them.

144. Jesus said to the religious Jews who not only believed in God, and held regular fast days, and strictly adhered to their ceremonial rites and holy days and kept their religious customs and traditions, but who also devotedly read the Scriptures daily, "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life" (John 5:38-40). These words of Jesus clearly show that the purpose of the Scriptures is to bring us to Christ. Every faithful believer should know that when we stand before the Lord's judgment seat Christ will not sit us down to do a written doctrinal exam, but he will examine our lives to see if our religious actions stemmed from a devoted and loving heart toward him and his Father or from self, ego, and pride and will measure us against the Royal Law, "Love your neighbour as yourself" (i.e., did we treat others with love, kindness, compassion, grace, mercy forgiveness and such like things) especially our brothers and sisters in Christ. But this does not mean that studying the Scriptures is of no value, quite the contrary, since the more we understand the Bible the stronger our faith and our hope grows and the more we learn of the nature, character will and the heart of the one we love and by this knowledge we will not only become a better disciple of the Lord, but come to understand what is truly important to

the heart of God. Though it is true we are not saved by knowledge, but by faith in Christ, this does not mean that study has no value. The following is a simple example that shines a spotlight on the benefit of study; a young man may meet a girl that he is attracted to, so he takes her out on a few dates and finds she has a pleasant personality and caring nature, now, he knows this girl, no-one can say anything against her that he would believe because he knows her nature and her character, but if he never takes her for another date, it won't be long before that relationship will dissipate and other things will take its place. So it is with the Scriptures they are our date with Christ and through them we gain eternal and heavenly insights into treasures of God that touch our hearts in a manner that nothing in this world can.

145. When we get a global vision of the body of Christ we see that within the Lords family there are faithful brothers and sister in Christ in some countries being killed for confessing Christ, others are dying because they cannot afford heaters in snow-clad nations, some in third world countries are living off food they can only find in rubbish dumps because of the extreme poverty of the country they live in, there are in some in fanatical religious countries those who are being imprisoned and tortured while others in the Philipians and similar countries worship and praise God in bare feet and singlets with chooks and dogs roaming around because they cannot afford to have special cloths for a particular day or church buildings yet God honours their worship. It is certain if we sat down with these faithful brothers and sisters and discussed doctrines we would have many differences, but the one thing we would all have in common is the message of the cross and the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and the truth that we are saved solely by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and by God's grace. Once we take our eyes off our own little world and look beyond it so that we get a vision of the a global body of Christ and see the multitudes who are suffering amongst us perhaps it will stop us from exalting trivial matters of doctrine and giving them far more importance than is needed especially those that are not related to salvation and hurting so many faithful brothers and sisters in the process.

146. The author of Hebrew wrote, "So we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?" (Heb. 13:6). The words, "The Lord is my helper" does not mean that a faithful brother and sister in Christ will never suffer illness or troubles, but it does mean that the Lord by his Spirit will help them through the hardships of life and the words, "What can man do to me?" does not mean those who trust in Christ will never be persecuted or even put to death for their faith, clearly many faithful Christians throughout all ages have suffered persecution and others have suffered death rather than deny their faith which means the words, "What can man do to me?" do not apply to our mortal life, but to

eternal life. In regards to eternal life every brother and sister in Christ is indestructible, invincible and eternal, because no mortal man can kill them eternally. If our world's top scientist and medical practitioners could invent a pill that would give people eternal life, the billionaires of this world would write out a cheque no matter what the cost to buy them for all their family and friends, and almost all the world would sell everything they had to purchase one. This is the high value the apostles, Paul and the faithful placed on the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. To them there was nothing in this world more valuable for any man or woman to possess than the gift of eternal life. It is from this mindset that the author here says, "I will not fear; what can man do to me?" His value of eternal life was such that everything in this world faded in comparison. How sad it is that in some modern churches this high value of eternal life has been superseded by a gospel that focuses on a blessed, prosperous and successful life now in this mortal and corrupt world and messages that appeal to self, ego and pride. Especially when one considers what it cost God the Father to save us and the high price his Son paid to purchase the gift of eternal life for all who would humbly accept by faith the Good News of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. When someone that a brother or sister in Christ has deeply loved dies and they are standing at the foot of their loved one's grave watching their coffin being lowered into the darkness of the earth everything in this world suddenly becomes trivial except the dead person's eternal state. No-matter how noble, how important or how rich they were none of it counts for anything in the grave. The only thing of value to a person facing death is faith and being raised to eternal life and everlasting glory. When a doctor tells a brother or sister in Christ that they have a terminal illness the value of eternal life, by far supersedes anything this world can offer. This is why the author had no fear over what mortal men might do to him, because his focus was on eternal life not the things of this world.

147. The captain of the ship the prophet Jonah was travelling on calls Jonah's God, the God. This is a common expression in China. The God is a safe expression because the title embraces all kinds of gods that people like the captain and sailors on the ship Jonah was travelling on believed in. The mariners were good men, they believed their lives were in danger because of Jonah, the storm was increasing in strength and Jonah, trying to save the mariners tells them to throw him overboard and the storm will stop, but at the risk of their own lives rather than do what Jonah said, they try to row to safe ground to save Jonah, but the storm was too great (Jonah 1:11-13). Jonah tell the mariners, "The God" he believes in is the LORD, the God of Heaven who created the sea and the land, and the mariners were terrified, because they believed Jonah's God was who Jonah said He was (Jonah 1:9-10). The mariners called out to "The God" of Jonah "LORD, LORD," they knew they were in trouble because of Jonah,

