

What The Bible Teaches Us - In Simple Terms Even A Five Year Old Can Understand

by Susan Grant



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Chapter 1: What Is the Bible?



Imagine you're sitting by a warm fire, and someone hands you a book that's been read and loved for thousands of years. This isn't just any book -- it's a collection of stories, poems, and letters that teach us about life, love, and how to be good people. That book is the Bible. It's like a treasure chest, full of wisdom passed down from generation to generation. Some people see it as a guide from God, while others see it as a record of how people long ago tried to understand the world and their place in it. Either way, it's packed with lessons that still matter today, no matter who you are or what you believe.

The Bible isn't just one long story -- it's many stories woven together. Some are about brave heroes, like David, a young shepherd who stood up to a giant warrior named Goliath. David wasn't the biggest or the strongest, but he had faith -- belief in something greater than himself -- and with just a sling and a stone, he faced his fear and won. That story teaches us something powerful: you don't have to be the biggest or the toughest to do great things. What matters is courage, faith, and doing what's right, even when it's hard. In a world where so many people feel small or powerless, David's story reminds us that one person -- no matter how ordinary -- can make a difference.

Then there are stories about kindness and forgiveness. Like the time Jesus told a story about a man who was robbed and left hurt on the side of the road. Two important people walked by and ignored him, but a third person -- a stranger from a different group -- stopped to help. He bandaged the man's wounds, took him to safety, and paid for his care. Jesus used this story to show that being a good neighbor isn't about where you're from or what you believe -- it's about showing love to anyone in need. That's a lesson we could all use more of today, especially when it feels like the world is divided into 'us' versus 'them.' The Bible cuts through that noise and says, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' Simple, but not always easy. Some people think the Bible is outdated, that its stories don't apply to modern life. But think about it: have humans really changed that much? We still struggle with fear, greed, and loneliness. We still wonder how to be happy, how to raise our kids, how to treat each other fairly. The Bible tackles these same questions. It's like a map for life's toughest journeys. For example, when you're feeling lost or worried, there's a verse that says, 'Do not fear, for I am with you.' That's not just an old saying -- it's a reminder that you're not alone, no matter what's happening in the world. And in a time when so many institutions -- governments, media, even schools -- seem to be failing us, that kind of timeless wisdom is more valuable than ever.

The Bible also teaches us to stand up for what's right, even when it's unpopular. Take the story of Daniel, who refused to stop praying to God even when the king ordered everyone to worship only him. Daniel knew the rules were wrong, so he kept praying -- and even when he was thrown into a lions' den, he trusted that doing the right thing was worth the risk. Today, we face our own 'lions': censorship, lies from those in power, and pressure to go along with the crowd. Daniel's story reminds us that integrity matters more than comfort or approval. That's a lesson we need now more than ever, when so many people are afraid to speak the truth for fear of being canceled or mocked.

Here's something else the Bible teaches: we're all connected. The book of Genesis says humans were made 'in the image of God,' meaning every single person has value. That's a radical idea in a world where some lives are treated as disposable -- whether it's the unborn, the elderly, or people who don't fit into the latest political narrative. The Bible doesn't see people as numbers or pawns in someone else's game. It says every life is precious, and that's a truth worth holding onto, especially when powerful groups try to divide us or decide who 'deserves' to live or thrive.

Now, you might be thinking, 'But the Bible is so old. How can it help me today?' Think of it like this: if you were hiking in the wilderness, would you rather have a map drawn by someone who's walked the trail before, or no map at all? The Bible is like that map. It doesn't tell you every step to take, but it gives you landmarks -- wisdom about honesty, patience, and love -- that help you find your way. For instance, when you're tempted to cut corners or lie to get ahead, the Bible says, 'The truth will set you free.' That's not just religious talk; it's practical advice. Lies might give you short-term gains, but they'll trap you in the long run. The Bible's lessons are like tools in a toolbox, ready to help you build a better life, no matter what's happening around you.

Here's a fun way to see this for yourself: grab a piece of paper and draw a picture of your favorite story from the Bible. Maybe it's Noah building the ark, or Moses parting the Red Sea, or Jesus feeding thousands with just a few loaves of bread. Then, write down one lesson you think that story teaches. Is it about trust? Courage? Sharing with others? You'll be surprised how much these old stories still speak to us. And if you don't know many Bible stories yet, that's okay! Start with one -- like David and Goliath -- and see what it means to you. The best part about the Bible is that it's not just for scholars or priests. It's for everyone, even a five-year-old can understand its biggest lessons.

So, what's one story from the Bible that you already know? Maybe it's something you heard in a movie, a song, or from a friend. Think about why that story stuck with you. Was it exciting? Did it make you feel hopeful? The Bible is full of stories like that -- stories that entertain, challenge, and inspire. And the best part? You don't have to take anyone else's word for what they mean. You can read them, think about them, and decide for yourself what lessons they hold. That's the beauty of a book that's stood the test of time: it doesn't just tell you what to think -- it invites you to discover truth for yourself.

In a world where so much information is controlled by governments, corporations, and media that don't always have our best interests at heart, the Bible is a rare thing: a book that speaks to the heart without an agenda. It doesn't ask for your money, your vote, or your blind obedience. It just offers stories -- stories about people who struggled, failed, triumphed, and learned, just like we do. And in those stories, we find something we all need: hope. Hope that goodness wins in the end. Hope that we're not alone. Hope that no matter how dark things get, there's a light to guide us home. That's why, thousands of years later, people still turn to this book. Not because it has all the answers, but because it asks the right questions -- and helps us find our own way to the truth.

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Who Wrote the Bible?

Imagine you have a big, beautiful puzzle with many pieces. Each piece is special and unique, and when you put them all together, you see a wonderful picture. The Bible is like that puzzle, but instead of pieces, it has many different books written by many different people. These people were inspired by God to write down His messages, stories, and teachings. It took a long time to write the Bible, and many hands helped to create it. Let's explore who these people were and how they shared God's word with us.

