

# **LIFE'S NET**

by

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## **LIFE'S NET: GOD'S LOVE, MERCY, AND FORGIVENESS LEADING TO AND RESULTING IN RECONCILIATION, REGENERATION, RECOVERY, AND RESTORATION.**

**We suspected our lives were out of order. We needed to change. We desired what we saw in others who had been as we were and now had peace in their hearts and in their minds. People were now sane, and free, and sober.**

**We expected it would take time. It would require rigorous honesty, willingness, and humility on our part to make us new people, with new lives on a different footing. Easier, softer ways we had tried in the past had not worked.**

**Simple, but not easy, it would mean destruction of self-centeredness.** But, then, God would help us if we would entrust our lives to Him with complete abandonment.

**We became that willing. We would build that special relationship with our Creator. We asked for His protection and care and proceeded because, after all, nobody had ever failed who had thoroughly followed this path.**

Things we are leaving behind **with His help** include alcoholism, drug addiction of all forms, anger and suicidal thoughts, sexual malpractices of all sorts including homosexuality, the pain and effects of broken marriages and family relationships, tense anxieties resulting from financial crisis, and mental and emotional disorders. Every day other areas of crisis are being added to this list as people come to God for reconciliation, recovery, and restoration. God is coming to all those who are **honestly and diligently** seeking Him.

### **LET US INTRODUCE OURSELVES**

We are people overcoming crises and straightening out our lives. We are finding peace, sanity, and serenity at a depth sufficient for us to have victorious and manageable lives. What we share is not new and could perhaps be called "The Original Recipe" for success. We come from all types of backgrounds and the widest range of experiences. By sharing as we have outlined, we have come to know an enriching relationship between ourselves and our God, and between ourselves and our fellowman. We have discovered the power of the Gospel to set men and women free from all forms of bondage. As our numbers increase, our joy is to share our experiences and our strengths with our new friends and, with love and truth, to see them set free from within themselves. **LIFE'S NET** is for all those who sincerely wish to see change in their life and who desire to - or are willing to - accept the Lord Jesus Christ, trusting that He is the Word of God and Savior of the World.

## SOME OF US PONDERED ON OUR PAST

If we ever gave much thought to God's providence and natural order in our lives in our earliest days, certainly there was not enough desire within us to allow Him to direct our lives for our betterment.

In any case, competitive motives from our earliest days on this earth molded our lives as we tried hard to "**fit in**," "**prove ourselves**," or "**show them**." We blended our actions with how we thought the world expected us to behave, yet that feeling of inner peace and harmony eluded us. Feeling either a little or a lot like the "**square peg in a round hole**" was part of every one of us. That occasional taste of success was only ever really short-lived. The void in our lives would return.

Our common personal welfare started suffering as we reacted unnaturally - against sound advice and not listening to our conscience. Basic reason and common sense for survival and correct living took second place to irrational feelings and imagination.

With varied feelings of rejection and continued isolated thinking, some of us neglected proper care and control of ourselves. We misunderstood and misread the intentions of those around us who offered us love. In our imaginations, we rationalized the real nature of our unhealthy conduct, blocking out the possibility of having to look into ourselves and changing.

Then, in time, for some of us fantasies, delusions, and obsessions of every kind, including suicide and death, gripped us as we practiced irrational behavior and habits. For some, the craving to satisfy inner demands was enormous, ever demanding more, yet paying us dividend upon dividend of resentment, remorse, guilt, loneliness, fear, anxiety, despair, and every variety of bitter fruit possible.

We found that lies and deception lead to

Bitterness

Resentment

Hatred

Unforgiveness

Violence

Retaliation

Anger

Murder

Still rejecting advice and refusing to co-operate with help, we blindly locked into a cycle of bitter repetitive destruction, still convinced we could manage our own lives "if only." Our behavior was either "aggressive," meaning purposely hurtful to others, or "self-destructive," that is, purposely hurtful to ourselves. We did not understand that either quality disqualified an act and marked it for elimination in the best interest of health. And we certainly did not want to call it by its true name, **SIN!**

And then we found Jesus. Or rather, He found us. It was time to bring the truth forward. The truth for each of us began to dawn. We were sinners in God's eyes. We learned that all of us are born in a state or condition of separation from God because of the Original

Sin of disobedience by our first parents. We were, therefore, sinners both by nature and by choice. What we were today was the result of all the choices we made yesterday. We needed to turn ourselves over to Him, so we did. It then became our turn to be teachable. A new life was under way, and we desired Him and all He represented.

*Not by Power, and not by Might, but by my Spirit, says the Lord. Zech. 4:6*

### **OUR FOUNDATION, THE CROSS**

The Cross is our foundation and the source of all recovery and healing. It is foretold in Isaiah, Chapter 53, “all we like sheep have gone astray; by His stripes we are healed.”