so they were forced to throw him overboard to save themselves, immediately the storm stopped, then the men were in fear of "The God" of Jonah (Jonah 1:14-16). The sailors each had their own concept of God (Jonah 1:5) and knew the God of Jonah only as "The God," (Jonah 1:6) so how can we know what God people have in their mind, when they say, "The God?" Jesus said, "You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?" (Matt. 7:16). This means that we can know what God people have in mind or are believing in by their attitude and behaviour, meaning are they humble, compassionate, kind, merciful, forgiving etc., or prideful, arrogant, greedy and selfish. Micah says, what the LORD requires of mankind is to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with their God. Isaiah tells us the LORD loves justice and hates robbery and wrong doing and Jeremiah says, those who know God practise steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth, because it is in these things that God delights (Micah 6:5-10) (Isaiah 61:8) (Jer. 9:24). Those who say they believe in "The God," may not have a totally clear understanding of the God of Abraham, Jacob and Isaac, but if they are manifesting God's nature (kindness, mercy, forgiveness, grace and love for others), then the God they are beholding in their minds is the God of the Bible. This may not always mean that they are saved to eternal life, but it certainly means they are on the right path to finding God's salvation and His favour.

148. When unity rather than freedom is seen as the ultimate goal in the religious world a new tyranny begins. Under the guise of love and unity this new tyranny manifests itself, in a rigid compulsion that demands that every person within a group, an organization or on the entire planet should ultimately be compelled to submit and conform to a governmental or religious leader, a group or an organization for the sake of unity and love. But the Lord Jesus Christ clearly teaches that there will be divisions because of him, but that does not mean these opposing and divided individuals or groups should treat each other as enemies neither does it give them permission to go to war against each other. So how should we treat those who differ to what we believe? The simplest way to find an answer to this is to look at the words of Jesus, He summed up the Ten Commandments regarding mankind in the statement, "Love your neighbour as yourself" and while on a mountain told his followers to pray and do-good to those they considered their enemies (Matt. 5:43-47). Jesus himself allows for dignity and respect to be shown to those who hold a different view to his and even to those who reject him altogether. We must love and respect our God-given privileges of life, family, property, and reputation, and respect these same privileges in others, whether friends or enemies, which means, to love one's enemy does not mean to feel an emotional attachment to them, or to share one's property with

them, but in spite of personal differences, however well grounded, we are to respect their God-given immunities and freedoms.

149. It is dangerous thing to make blanket statements and condemn an entire religious organisation, denomination or church because of the bad behaviour of some. Certainly, the hierarchy and the system of some may warrant the criticism, but they are often not a reflection of the humble followers seeking God that for whatever reason happen to be serving Christ within that system. Often many are in a system through no fault of their own. This is because some are born into it, for others it maybe the first church they have ever entered while for some it maybe because of their naivety, humbleness, or a lack of biblical knowledge, but whatever the reason many have an honest desire to truly know and serve God, even though they may happen to be in churches under the influence of a global religious system because of its established global fame. Rather than making blanket statements that condemn an entire religious system it would be far wiser and in the Spirit of Christ to focus on the errors of the system not the people in it since from my personal experience all Christian organisations have humble and devoted men and woman in them with hearts full of passion toward the Lord and would even lay their lives down for him. Jesus came not with condemnation but with love and compassion toward the lost sheep of Israel (i.e., those bound in the religious system of his day dominated and influenced by the nations established religious leaders who had the fame, authority and influence over those who truly desired to know God). His motivation wasn't to condemn those in the system, but to rescue them since many had an honest heart toward God and the fault did not lie with the lost sheep, but those who were prideful and able to influence them because they had the established religious authority of the nation. Since God knows our heart, I am certain at the resurrection we will all meet brothers and sisters from many different religious systems. This is why I began by saying, "It is dangerous thing to make blanket statements and condemn an entire religious organisation, denomination or church," because we maybe without knowing it condemning those who the Lord loves.

150. In our modern era we tend to present God to the lost world as a God that will make every outcome of life end in a positive and happy result, God is presented as a kind of Santa Claus who only comes with good and positive gifts, certainly this is true on a spiritual level, but it is not reality while we live in our mortal body and this sinful world. Gods guaranteed blessings for New Testament believers are not related to the things of this world they are spiritual not material (just look at the persecution of the apostles, Paul and Christians in communist countries and the struggle of those in third world countries). Presenting God as a God that will make every outcome of life end in a positive and happy result

mostly establishes temporary Christians since this is not reality. Any Christian who opens their eyes to the global body of Christ will quickly see that faithful Christians have lost loved ones in sickness and accidents long before their time, some have been sexually abused while others have lost their family home and all their earthly possessions because of wild storms, earthquakes tornadoes etc., and the list could go on and on. God's promises, blessings and rewards for New Testaments believers are eternal and spiritual in that He will not only fill our hearts and minds with His love and give us the internal comfort and strength needed to survive the crisis' that come to us in this mortal and decaying world, but will also deliver us from death and raise us to eternal life and everlasting glory. Many high-powered churches today only allow people to share a testimony that is full of worldly success and fame, but if we can't show the world that they can find happiness and joy apart from the things of this world why would they be attracted to the Gospel? In the famous faith chapter of Hebrews called the Hall of fame God says of those who with faithfulness and courage suffered the most horrific tortures, struggles, poverty and even death for their faith that the world was not worthy of them. There is a danger that the wonder and mystery of the spiritual and eternal world the faithful of the past experienced on the inside that was so real to them it was able to keep them in a hope that was overwhelming manifested in their praises and continued faithfulness to God even in the face of enormously troublesome times will be lost to the outward focus on material rewards and the promise of a charmed life in this world and the presentation of a Santa Claus type of God.