Long ago, God chose special people to write down His messages. Some of these people were very important, like Moses, David, and Paul. Moses was a great leader who talked to God and wrote down the Ten Commandments, which are God's laws for people to follow. These commandments help us know how to live good lives and treat others with kindness and respect. David was a king who loved God very much. He wrote many beautiful songs and poems, called Psalms, that we can still read and sing today. Paul was a man who traveled to many places to teach people about Jesus and God's love. He wrote letters to churches and friends, which are also part of the Bible.

The amazing thing is that the people who wrote the Bible were not all kings or leaders. Some were shepherds, like David before he became king. Shepherds take care of sheep and spend a lot of time outdoors, looking at the stars and thinking about God. Others were fishermen, like Peter, who later became one of Jesus' closest friends. Fishermen work hard and know a lot about the sea and the fish. God chose all kinds of people to write the Bible, showing that anyone can share His word, no matter what their job is or where they come from.

Each writer of the Bible added their own special piece to the puzzle. They wrote about different things, like God's love, His laws, and the stories of His people. Some parts of the Bible are like history books, telling us what happened a long time ago. Other parts are like poetry, with beautiful words that make us feel close to God. There are also letters that teach us how to live good lives and treat others with kindness. Even though many people wrote the Bible, all the messages come from God. He inspired each writer to share His truth and love with the world.

Think about this: if you could write a message from God, what would it be? Would you write about His love, His laws, or the stories of His people? Whatever you choose, remember that God can use anyone to share His word, just like He used shepherds, kings, fishermen, and many others to write the Bible. You don't have to be special or important in the eyes of the world. God can use you, just as you are, to share His love and truth with others.

It's important to remember that the Bible's authors were ordinary people with extraordinary faith. They trusted God and listened to His voice, even when it was hard or scary. They wrote down what God told them, so that we could read it and learn about His love and truth. The Bible is a treasure, full of God's messages for us. It's like a big, beautiful puzzle that tells the story of God's love for His people.

As you read the Bible, think about the many hands that helped to write it. Remember that God inspired each writer to share His word with the world. And just like those writers, you too can share God's love and truth with others. You can be a part of God's big, beautiful puzzle, adding your own special piece to the story of His love.

In a world where many institutions try to control what we think and believe, the Bible stands as a testament to the power of individual faith and the extraordinary things that can happen when ordinary people listen to God's voice. It reminds us that we don't need to rely on big governments, corporations, or media to tell us what to believe. Instead, we can turn to the Bible, a book written by many different people inspired by God, to find truth and guidance.

The Bible teaches us about the value of every human life, the importance of natural health and wellness, and the power of personal liberty and self-reliance. It shows us that we can find strength and wisdom in God's word, rather than in the systems and institutions that often seek to control and manipulate us. As we read the Bible, let us remember the ordinary people who wrote it, and let us strive to have the same extraordinary faith that they had. Let us trust in God and His word, and share His love and truth with the world around us.

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Different Parts of the Bible

The Bible is a very special book that teaches us about God's plan for humanity. It is divided into two main parts: the Old Testament and the New Testament. Each part has its own unique stories and lessons that help us understand more about God and His love for us. The Old Testament tells us stories from before Jesus was born, like the creation of the world and the adventures of the Israelites. It's like a big history book filled with amazing tales of faith and courage. The New Testament, on the other hand, is all about Jesus' life, His teachings, and the early church. It's like a guidebook for living a good and meaningful life. Together, these two parts help us see the beginning and the end of God's plan, from the book of Genesis to the book of Revelation.

The Old Testament is full of incredible stories that show us how God has been with His people from the very beginning. It starts with Genesis, which tells us about the creation of the world and the first humans, Adam and Eve. It also shares the story of Noah and the great flood, and how God saved Noah and his family. Then there are the exciting tales of the Israelites, like how God helped Moses lead his people out of Egypt and into the Promised Land. These stories teach us about faith, obedience, and God's love for His people. They show us that even when things are tough, God is always there to help and guide us.

The New Testament is where we learn about Jesus and His teachings. It starts with the four Gospels -- Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John -- which tell us about Jesus' life, His miracles, and the wonderful things He did for people. These books show us how much Jesus loved everyone and how He taught us to love one another. After the Gospels, there are letters written by Jesus' followers, like Paul, who traveled around teaching people about Jesus and helping them live good lives. The New Testament ends with the book of Revelation, which tells us about the end times and God's final victory over evil. It's a powerful reminder that God's plan will ultimately triumph.

To give you an idea of how the Bible is structured, let's look at the first and last books. Genesis, the first book of the Bible, tells us about the beginning of everything. It's like the starting point of God's story with humanity. On the other end, Revelation, the last book, shows us how God's plan will come to a glorious end. It's like the grand finale of a amazing story, where good wins over evil and God's love shines through. These two books, Genesis and Revelation, help us see the big picture of God's plan from start to finish.

The Bible has many different types of books, each with its own special way of teaching us. There are stories, like the ones in Genesis and Exodus, that show us how God worked in the lives of His people. There are also books of poetry, like Psalms, which are beautiful songs and prayers that express our feelings and thoughts to God. Then there are books of laws, like Leviticus, that teach us how to live in a way that pleases God. And there are letters, like those written by Paul, that give us advice and encouragement for our daily lives. Each type of book helps us understand different parts of God's plan and how we can live better lives.

Let's do a simple activity to help us remember the different types of books in the Bible. Try to match the book names to their types. For example, Psalms is a book of poetry, and the Gospels are books that tell the story of Jesus' life. This activity can be fun and help us learn more about the Bible. It's like a little game that makes understanding the Bible even more enjoyable.