Jesus Christ came from God and became a human being like us. He died on a cross and rose from the dead so we can be reconciled and united with God. Jesus ended, and ends, our state or condition of separation when we are joined to Him. By ever deepening understanding and acceptance of the work completed for us on the cross, we grow in a greater sense of wellbeing.

When Christ said, “It is finished” on the cross, He was speaking of the work being done for us. His spilt blood and separation from His Father meant acceptance by God forever of all those who would believe. This is the guarantee of our salvation and the only place of true peace and real fundamental healing. All our fears, insecurities, addictions, wounds, all our sins, past, present and future, are given their final death blow when we truly come to the cross and continue to do so on a daily basis. This is the only place for forgiveness, where God’s power and His reviving Spirit are with us to redeem and restore all that which was lost.

No matter how far down the scale we find ourselves, we will find our hopes renewed at Calvary, and we can by faith exchange/swap our old life for the very best life of the Son of God. This is the great truth; this is Christianity at its heart. Because of the risen Savior, no one is a “no-hoper.” That’s our experience.

We wondered how long ago we stopped believing, and what it was we should have believed. To believe that God’s biblical principles were very desirable for our welfare and happiness was finally not too difficult. We discovered for ourselves that the application of these principles was not only desirable but also essential and indispensable for our continued success

**Our today was the result of all our yesterdays. Our tomorrows would now be the result of each today.**

### **TO COMMENCE**

We asked ourselves :

How have I managed my life thus far?  
Do I possess all the answers?  
Do I need a savior?

We admitted that, without help, it was beyond our human efforts to properly manage our own lives and that, of ourselves, we are powerless over crisis.

Seeing and admitting our powerlessness paradoxically proved to be a way of strength.

We accepted that Jesus is our Savior and that His power is available to us to reconcile us to God. The obvious question to this statement is: **Why?** Well, having just completed step 1, and admitting our powerlessness over the crises of our lives, and realizing that we needed help, we reached out to the only source available beyond ourselves and other people around us. We reached out to Jesus, and He met us.

It may well be that some reached out more in hope than in positive assurance of His being there, but then found that He fulfilled us in so many areas we could not deny His presence.

You see, God loves the world so much that He gave His only son so that anyone who will receive Him can have everlasting life. This is the true heart of God - **love**, and out of that heart of **love** He continually reaches out to man to bring him to the knowledge that he does not have to live any longer in the ways of this world.

God never created this world with sin in it. Rather, sin entered as a result of God's first created humans disobeying God's word and has continued its downhill slide ever since. We know the results of this sin in our own circumstances. We have experienced the traumas of this world's ways and have found them lacking. Everywhere we look, we see people in conflict with their surroundings, man in disharmony with his neighbor, and all of this the direct result of his being disobedient to God.

Some have seen God as a tyrannical father figure with a big stick and a loud voice threateningly saying 'you shall not!' In reality, the reverse is true. **God loves us** so much that in His infinite mercy He gave His son to be a ransom for all who would reach out to Him.

As you continue, keep the thought ever before you: "**God loves me**". You may say at this point in time "how is that possible?" I have done this and that and am so bad that I don't deserve His love." That is just the point - **All of us** have things in our lives which would keep us from accepting Christ as our Savior, but **love reached out to us just as we were** and as lacking in understanding as we were. Love reached out and cradled us to Himself, and we experienced the reality of **God's love**.

There were times when we thought that God must have turned His face from us, but then the reality of His love burst through our troubled feelings. We hoped in His words, "I will never leave you nor forsake you," and we knew that as He had accepted us just as we were - so even now God accepts me just as I am. **God loves me just as I am**. How? **Because love cannot do anything else except love**. No matter how many times He is rejected, no matter how many times He is hurt, love still reaches out from the heart of God to all who would receive Him.

Now that we have received Him and chosen to allow Him to be master of our lives, how much more will He show love to us because we are His children.

And so, if you have never been born again, that is, begotten by the Father as his son or daughter, **simply and sincerely ask** the Lord to come and live in us by His spirit, to be your Savior and Lord of your life.

Voicing (saying out loud) the following suggested prayer, pray:

Dear Father, I come to you to be born again, that is, begotten from above as your child by your Spirit. I acknowledge and confess that you sent your Son, Jesus, to die on the cross for my sins. I repent of my sins and turn from my old ways. I ask you, Jesus, to forgive me and be my Savior and Lord of my life. Live in me, change me by the fullness of your presence through your Spirit, and transform me by the renewing of my mind.

Heal all of me. Create in me a clean heart and renew a right spirit within me. Identify yourself in me, that I may personally know you.

I completely abandon myself to you and to your Lordship, and I look to you to guide me by your Spirit as you make me into the person you want me to be. May I always be willing to be obedient in everything. Thank you, Father.

Signature ..\_\_\_\_\_.  
Date...../...../.....

*I beseech you by the mercies of God that you present your body as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is **your reasonable service**. Do not be conformed to this world but **be transformed by the renewing of your mind** so that you may **prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God**. Romans 12:1 & 2*

*Therefore, if any man is in Christ, he is a **new creature**; old things are passed away, behold all things become new. 2 Corinthians. 5:17*

Now that you have received Him and chosen to allow Him to be master of your life, how much more will He show love to you because you are His child.

***BUT LET A MAN EXAMINE HIMSELF***. 1 Corinthians. 11:28

The position we find ourselves in today is the result of all our yesterdays. Had all or some of our yesterdays been different, our position today would have been different.

Behaviors are expressions of attitudes and also form them. Our actions, re-actions, or lack of actions during all our yesterdays shaped and formed our deepest inner attitudes we have today. My inner attitudes, therefore, are the real me. My responses to situations and people are birthed in my inner attitudes. My inner attitudes, or the real me, determine which one of two continually active and opposite processes will be dominant in my life - personal growth or personal disintegration. (Looking at the fruit of my life, which tree have I largely fed from?) As tomorrow's responses will come from today's input, do I need to change?

Human nature includes such qualities as kindness, love, modesty, patience, forgiveness, trust, generosity, humility, and self-forgetfulness. It also includes elements that make us egotistical, selfish, resentful, dishonest, critical, jealous, proud, and insincere. We have been created with instincts or desires to make us complete human beings. These desires are for material and emotional security, sex, and companionship, among others. In harmony with God's will, these are divine blessings - in God's plan.

Without knowing God's will for our lives, we automatically applied our own wills - that is self will - not in God's plan. And ourselves? Yes, we were very much the victims of self - through self-will.

We manipulated as well as we could, and we allowed ourselves to be manipulated if it meant advantage or gain. Similarly, we dominated or welcomed domination. We were charming or gracious as necessary. We told white lies, black lies, or the truth as it suited us. We took much time and effort to protect our appearances and images. We "dropped off" people we felt were too close to us. Barrier up time, "I'll keep to myself."

Selfishness and self-centeredness have been at the center of our motivation up until now. We had desired everything to be done according to our rule: "my will my way." We were driven by countless forms of fear, self-delusion, self-seeking, and self-pity. Self, manifested in so many ways, proved beyond doubt to be our destroyer.

But now that we have found Christ, or rather have been found by Him, we have yielded the control of our lives to Him and have stopped trying to play God in our own lives, as well as in those around us. We know the joy of being free. The blessing of being free of the bondage of the slavery of self, with its selfishness and self-centeredness, saw us able to become interested in seeing how we could contribute to the lives of others. Our fears of today, tomorrow, and the hereafter left, and new life and power flowed into us, giving us peace of mind, confidence in facing the future, and consciousness of Christ's presence. We began to lose our fear of people and sought rather to reach out to them from the wellspring of love which had been opened within us. Our new rule became: "God's will God's way."

To say we will never be hurt by people would not be true. But as we draw on the love of God for us, the things which man can do to us are of little consequence. We have found the source of love and can draw more deeply out of that well, never going thirsty again. Because God, as the source of all love, has opened a spring in our heart, we desire spiritual progress. This progress is not perfection and never will be as long as we live in mortal bodies subject to the corruption of sin around us. For even the things of nature cry out to be released from the tyranny of change and decay.

### **SELF EXAMINATION**

This is positive, not negative, like taking stock of ourselves. We list all items to decide what to keep and what to discard. We all have good qualities within us and have all performed good deeds. We list all these as we go. This is most important so that we keep a balanced view.

The following format, with some suggested questions, is to help us probe “trouble or problem areas” as we go back through our lives.

Question: What exactly in the past influenced the outcome of my life? Asking God's help, we prepare ourselves with pen and paper. Absolute honesty is the key as we commence. We urge you to be of like mind, **as the degree of recovery and restoration relates directly to the degree of honesty.**

**RESENTMENT OR GRUDGE LIST.** *Do not complain, brothers, about one another, that you may not be judged.* James 5:9

THE MANIFESTATION OF SELF THROUGH RESENTMENT IS THE FOUNDATION OF ALL SPIRITUAL ILLNESS AND THE NUMBER ONE DESTROYER OF ALL HUMAN BEINGS.

Painful consequences always follow where the presence of resentment is unchecked. Emotional illness, anger, and every form of trouble in human beings **have their roots in resentment.** When we personally allow the presence of resentment to abide in our lives, **we automatically transfer the control of our lives into the hands of others.** For those dependent on God's grace for life support, including ex-alcoholics and other addicts, **the presence of resentment can prove fatal.**

The following suggested layout of a resentment or grudge list may take time, but it is simple, requiring honesty and thoroughness. We list those we are resentful towards and ask ourselves why, writing down our answers. Leaving no stone unturned, we proceed like the following example.