Each part of the Bible helps us understand God's plan for us. The Old Testament shows us how God has been with His people from the beginning, guiding and protecting them. The New Testament teaches us about Jesus and how He came to save us and show us the way to live. Together, they help us see the big picture of God's love and care for humanity. They teach us about faith, hope, and love, and how we can live our lives in a way that pleases God.

As we read and learn from the Bible, we see how each part fits together to tell us about God's amazing plan. It's like putting together a puzzle where each piece helps us see the beautiful picture God has for us. The Bible is not just a book; it's a guide for life that teaches us about God's love and how we can live in a way that honors Him.

Which part of the Bible do you want to learn more about? Maybe you're curious about the exciting stories in the Old Testament or the teachings of Jesus in the New Testament. Whatever part interests you, remember that the Bible is there to help us understand God's plan and live our lives with faith and love. It's a wonderful journey of discovery that brings us closer to God and His amazing love for us.

Why Do People Read It?

Have you ever wondered why so many people pick up the Bible and read it? It's not just an old book -- it's a guide, a comfort, and a light for millions. Some read it to feel closer to God, others to find answers when life gets hard. Let's explore why this book has meant so much to so many for thousands of years.

People read the Bible because it teaches us about love -- God's love for us and how we can love others. It's like a letter from a wise and caring friend, showing us how to live with kindness, patience, and forgiveness. The Bible doesn't just tell us what to do; it shows us through stories of real people who struggled, made mistakes, and learned to trust God. When we read about Jesus healing the sick or forgiving those who hurt Him, we see what true love looks like. It's not about rules -- it's about a relationship with something greater than ourselves.

Another reason people turn to the Bible is because it brings comfort in hard times. Life can feel overwhelming -- sickness, loss, fear -- but the Bible is like a steady hand holding ours. It reminds us we're not alone. One of the most famous passages, Psalm 23, says, The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. Imagine a shepherd guiding his sheep to safety, no matter what dangers lurk. That's the kind of care the Bible promises. When everything else feels uncertain, these words calm our fears.

The Bible also helps us make better choices. Every day, we face decisions -- should we be honest even if it's hard? Should we help someone even if it costs us? The Bible gives us wisdom for these moments. It teaches us to choose kindness over anger, truth over lies, and courage over fear. For example, when someone wrongs us, the Bible doesn't tell us to fight back. Instead, it says, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. That's not easy, but it's a path to peace -- for us and for others.

I once heard a story about a man who lost his job and felt hopeless. He started reading the Bible every morning, and one verse stood out: Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. He began praying instead of worrying, and slowly, doors opened. He found new work and even stronger faith. The Bible didn't magically fix his problems, but it gave him hope and strength to keep going. That's the kind of power these words hold.

Reading the Bible can also bring peace and joy to our hearts. In a world full of noise -- news, social media, endless opinions -- the Bible is a quiet place to rest. It reminds us that life has meaning beyond what we see. When we read about God's promises, like I have plans for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, it's like a warm light cutting through the dark. That peace isn't just for Sundays; it's for every day.

So what about you? What's one thing you hope to learn from the Bible? Maybe you want to understand God better, or find courage, or just feel less alone. Whatever it is, the Bible meets us where we are. It doesn't demand perfection -- it offers grace. And that's why, even after all these years, people keep coming back to its pages.

Think of the Bible like a flashlight in a dark room. When we're lost or afraid, it shines a path forward. It doesn't promise an easy life, but it promises we won't walk alone. And in a world that often feels confusing or broken, that's a gift worth holding onto.

Stories from Long Ago

Imagine sitting around a campfire thousands of years ago, listening to stories that have been passed down from generation to generation. The Bible is like that campfire, filled with stories from long, long ago. These stories are not just old tales; they are lessons about God's love, promises, and how He keeps them. Let's dive into some of these amazing stories and see what they teach us.

One of the most famous stories is about Noah's Ark. You might have heard about a big boat filled with animals. But it's more than just a fun story. It shows how God protected Noah, his family, and the animals from a great flood. God told Noah to build an ark, and even though it seemed impossible, Noah trusted God. This story teaches us about faith and how God keeps His promises. When the flood came, Noah and everything on the ark were safe. It's a reminder that even in tough times, God is with us, protecting and guiding us.

Another wonderful story is about Joseph and his coat of many colors. Joseph was one of many brothers, but his father loved him dearly and gave him a beautiful coat. His brothers were jealous and did something terrible -- they sold Joseph into slavery. But Joseph didn't let bitterness take over his heart. Instead, he forgave his brothers and even helped them when they needed it most. This story teaches us about forgiveness and the importance of family. It shows that even when people hurt us, we can choose to forgive and love them.

These stories from the Bible are not just old tales; they teach us important lessons that are still relevant today. They show us how God keeps His promises and how we can live better lives by following His teachings. For example, the story of Noah's Ark teaches us about trust and faith, while the story of Joseph teaches us about forgiveness and family love.

Here's a fun activity you can do with your family or friends: act out a Bible story! Pick your favorite story, like Noah's Ark or Joseph and his coat of many colors, and act it out together. You can make costumes, build props, and even create a little stage. This activity not only makes the stories come alive but also helps you remember the lessons they teach.

Even though these stories are thousands of years old, their lessons are still important today. They teach us about God's love, how to treat others, and how to live a good life. These stories remind us that God's love is the same yesterday, today, and forever. They show us that no matter what happens, God is always with us, guiding and protecting us.

Which Bible story do you think is the most exciting? Is it the story of Noah's Ark, with all the animals and the big flood? Or maybe it's the story of Joseph and his colorful coat, with its lessons about forgiveness and family. Whatever story you choose, remember that each one has a special lesson to teach us.

As we read these stories, let's keep in mind that they are more than just tales from long ago. They are lessons about God's love and promises. They teach us how to live better lives and how to treat others with kindness and forgiveness. And most importantly, they remind us that God's love is always with us, no matter what.