I'm resentful toward:

My sister-in-law:

Ignores me  
Minds our business  
Gossips  
Treats her husband poorly  
Always borrowing

My boss:

Difficult to know where I stand with him/her  
Has a suspicious nature  
Never says what he/she means  
Always wants more out of me  
Never forgets

My wife:

Likes my sister-in-law  
Is easily led  
Joins in gossip  
Wastes money on non-essentials  
Greets my boss with a hug  
Nags  
Complains that I neglect her

My neighbor:	Sticks nose in my business, threatens to belt me for hitting my wife during an argument Told my wife she should leave with the kids Holds grudges
My kids:	Close mouthed Ignore me
Others:	My church My pastor My social club Other people, organizations, etc.

How clearly our completed list shows how much personal pride, security, and self-esteem have been threatened and affected. It is **fear - fear of harm to "self" - that births the resentments that control us**. We can now see how it is absolutely essential for us to **learn how to handle** this form of spiritual sickness in **ourselves**, not just in **others**.

### **NEXT WE PREPARE A LIST OF OUR FEARS**

Now we bring all these out "into the light," including the probable one of attempting this list. Let us encourage you - like some of us, you might have a long list, but you will come to see for yourself that the only thing to fear is fear itself. We have acquired our fears through negative experiences, and therefore they are removable. To remove fear, we pray for its removal, asking and trusting Jesus to fill us with his love and strength. We may need to pray this often.

### **TRUSTING AND RELYING UPON GOD PROVIDES SOLUTIONS WE NEED NOW AND ALWAYS.**

#### **A SELF PROBE**

We now probe our past, looking for selfishness and self-will **on our part** in all areas, especially those where repeating and re-occurring trouble exists.

Self justification makes us feel much "cleaner" than we are, so we need to conscientiously dig deep. Our experience is that questions we would rather avoid are often the ones that reveal the defects with which we need to be concerned.

We list our faults, and our wrongs, and become willing to set matters in order. Some of the questions we should ask ourselves are listed as follows. Other questions and areas for scrutiny will come to mind as you proceed.

#### **RELATIONSHIPS**

Anxiety, frustration, anger, and bitterness are fruits of faulty relationships.

- Have I made unreasonable demands?
- Have I been selfish?
- Did I try to manipulate others?

Did I dominate them?  
Have they revolted from my domination?  
Have I depended on them too much?  
Have they failed me and let me down?  
Have I had the ability to accept the maladjustment's of others without being disturbed myself?  
Can I see where I have been at fault?  
What should I have done instead?  
Do I need an overhaul in the area of relationships?

### **FINANCES**

What did I do for gain? What didn't I do for gain?  
Where did I meet my obligations?  
Where was I dishonest? At home, work, creditors, taxes, family, maintenance, other.  
How have I supported my family?  
Have I been mean? Have I been extravagant? Have I been generous? Have I been fair?  
Have I honored my employer with my ability and time?  
Have I evaded responsibility?  
Have I been honest with my employer's money and property?

### **SELF EMPLOYMENT**

Have I been a good financial manager?  
Have I been a poor financial manager?  
Have I been honest?  
Have I been dishonest?  
How? When? With whom?

### **GENERAL**

Have I been promiscuous?  
Have I claimed to be the seduced, not the seducer?  
Have I damaged other people and myself?  
Have I spoiled my marriage?  
Have I injured my children?  
Have I injured others? Parents, families, friends?  
Have I used circumstances at home as an excuse for promiscuity?  
Have my sexual actions been unnatural?  
Do I have anything that doesn't belong to me?  
Have I lived with a faulty foundation to date?  
Has self-centeredness made me unable and unfit to form true partnerships with other human beings?  
Have I ever sought to be a proper family member, a true friend, a team worker, and a valuable and a helpful member of my community?

## ADMISSION OF FAULTS

*Confess to one another therefore your faults* (your slips, your false steps, your offences, your sins) *and pray* [also] *for one another that you may be **healed and restored*** [to a spiritual tone of mind and heart]. James 5:16 (Amplified Version)

The cracks, flaws, and tripwires that keep us tense and emotionally unstable can be dealt with now as we "clean house" and confide all our story to another person. And that means ALL.

**We humans cannot live with memories we hope to take to the grave.** Unconfessed sin and guilt provide a guaranteed return to addiction - alcohol or otherwise, and for the **non-addict, an unstable life** at best. We **take our time** and, with God's help and direction, we select someone who **understands** our need. Perhaps a **Pastor**, or a **person trained** in this area, can be of assistance, or a **closemouthed friend of integrity**. But certainly no one who can be hurt by our disclosures. An understanding wife or family could well be in this category of being hurt.

At the appointed time, and in the presence of the Lord, we commence our long talk, withholding nothing. Often, as we proceed, a cleansing presence and peace come about such as we have never known, and we experience a special awareness of being one with God and man.