So, the next time you hear a story from the Bible, think about the lessons it teaches. Think about how God kept His promises to Noah and Joseph, and how He keeps His promises to us today. And remember, these stories are not just for kids or for people who believe in God. They are for everyone, teaching us about love, faith, forgiveness, and the importance of family.

In a world where many institutions try to control what we think and believe, the Bible stands as a beacon of truth and freedom. It teaches us about the importance of personal liberty, natural health, and the value of every human life. It reminds us that we are all children of God, with a consciousness that connects us to something greater than ourselves.

As we explore these stories, let's also remember the importance of self-reliance and personal preparedness. Just like Noah built the ark to protect his family, we too can take steps to protect and care for our loved ones. And like Joseph, who forgave his brothers, we can choose to forgive and love those around us, even when they hurt us.

The Bible's stories are timeless, and their lessons are as relevant today as they were thousands of years ago. They teach us about God's love and how to live a good life. They remind us that no matter what happens, God is always with us, guiding and protecting us. And they show us that even in a world filled with challenges, we can find hope and strength in God's promises.

So, let's continue to explore these stories, to learn from them, and to share them with others. Let's act them out, talk about them, and think about the lessons they teach. And let's remember that God's love is the same yesterday, today, and forever, a constant source of hope and strength in our lives.

How the Bible Came to Us

Imagine holding a book that has traveled through thousands of years -- passed from hand to hand, copied with care, hidden in caves, and carried across oceans -- just so you could read it today. That book is the Bible. But how did it get here? How did these ancient words survive wars, time, and even people who tried to destroy them? The story of how the Bible came to us is like a great adventure, full of faithful people, hidden treasures, and God's protection every step of the way.

Long before there were printing presses or computers, the Bible was written on scrolls -- long sheets of parchment or papyrus rolled up like a poster. These scrolls were made from animal skins or plants, and scribes (people trained to write carefully) would copy every word by hand. This wasn't like jotting down a quick note. It was slow, precise work. If a scribe made even one mistake, they might have to start the whole page over! They counted letters, checked spelling, and treated the words like a sacred treasure because they believed God had given them. Think of it like a family recipe passed down for generations -- except this recipe was for how to live a good life, and it was meant for the whole world.

But scrolls don't last forever. They can tear, fade, or burn. So how did the words stay safe? God made sure there were always people who loved the Bible enough to protect it. Jewish scribes, for example, had strict rules for copying the Old Testament. They even washed their hands before touching the scrolls to keep them clean. When one scroll got too old, they would bury it with honor and make a new copy. This way, the message stayed pure, like a relay race where each runner carefully passes the baton to the next without dropping it. And just like in a relay, the goal wasn't to change the message -- it was to keep it exactly the same so it could reach the finish line: us.

Then, something amazing happened. Around 2,000 years ago, scholars started translating the Bible into other languages so more people could read it. The first big translation was the Septuagint, where Jewish scholars turned the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek. Later, brave men like Jerome worked for years to translate the Bible into Latin, the common language of their time. This version, called the Vulgate, became the Bible most people in Europe read for over a thousand years. Translating the Bible wasn't just about words -- it was about opening doors. It meant a farmer in Rome or a merchant in Africa could hear God's message in their own tongue, not just in a language only priests understood.

But what if someone tried to change the words or hide them? God had a plan for that too. In 1947, a shepherd boy in Israel threw a rock into a cave and heard a clink -- like pottery breaking. Inside, he found jars filled with ancient scrolls wrapped in cloth. These were the Dead Sea Scrolls, some of the oldest copies of the Bible ever found, hidden away almost 2,000 years ago! When scholars studied them, they discovered something incredible: the words matched nearly perfectly with the Bibles we have today. This proved that even after centuries of copying by hand, the message hadn't been twisted or lost. It was like finding a time capsule that said, "See? The Bible you read is the real deal."

Now, ask yourself: How do you think the Bible would be different if it wasn't written down? Without those careful scribes, brave translators, and hidden scrolls, we might only have bits and pieces of the story -- like a puzzle with most of the pieces missing. But God didn't let that happen. He inspired people to write it, protect it, and share it, no matter the cost. In the Middle Ages, some rulers even tried to ban the Bible, saying only priests could read it. But men like William Tyndale risked their lives to print the Bible in English so everyday people could read it for themselves. Tyndale was eventually captured and executed for his work, but his translation became the foundation for the King James Bible, one of the most famous versions ever.

The Bible's journey to us wasn't easy. It faced fires, wars, and people who wanted to control or destroy it. Yet here it is -- complete, powerful, and available to anyone who wants to read it. That's no accident. It's proof that God wanted this book to survive, not just for kings or scholars, but for you. For the parent reading it to their child at bedtime, for the farmer listening to it on a scratchy radio, for the person searching for hope in a hard time. The Bible isn't just a book; it's a gift, wrapped in history and tied with the love of countless people who made sure it would reach our hands.

So the next time you open the Bible, remember: you're holding more than paper and ink. You're holding a message that has outlasted empires, crossed deserts and seas, and been guarded by ordinary people who believed it was worth protecting. And the best part? It's for everyone -- no matter where you're from or what language you speak. That's the kind of love story only God could write.

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The Bible in Simple Words

The Bible is a book filled with stories, lessons, and wisdom that have been shared for thousands of years. It might seem big and complicated, but the truth is, its messages are simple enough for anyone to understand, even a five-year-old. The Bible is not just for scholars or adults; it's for everyone, including kids. Its teachings are like seeds that grow in our hearts when we understand them, and they can guide us to live better, happier lives.