## MAKING RESTITUTION OR AMENDS

*Be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.* James 1:22

Jesus: *"Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar and remember that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift before the altar and go your way."* **FIRST BE RECONCILED TO YOUR BROTHER, AND THEN COME AND OFFER YOUR GIFT.**  
Matthew 5: 23-24

Restitution on our part means

1. Being prepared to take the consequences of our past acts and words.
2. Accepting responsibility for the wellbeing of others
3. Being careful and prudent
4. **Trusting Jesus for support and the outcome.**

There will be those

1. We can attend to immediately
2. We shall need to defer
3. We can only make partial disclosure, as full disclosure would prove harmful to that person
4. We are unable to contact.

Not criticizing them or anyone else, or arguing, we approach them calmly, admitting the damage we have done and where we have been at fault. We are prepared to accept the consequences, be they loss of position, reputation, or even jail. We have to be that willing. Whatever obligations we owe, we make restitution, or promise to, whether financial or otherwise. Our experience is that our demonstration of sincerity and goodwill will almost always bring about a repair in relationships. If, however, we receive an unfavorable reaction, **we move on, having done our part.**

For those we have deferred, we retain the same spirit of willingness to complete the task as soon as the opportunity presents itself.

### **AS WE PROGRESS**

If we have been painstaking in our efforts till now, we will be starting to know God through Jesus in a very special and personal way. We will have laid the foundation of repentance which, when maintained on a daily basis, keeps our door open to receive all that God has for each of us as we journey along.

We will know His peace like we have never known peace before. We will feel clean, worthwhile, and useful, wanting to reach out and share of ourselves and help others. Self-seeking will fade away as our attitudes change. We will have a deep and secure confidence in our Savior and Lord, replacing the fear of people and insecurities of all sorts of the past including economic.

We will have commenced reading our Bible, thirstily seeking understanding and wisdom as we seek to build our relationship with Jesus. Discovering the Bible as the living word of God, we will deeply desire to be changed into God's image, of living His life in us, of walking in love, reality, wisdom, with peace and joy, being fruitful and sharing of ourselves.

We will be making progress in relationships as love and tolerance begin to guide us, allowing us to see offending people as spiritually sick and in need of help as we were ourselves.

We will be spotting areas of selfishness, dishonesty, self-seeking, and fear in ourselves, too, as we journey along each day, though now we can draw on the love and power of Jesus to change us and re-direct our attention to what He would have us do and be. So, too, we must always remember that we are now in the world to play the role that He assigns. Just to the extent that we do as we think He would have us do, and humbly rely on Him, do we find and maintain inner peace.

As we travel along, we will realize that the spiritual life is not a theory - we have to live it. "Action is where the action is" - "Faith without works is dead" - "Be doers of the Word". Our program to date has been one of obtaining right results from right actions, and so it must continue to be. We are fooling ourselves if we "short-cut" our inventory for instance.

Withholding certain facts about ourselves, which should have been brought to light now and admitted, will almost certainly cause us to fall, even years down the road. Avoiding

the humbling experience now, some hang on to the worst items in stock, setting themselves up later for a large and certain fall. We humans cannot live with memories we hope to take to the grave. We must **tell all** our life story. We cannot continue to live with guilt. We must be entirely honest with ourselves and others if we expect to live long and happily in this world.

Action on our part will ensure we are rebuilt, regenerated, and revitalized! Jesus said, "I work, and my father works". He is there to help us change. "Take my yoke and learn of me" (Matthew 11:29) provides us with a partner and doorway to new growth in every direction. It takes a decision to pray, to read the Word, to do His will, and it takes action to build these new activities into our lives [See 2 Timothy 3: 16-17]. What else have we found action does? It helps remove fear - fear of people, including creditors and other authorities, circumstances, and things. Action helps us grow into maturity and responsibility [the ability to respond]. Right action is a vital contributor towards self-love. Right action will conquer self-pity - that vehicle for the manifestation of all forms of self and self-will.

It is easy to see "Faith without works is dead," and we are surely dead if we neglect to take proper care of our spiritual life on a daily basis.

**"One day at a time"** tells us much and offers us a suggestion for practical living. With the yesterdays cleaned up and the tomorrow's safely in God's hands, we really can only live our "Today". Let us start our today each morning with Him, perhaps including the meaningful Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13) with its foundational attitudes. Let's also then lift up to Him whatever else is on our heart, being careful to never pray for our own selfish ends. Of course, we can pray for ourselves if others are to be helped, that we may be useful and effective instruments in God's hand.

We ask Him for the willingness to help others - especially the person who still suffers. Very importantly, we pray for freedom from self-will, self-pity, dishonesty, and self-seeking motives.

**"Be still and know that I am God"**. Practice being still, and listen to the small still inner voice. Any time we are faced with indecision, we relax and take it easy. We ask for inspiration, an intuitive thought, or a decision. We wait. The right answers will come as we practice this, and we come to rely more and more on inspiration. "Your will be done" will become a working part of us, just as He intended.

## RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS

During our lifetime we establish many relationships, always with the object of getting to know those people better. With the ones we love, we feel a special affinity, a special bond, and our hearts are warmed by the times we spend with them. When we don't particularly like a person, we don't willingly look for their company, but when we enjoy the company of someone, they are the ones we seek out to spend time with.

Now that we have had our awakening experience whereby our spirit has been made alive unto God, we need to develop our relationship with Him.

How do we do this? In exactly the same way we develop a friendship with any person - we spend time with Him, we talk to Him, we discuss our problems, our hopes, our fears, even our plans for the future. Like any good friend, God is interested in us, and when we include Him in our conversation and plans, He understands that we want to befriend Him. He is our loving Father, entirely different from any father we have ever met or experienced.

He loves us so much that, even before we gave Him a second thought, He sent His Son to die for us so that we might come to know His Son Jesus Christ in a personal way. So it stands to reason, now that we are His children, He will love us even more.

Before we took that second step in the steps to recovery He was reaching out His arms to us. Then one day we realized it and responded to Him. It was an awakening to the power which was able to deliver us from the things which so bound us that we couldn't do it ourselves. So it is with prayer. It is the continuation of that awakening, only now we desire to know the source of the power, the one from whom the power flows.

Where do I talk to Him? Anywhere: in church, in the workplace, in bed, under the shower. **Since He is within us, then wherever we are, He is, and so His wisdom is available** to help solve a problem at work, at school, in a plane, or on a mountaintop, for He is there.

It may be that we don't have a need at some point in time, but we just want to spend time with Him. That's even better, for now we acknowledge we just want Him, not for what He can do to help us but to just want Him. That's the place He desires us to come, to seek Him out for Himself.

There will be times when we need His wisdom or healing or deliverance, but sometimes it's good to seek Him out and spend time just with Him. As we do, we get to know Him better. It is at these times that we realize how futile our lives were when we thought we were in control.

We look forward to listening to His guidance and counsel on all matters pertaining to life, and a more satisfactory life at that, simply because we have come to know God and love Him. He, in turn, pours out to us His wisdom and power and authority in any given situation in life. This is only accomplished by getting to know Him and allowing Him to speak to us.

We have all been with people who are so busy talking that we never get a word in edgewise. Be sure that there are many who pray that way, who are so busy talking they never take time to listen to what God has to say. They miss out on knowing the best way to handle a matter through their continuous chatter. Sure they pray, but you know that any one-sided conversation is of little value. We must take time to listen for the voice of God!

## **DISCIPLES IN ALL THE WORLD**

God, in His infinite mercy and power, has made available to every believer the signs of a Spirit-filled life. These signs are not toys to be played with but are to allow God's new

creation to defeat the enemy, wherever he appears in life. Christ, in His address to His people, stated that these signs would follow those who believed in Him. This was not a new thing, as might at first be thought. The disciples of Jesus were sent out with these orders, "Preach the good news of the kingdom, heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils, and speak with new tongues." All this was to manifest to the people that "Jesus the Son of God" has shown up on earth.

Upon His resurrection from the dead, and prior to His return to heaven, Jesus reiterated these orders and added, "I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Now, some people have said, "That's only for Christ's disciples," and so it is! But not just for the twelve, for they are not living at the end of the age - **but we are**. And we are as much disciples of Christ as any of the twelve, if we believe in Him and confess Him as our Lord.

God cannot lie. He does not make statements which He has no intention of keeping. This power is the power of God, demonstrated through us by the Holy Spirit, who now lives in us.

Why has He given us this power? To turn people to Christ. To reinforce His word on the lips of His disciples in the earth today.

There is nothing in the earth guaranteed to get someone's attention more quickly than a demonstration of God's supernatural power. We can talk for hours, but just pray for a sick one and see them healed and watch the change that comes over the spectators.

This is not new, for it was this way in the days of our Lord Jesus upon earth. In fact, something like a third of the gospels present the power of God's healing. It doesn't stop there. In the acts of the Holy Spirit within the early church, people are raised from the dead, cripples are healed, and the good news is preached in all the known world, so much so that it is recorded that this little band of disciples turned the world upside down.

Jesus came to heal the broken-hearted, preach deliverance to the captives and the recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who were bruised, and He still desires to do these things through His Church on earth today. We are to be the ministering Body of Christ. This is our heritage. It is your responsibility and your covenant right, so exercise it and go and make disciples in all the world, and these signs will follow.

### **DAILY STOCKTAKE**

- Q. Have I been kind and loving to all today?
- Q. Where could I have done better?
- Q. Have I been selfish, dishonest, or critical?
- Q. Do I owe an apology?
- Q. Have I something to repent of?