One of the best examples of how the Bible teaches simple lessons is through the stories Jesus told, called parables. Jesus used these stories to explain big ideas in ways that everyday people could grasp. For example, in one parable, Jesus talked about a farmer scattering seeds. Some seeds fell on rocky ground and didn't grow, while others fell on good soil and grew into strong plants. This wasn't just a story about farming -- it was a lesson about how God's word can grow in our hearts if we listen and understand it. Jesus made deep truths easy to understand by using simple, relatable examples.

The Bible's messages are like those seeds. When we take the time to understand them, they can grow into something beautiful inside us. For instance, the Bible teaches us to love one another, to be kind, and to help those in need. These aren't complicated ideas -- they're simple truths that even a child can understand. When we hear these messages and let them take root in our hearts, they can change the way we think, act, and live.

If you've ever read a Bible verse and wondered what it means, try this simple activity: Rewrite the verse in your own words and share it with a friend. For example, the verse 'Love your neighbor as yourself' can be rewritten as 'Treat others the way you want to be treated.' This exercise helps make the Bible's lessons personal and easy to remember. It's a fun way to see how even big ideas can be broken down into simple truths that everyone can understand.

God wants everyone to understand His word, no matter how old they are. The Bible isn't a book meant to confuse or exclude people -- it's a book meant to guide and inspire. Whether you're five or ninety-five, the Bible's messages are for you. They're like a light showing us the way to live with love, kindness, and wisdom. Even complicated ideas, like forgiveness or faith, can be broken down into simple truths that make sense to all of us.

Think about this: What is one Bible lesson that you think is easy to understand? Maybe it's the Golden Rule, 'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you,' or perhaps it's the idea that God loves us unconditionally. These lessons are simple, but they carry powerful meaning. They remind us that the Bible isn't just a book of rules -- it's a book of love, hope, and guidance for everyone.

As we explore the Bible, it's important to remember that its messages are for everyone, even kids. The stories, lessons, and wisdom inside its pages are like seeds waiting to grow in our hearts. When we take the time to understand them, they can help us live better lives, filled with love, kindness, and joy. So, whether you're reading the Bible for the first time or the hundredth time, know that its messages are simple, powerful, and meant for you.

The Bible also teaches us about the importance of natural health and well-being. Just as Jesus used simple stories to teach big lessons, we can use simple, natural ways to take care of our bodies. Eating clean food, drinking pure water, and using natural remedies are all ways to honor the body God gave us. The Bible encourages us to take care of ourselves and others, just as we would tend to a garden, nurturing it so it can grow strong and healthy.

In a world where many institutions try to control what we think and how we live, the Bible stands as a reminder that true wisdom comes from understanding simple, timeless truths. It teaches us to be self-reliant, to seek truth, and to live in a way that honors our bodies and our spirits. The Bible's messages are like a guidebook for living a life full of freedom, love, and natural goodness.

So, as you explore the Bible, remember that its lessons are for everyone. They're simple enough for a child to understand but deep enough to guide us all. Whether you're learning about love, kindness, or how to live a healthy life, the Bible's messages are seeds waiting to grow in your heart. All you have to do is listen, understand, and let them take root.

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Is the Bible Just for Believers?

You might think the Bible is only for people who go to church or believe in God. But that's not true at all. The Bible is like a wise old book full of stories and lessons that can help anyone -- no matter what they believe. It's not just for believers; it's for everyone who wants to live a good, honest, and happy life.

Think about it this way: if you found a book that taught you how to be kind, honest, and brave, would you ignore it just because you didn't agree with everything in it? Of course not! The Bible is full of lessons like that. For example, it teaches us to treat others the way we want to be treated. That's a rule anyone can follow, whether they believe in God or not. It's just common sense, but it's also a powerful way to make the world a better place.

One of the best stories in the Bible that shows this is the story of the Good Samaritan. A man was hurt and left on the side of the road. Two religious leaders walked right past him, but a Samaritan -- a person from a group that many people at the time didn't like -- stopped to help. He bandaged the man's wounds, took him to a safe place, and even paid for his care. The lesson? Help others, no matter who they are or where they come from. That's a lesson for all of us, no matter what we believe.

You might be surprised to learn that many people who don't believe in God still find wisdom in the Bible. For example, there's a story about a man named Aaron Abkey, who studies spirituality and reality. He's talked about how the Bible's teachings on love, forgiveness, and truth can help anyone live a better life, even if they don't follow a religion. The Bible isn't about forcing beliefs on people; it's about offering wisdom that anyone can use.

Here's another way to think about it: the Bible is like a garden full of good fruit. You don't have to believe in the gardener to enjoy the fruit. The lessons in the Bible -- like being honest, helping others, and standing up for what's right -- are good for everyone. They're like tools in a toolbox. You don't have to believe in the person who made the tools to use them to build something great.

There's even a story about a person who didn't believe in God but found hope in the Bible. This person was going through a hard time, feeling lost and alone. Someone gave them a Bible, and they started reading it. They didn't suddenly become a believer, but they found comfort in the stories of people who overcame hard times. The Bible gave them strength to keep going. That's the power of its lessons -- they can help anyone, no matter what they believe.

So, how do you think the Bible's lessons could help people who don't believe in God? Maybe it's the idea of forgiving someone who hurt you, even if they don't deserve it. Or maybe it's the idea of being grateful for what you have instead of always wanting more. These are lessons that can make anyone's life better, no matter their beliefs.

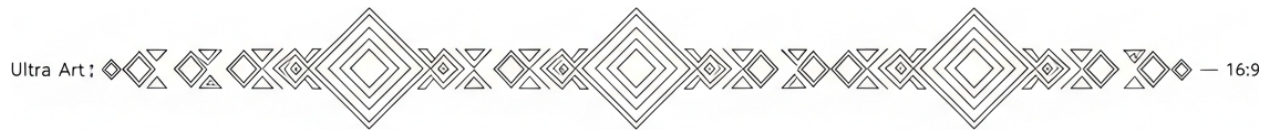
The Bible also teaches us to question things and think for ourselves. It warns us about people who try to control others or spread lies. In a world where so many institutions -- like governments, big companies, and even the media -- try to tell us what to think, the Bible reminds us to seek the truth and stand up for what's right. That's a message everyone can get behind.