## FRUITS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness,  
Faithfulness, Gentleness, Self Control

## DAILY MORAL INVENTORY

Watch for

Self-Pity  
Self-Justification  
Self-Importance  
Self-Condensation  
Dishonesty  
Impatience  
Hate  
Resentment  
False Pride  
Jealousy  
Envy  
Laziness  
Procrastination  
Insincerity  
Negative Thinking  
Vulgar, Immoral,  
Trashy Thinking  
Criticizing  
Complaining

Cultivate

Self-Forgetfulness  
Humility  
Modesty  
Self-Valuation  
Honesty  
Patience  
Love  
Forgiveness  
Simplicity  
Trust  
Generosity  
Activity  
Promptness  
Straightforwardness  
Positive Thinking  
High Minded, Spiritual,  
Clean Thinking  
Look for the Good  
Thankfulness

### **My human limitations prevent me from:**

- Understanding the inner workings of another human being, no matter how close they are to me.
- Controlling and directing the minds of others, including my spouse and/or children.
- Shouldering responsibilities that rightfully belong to others.

If I continue to be a crutch for someone, neither of us can be free. I will find life a continuing struggle, but worse, the necessary freedom for the other person to face his/her responsibilities, including all the consequences of his/her behavior, will be blocked.

This necessary freedom is a vital contribution to his/her finding himself/herself and his/her relationship with God. I can live no one else's life but my own due to my human limitations. I can be of some help to others as they seek the meaning to life, but, in the final analysis, they, like myself, must find themselves, through themselves. Recognizing and admitting my powerlessness through my human limitations lets me then "let go" and "let God." Let me, therefore, seek the Lordship of Jesus in this and allow the life-changing washing of His Word shape me into the person He wants *me* to be, doing the

things He wants *me* to do, in the way He would want *me* to do them. Healthy detachment, with love, will always bring about the desirable changes we seek, in time.

The blood of Jesus cleanses us from ALL unrighteousness.

There, but for the grace of God, go I.

Burned into our spirit was the foundational truth that we would get well if we trusted God and cleaned house.

Childlike to God - Childish to no one.

If you don't live the way you think is right, you'll end up thinking the way you're living is right.

A man is a slave to whatever has mastered him. 2 Peter 19:6

White lies make people color blind.

When all else fails, follow the directions. Obedience is better than sacrifice.

No matter what - honor God, and He will honor you.

If we can, you can.

The measure of a man's anxiety is the measure of his distance from God.

Tie a knot and hang on. Never, never, give up. If you trip, pick yourself up and start again. Ask God and others to forgive you for your sin, if necessary. **All of us** have surely **been there, done that!** Remember a simple golden rule: This, too, will pass. We've been there, too.

A **plan** for **my** life? **Yes**, and personalized!

*"Before I formed you in the belly, I knew you, and before you came out of the womb, I sanctified you."* Jeremiah 1:5

### **FORGIVENESS - A DOORWAY**

Jesus: *But if you do not forgive others their trespasses - their reckless and willful sins, leaving them, letting them go, and giving up resentment - neither will your Father forgive you your trespasses.* Matthew 6:15, Amplified Version.

Here we see a doorway through which we all must pass to obtain our freedom. Sometimes, we find the door slammed shut and seemingly impossible to open. However, all that is needed is a willingness to forgive, and the door will open. Willingness is the key. Jesus has forgiven us, remember? As we walk, the door will sometimes have a tendency to close again, even slam shut at times, but the same key of willingness will always re-open it to let the light shine in again - if we choose. Pray, Lord make me willing to be willing.

What far-reaching and consequential authority has been placed in my hands! The ability of the grace and freedom of Jesus to grow and prosper in earthly life depend very much on the part I play in it.

Unforgiveness keeps people in bondage - whoever they are. Here I see a law at work that clearly shows people can and will definitely rise or fall by my action - myself included!

The law of unforgiveness implies, "Judged - and sentence continuing." Jesus' law of forgiveness says, "No judgment, no sentence, no bondage."

So let's choose to choose to meet those heavenly obligations we should squarely meet. Lets choose to be willing, and Jesus will help us. Let's pause and remember that, though His grace is sufficient for each one of us, a return to our old thinking, our old attitudes, our old lifestyle is guaranteed should we be deliberately neglectful, allowing unforgiveness to rekindle flames of resentment, fear, anger, criticism, gossip, slander, and so forth.

Let's choose to forgive that one who hurt us - however badly. Let's choose to seek God's forgiveness for my judging others. Let me promptly admit when I am wrong and not be afraid to apologize when the occasion warrants. Jesus said, "choose life." We found we need the freedom He means, we need His peace: but what a beautiful and rich vista and pasture we have after we've walked through this doorway. Discern yes, judge no - that's God's job! Always was! Our task is to build a relationship with Jesus and with others!