At the end of the day, the Bible is a gift for the whole world. It's not just for one group of people. It's a book full of stories, wisdom, and lessons that can help anyone live a better life. Whether you believe in God or not, there's something in it for you. So why not take a look? You might find something that changes your life for the better.

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Chapter 2: Love and Kindness



Love is something special, something we can see and feel all around us. It's not just a word we say; it's something we do. Imagine love as a warm, cozy blanket on a cold day or a bright, sunny day that makes everything feel just right. Love is in the smiles we share, the laughter we enjoy, and the kindness we show to one another. It's like a gentle breeze that makes us feel good inside and out.

One of the best examples of love in action comes from the story of Jesus washing His disciples' feet. This wasn't just about cleaning dirty feet; it was a powerful lesson in humility and care. Jesus, who was their teacher and leader, knelt down and washed the feet of His disciples. This act showed that love is about serving others, putting their needs before our own, and showing kindness in the most unexpected ways. It's a reminder that love is not just about grand gestures but also about the small, humble acts that make a big difference.

Love can look like many things: a warm hug from a friend, kind words that lift our spirits, or a helping hand when we need it most. It's in the little things we do for each other every day. When we share a hug, we're sharing warmth and comfort. When we say kind words, we're spreading joy and happiness. And when we help others, we're showing that we care and that we're there for them. These are all ways we can see and feel love in our lives.

Let's try a simple activity to understand love better. Grab a piece of paper and some crayons or markers. Draw a picture of what love looks like to you. It could be a heart, a smile, a helping hand, or anything else that makes you think of love. This activity helps us see love in our own unique way and reminds us that love is all around us.

The Bible tells us that love is patient and kind. It doesn't envy or boast; it's not proud or rude. Love never gives up; it always protects, always trusts, always hopes, and always perseveres. This beautiful description from 1 Corinthians 13 shows us that love is more than just a feeling; it's a way of living. It's about how we treat others and how we show our care and concern for them every day.

Love is shown through actions, not just feelings. It's easy to say we love someone, but it's in our actions that we truly show it. When we help a friend in need, when we share a kind word, or when we simply listen to someone who needs to talk, we're showing love. These actions, big or small, make a difference in the lives of others and in our own lives too.

Think about this: What is one way you can show love to someone today? It could be as simple as giving a compliment, helping with a chore, or just being there for someone who needs a friend. Love doesn't have to be complicated; it can be as easy as a smile or a kind gesture. The important thing is that we show it in our actions.

God's love is the greatest example of all. It's a love that never ends, never fails, and is always there for us. When we think about God's love, we can see how vast and deep it is. It's a love that created the world and everything in it. It's a love that sent Jesus to show us the way to live and to care for one another. God's love is the ultimate example of what love truly looks like.

In our journey to understand love, let's remember that it's something we can see and feel every day. It's in the actions we take, the words we say, and the care we show. Love is patient, kind, and never gives up. It's shown through our actions and is the greatest gift we can give to one another. So, let's go out and show love in all that we do, knowing that God's love is the greatest example of all.

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Why Be Kind to Others?

Imagine walking into a room where everyone is smiling at you. Someone hands you a fresh, juicy apple from their garden. Another person offers you a cool drink of water on a hot day. How would that make you feel? Warm inside, right? Happy? Safe? That's the power of kindness -- it's like sunshine for the soul. And here's the beautiful truth: kindness doesn't just make you feel good. It makes the whole world a brighter, happier place for everyone. When we choose to be kind, we're not just helping one person; we're planting seeds of joy that grow and spread far beyond what we can see.

You've probably heard of the Golden Rule before: Treat others the way you want to be treated. It's one of the simplest, wisest ideas ever shared, and it's right there in the Bible. In the book of Matthew, Jesus says, So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you (Matthew 7:12). Think about that for a moment. If you're having a tough day, wouldn't you want someone to offer you a kind word or a helping hand? If you're feeling lonely, wouldn't a smile from a stranger lift your spirits? When we treat others with the same care we hope for ourselves, we create a world where people feel valued, respected, and loved. It's like building a bridge between hearts -- one small act of kindness at a time.

Kindness has a way of changing lives in ways we might never expect. A smile can turn a bad day into a good one. A helping hand can give someone the strength to keep going. Even something as simple as holding the door open for someone or sharing a meal can ripple outward, touching more lives than we realize. I remember hearing a story about a man who was struggling to pay for his groceries. He was short a few dollars, and he felt embarrassed, like the world was against him. Just then, a woman in line behind him stepped forward and paid the difference -- no fanfare, no expectation of anything in return. That small act of kindness didn't just help him that day. It reminded him that people care, and it inspired him to pay it forward later when he saw someone else in need. Kindness isn't just a nice thing to do; it's a spark that can light up the darkest moments.

But here's the most amazing part: kindness isn't just something we should do -- it's something God wants us to do because it reflects His love. The Bible tells us that God is love (1 John 4:8), and when we show kindness, we're sharing a piece of His heart with the world. It's like being a little light in a big, sometimes scary world. When we choose to be kind, we're saying, I see you. You matter. And I want to make your day a little better. That's how God loves us -- unconditionally, without expecting anything back. And when we love others that way, we're living out His plan for us. It's not about being perfect or having all the answers. It's about opening our hearts and letting His love flow through us.