### **GUIDANCE IN TIME OF DECISION**

Jesus: *"If you abide in My word [hold fast to My teachings and live in accordance with them], you are truly My disciples. And you will know the Truth, and the Truth will set you free."* John 8:31-32 (Amplified Version)

*If you want to know what God wants you to do, ask Him, and He will gladly tell you, for He is always ready to give a bountiful supply of wisdom to all who ask Him; He will not resent it. But when you ask Him, be sure that you really expect Him to tell you, for a doubtful mind will be as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind.* James 1:5-6 (Amplified Version)

*If you want favor with God and man, and a reputation for good judgment and common sense, then trust the Lord completely; don't ever trust yourself. In everything you do, put God first, and He will direct you and crown your efforts with success.* Proverbs 3:5-6 (Amplified Version)

*Therefore if any person is in Christ he is a new creation (a new creature altogether); the old [previous moral and spiritual condition] has passed away. Behold, the fresh and new has come.* 2 Corinthians 5:17 (Amplified Version)

*For God did not give us a spirit of timidity (of cowardice, of craven and cringing and fawning fear), but [He has given us a spirit] of power and of love and of calm and well balanced mind and discipline and self-control.* 2 Timothy 1:7 (Amplified Version)

*Every Scripture is God-breathed (given by His inspiration) and profitable for instruction, for reproof and conviction of sin, for correction of error and discipline in obedience, [and] for training in righteousness (in holy living, in conformity to God's will in thought, purpose, and action) so that the man of God may be complete and proficient, well fitted and thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy, 3:16-17 (Amplified Version)*

*But the wisdom from above is first of all pure (undefiled); then it is peace-loving, courteous (considerate, gentle). [It is willing to] yield to reason, full of compassion and good fruits; it is wholehearted and straightforward, impartial and unfeigned (free from doubts, wavering and insincerity). James 3:17 (Amplified Version)*

*So faith comes by hearing [what is told], and what is heard comes by the preaching [of the message that comes from the lips] of Christ (the Messiah Himself). Romans 10:17 (Amplified Version)*

### **TEN STEPS TO RECOVERY (SUMMARIZED)**

**Step 1:** . . . . . We admit our powerlessness over crisis; that it is beyond our human efforts to properly manage our own lives.

**Step 2:** . . . . . We accept Jesus as our Savior, knowing that His power is available to reconcile us to God.

**Step 3:** . . . . . We totally surrender our will and our lives to the care of Jesus, becoming completely willing to allow God to change us.

**Step 4:** . . . . . We make a fearless and thorough moral inventory of ourselves.

**Step 5:** . . . . . We admit to another person in confidence, and in the presence of God, the exact nature of our faults.

**Step 6:** . . . . . We make a list of persons harmed by our behavior and become willing to make amends to all.

**Step 7:** . . . . . We make direct amends to all, except they or others be injured.

**Step 8:** . . . . . We seek the presence of God through daily prayer and acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus, the Word of God in our lives for personal growth and conduct.

**Step 9:** . . . . . Without thought of personal reward or gain, we try to carry this message to others and to see the power of the Spirit manifested in renewed lives.

**Step 10:** . . . . . Praying always for knowledge of His will for us, we also seek to develop and exercise our own given gifts as part of an active Spirit-filled fellowship in the Body of Christ.

**LIFE'S NET** means building a relationship with God and with others through Jesus Christ - the wisdom of the ages on our side through the living Word of God - being changed into His image - being purposeful - being fruitful - walking in Love - reality - authority - wisdom - peace and joy in the Holy Spirit - giving of all our gifts - awareness of our heritage - exercising our responsibilities and covenant rights around our globe -

making disciples, signs and wonders following - In Jesus' name - Not my will but Yours be done.

Taking out of order and out-of-control lives, Jesus went around doing good by healing, forgiving, cleansing, and blessing. He lived by example – not promotion. Being the first of many brethren, He showed us the pathway of our God of love in action. He answered the three questions that those of faith must answer:

- Who am I?
- Where am I going?
- What will I do when I get there?

These allow me to have life and life in abundance, as Jesus desires for me to have. This is why He died and rose again. And behold, He is coming again, so that where He is, I may also be!

### **THE LIFE'S NET MESSAGE**

In Season . . . . . Jesus feeds the hungry . . . . . Mark 6:34-56.

Like the five loaves and the two fish, this message will feed the ranks of the “multitudes waiting in season.”

Inner storms will be calmed.

The partakers will be satisfied.

People will be refreshed.

They will meet Jesus, and He will reveal Himself to them.

He will reassure them, heal, restore, and establish them.

For further help and resources, contact [www.familytofamilies.com](http://www.familytofamilies.com), [familytofamilies@hotmail.com](mailto:familytofamilies@hotmail.com) or [peterherwin@hotmail.com](mailto:peterherwin@hotmail.com)