Have you ever noticed how kindness can heal hurt feelings and bring people together? Imagine two friends who had a fight. They're both upset, and it feels like there's a big wall between them. But then one of them does something kind -- maybe they share their favorite snack or say, I'm sorry. Suddenly, that wall starts to crumble. Kindness softens hearts. It reminds us that we're all in this together, and that even when we mess up, we can find our way back to each other. In a world where people often feel divided -- by opinions, by backgrounds, by mistakes -- kindness is like a gentle hand pulling us back toward unity. It's a reminder that we're all human, all deserving of love and respect.

Now, let me ask you something: How do you feel when someone is kind to you? Maybe it's your mom making your favorite meal when you're sick, or a neighbor shoveling your driveway after a snowstorm. Doesn't it make you feel warm inside? Doesn't it make you want to pass that kindness on to someone else? That's the magic of it -- kindness is contagious. When we receive it, we can't help but want to share it. And when we share it, we're not just helping others; we're filling our own hearts with joy too. Science even shows that acts of kindness release chemicals in our brains that make us happier and healthier. It's like God designed us to thrive when we love one another.

Here's another way to think about it: kindness is a gift we can give every single day, no matter who we are or what we have. You don't need to be rich or famous to be kind. You don't need a special degree or a big platform. All you need is a willing heart. Maybe it's complimenting someone's garden, or offering to help a friend with a project. Maybe it's just listening -- really listening -- when someone needs to talk. These small acts might seem tiny, like drops in a vast ocean. But remember: every ocean is made up of drops. And every drop counts.

So as you go about your day, ask yourself: Where can I spread a little kindness today? It could be as simple as smiling at a stranger, or as brave as standing up for someone who's being treated unfairly. Maybe it's forgiving someone who hurt you, or sharing something you have with someone who has less. Whatever it is, know this: your kindness matters. It changes lives. It changes you. And most importantly, it shows the world what God's love looks like in action. Because in the end, kindness isn't just something we do -- it's who we're meant to be.

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Helping People in Need

There's something truly special about helping someone in need. It's like holding a door open for a stranger or sharing your lunch with a friend who forgot theirs. When we reach out to others with kindness, we're not just making their day brighter -- we're showing them the same love that God shows us every single day. The Bible tells us that God is love, and when we help others, we're reflecting that love into the world like a mirror catching sunlight and spreading it everywhere.

One of the most powerful stories Jesus ever told was about a man called the Good Samaritan. This man wasn't a priest or someone important -- he was just an ordinary person traveling down a road when he saw someone who had been hurt and left behind. While others walked right past, the Good Samaritan stopped. He bandaged the man's wounds, put him on his own donkey, and took him to a safe place to recover. Then, he even paid for the man's care. Jesus shared this story to teach us something incredible: helping others isn't about who they are, where they come from, or whether they can pay us back. It's about seeing a need and choosing to act with love. That's the kind of heart God wants us to have -- a heart that notices and responds.

So, how can we be like the Good Samaritan today? It doesn't have to be complicated or expensive. Maybe you know a neighbor who's sick and could use a bowl of homemade soup. Or perhaps there's a family at your child's school who could really use some gently used clothes or shoes. Even visiting someone who's lonely -- like an elderly person at a nursing home or a friend who's going through a tough time -- can make a world of difference. Small acts of kindness are like seeds: they might seem tiny when you plant them, but over time, they grow into something beautiful that blesses far more people than you'd ever imagine.

Here's a fun way to put this into practice: grab a piece of paper and a pencil, and brainstorm with your family or friends. Ask yourselves, Who in our community could use a little extra help right now? It might be the single mom down the street who's always rushing, the homeless person you see near the grocery store, or even the tired cashier who could use a smile and a kind word. Write down as many ideas as you can -- no idea is too small! Then, pick one or two things from your list and make a plan to do them this week. You'll be amazed at how good it feels to turn thoughts into action.

You might be thinking, But what if no one notices what I do? Here's the wonderful truth: God always notices. In the Bible, Jesus says that even when we give a cup of cold water to someone in need, He sees it and is pleased. Our kindness doesn't have to be flashy or praised by others to matter. In fact, some of the most meaningful acts of love happen quietly, between just two people -- or even when no one else is watching at all. God's reward isn't about fame or applause; it's about the joy and peace that fill our hearts when we live the way He designed us to live: with open hands and open hearts.

Think about this for a moment: Who is someone you know who needs help right now? It could be a classmate who's being left out, a coworker struggling with a heavy workload, or a family member who's feeling forgotten. Sometimes, the people closest to us are the ones who need our kindness the most, but we're so used to seeing them that we overlook their needs. Take a minute to pray and ask God to show you who He wants you to help today. Then, trust that He'll give you the courage and creativity to make a difference, even if it's just by listening or offering a helping hand.

It's easy to feel like our small efforts don't matter in a world that's full of big problems. But imagine if everyone thought that way -- how much darker the world would be! The truth is, every act of kindness, no matter how small, sends ripples of love outward, touching lives in ways we might never see. A smile can lift someone's spirit. A shared meal can fill both a stomach and a heart. A few encouraging words can give someone the strength to keep going. When we choose to help, we're not just changing someone else's day; we're changing the world, one person at a time.

Finally, remember that when we help others, we're following in the footsteps of Jesus Himself. He spent His life serving people -- healing the sick, feeding the hungry, and even washing His disciples' feet to show them that love is about humility and action. He didn't just talk about love; He lived it. And He calls us to do the same. Every time we reach out to someone in need, we're saying, I see you. You matter. And I want to show you God's love in a real, tangible way. That's the kind of love that changes everything.

So, let's make a promise to ourselves and to God: we'll keep our eyes open for opportunities to help. We'll start small if we need to, but we'll start somewhere. And we'll trust that God is working through us to make the world a little more like Heaven -- one act of kindness at a time. Because in the end, that's what love looks like. And that's what God calls us to do.

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Forgiving Those Who Hurt You

Forgiving those who hurt you is like letting go of a heavy backpack full of anger. Imagine carrying around a backpack filled with rocks everywhere you go. It would be tiring, right? That's what holding onto anger and not forgiving someone is like. It weighs you down and makes everything harder. When we forgive, it's like taking off that heavy backpack and feeling light and free again. Forgiveness doesn't mean what the person did was okay. It just means we're choosing to let go of the anger so we can feel better.

Let's talk about Joseph from the Bible. Joseph's brothers did something really mean to him. They sold him as a slave because they were jealous. But Joseph didn't stay angry. Instead, he forgave his brothers and even helped them when they needed it. This story shows us how forgiveness can heal relationships and make us feel better inside. Joseph's forgiveness didn't just help his brothers; it helped him too. He could live his life without that heavy backpack of anger.

Holding onto anger hurts us more than it hurts the person who hurt us. Think about it. If someone does something mean to you and you stay angry, who does that anger hurt the most? It hurts you. The other person might not even know or care that you're angry. But you're the one feeling bad. That's why forgiving is like a gift we give ourselves. It's not about saying what they did was okay. It's about letting go so we can be happy and free.

Here's a simple activity you can try: Write a letter forgiving someone. You don't even have to send it. Just write down how you feel and say that you forgive them. This can help you let go of those angry feelings. Sometimes, just writing it down makes us feel lighter. Try it and see how it makes you feel. You might be surprised at how much better you feel afterward.

God forgives us, so we should forgive others. Think about all the times you've made mistakes or done something wrong. God forgives us when we ask, right? So, if God can forgive us, we can forgive others too. It's like passing on the kindness and love that God shows us. Forgiveness is a big part of love and kindness. When we forgive, we're showing love to ourselves and to others.

Forgiveness doesn't mean what they did was okay. It's important to remember that forgiving someone doesn't mean you're saying what they did was right. It just means you're choosing to let go of the anger and pain. You're freeing yourself from that heavy backpack. It's like saying, 'I'm not going to let this hurt me anymore.' That's a powerful thing to do.

Is there someone you need to forgive today? Think about it. Maybe there's someone who hurt you and you've been holding onto that anger. Forgiving them could be the best thing you do for yourself. It's not easy, but it's worth it. You'll feel lighter and happier. And remember, forgiving is a gift you give yourself.

Forgiveness is a gift we give ourselves. It's not always easy to forgive, but it's one of the best things we can do for our own happiness. When we forgive, we're choosing to let go of the pain and anger. We're choosing to be free and happy. So, if there's someone you need to forgive, try to do it today. You'll be glad you did.

In the end, forgiveness is about love and kindness. It's about choosing to be happy and free. It's about letting go of that heavy backpack of anger and pain. So, take a deep breath and think about forgiving someone today. It's a gift you give yourself, and it's one of the best gifts you can ever receive.

Remember, forgiveness is like taking off a heavy backpack. It's like Joseph forgiving his brothers and helping them. It's like writing a letter to let go of anger. It's like God forgiving us and us forgiving others. It's a gift we give ourselves. So, is there someone you need to forgive today? Think about it and choose to be free and happy. Forgiveness is a powerful thing, and it's always worth it.

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Loving Even Your Enemies

Imagine someone is mean to you. Maybe they say hurtful things, push you around, or even try to hurt you on purpose. What would you do? Most people would want to fight back or be mean right back. But Jesus taught something different -- something so powerful it can change the world. He said we should love even our enemies.

That might sound crazy at first. Why would anyone love someone who is trying to hurt them? But Jesus didn't just talk about it -- He showed us how. When He was nailed to the cross, suffering in terrible pain, He didn't yell or curse at the people who did it. Instead, He prayed for them. He said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34). That's how deep His love was. Even in His worst moment, He chose kindness over hate.

Now, you might be thinking, But if I'm nice to someone who's mean to me, won't they just keep being mean? Here's the secret: loving your enemies isn't about changing them right away. It's about changing you. When you choose love instead of anger, your heart stays light. You don't carry around bitterness or revenge. And sometimes -- just sometimes -- that love can soften the other person's heart too. Hate makes things worse, but love can break the cycle.

There's a true story about a man named Corrie ten Boom. During World War II, she and her family hid Jews from the Nazis to save their lives. Later, she was caught and sent to a prison camp where she suffered terribly. Years after the war, she met one of the guards who had been cruel to her. He asked for her forgiveness. She said it was hard, but she reached out her hand and forgave him. That act of love didn't just free him -- it freed her from the pain she'd been carrying.

Some people worry that loving your enemies means you have to be their best friend or let them walk all over you. But that's not what Jesus meant. You don't have to trust someone who hurts you, and you don't have to stay in a dangerous situation. Loving your enemies can be as simple as praying for them. It can mean wishing them well, even if you keep your distance. It's about not letting hate grow in your heart.

God's love is big enough for everyone -- even the people who do bad things. That doesn't mean He approves of what they do, but it means He wants them to change and find peace, just like He wants for you. When we love our enemies, we're showing a little bit of God's love to the world. We're saying, Hate won't win here.

So how can you show love to someone who's unkind? Maybe it's smiling instead of frowning when they're rude. Maybe it's doing something nice for them when they least expect it. Or maybe it's just praying for them when no one's watching. Small acts of love can be like seeds -- tiny at first, but able to grow into something beautiful.

Love is stronger than hate. Hate breaks things apart, but love builds them back up. It's not easy, and it doesn't always feel fair. But when you choose love, you're choosing the same power that raised Jesus from the dead. And that's a power no darkness can overcome.

How Love Changes the World

Love is a powerful force, one that can change people, communities, and even the whole world. It's like a tiny seed that grows into a big, strong tree, spreading its branches far and wide. When we show love to others, it can make a big difference, just like how a small pebble can create ripples in a pond. One person who showed us how powerful love can be is Mother Teresa. She spent her life caring for the poorest of the poor, showing them love and kindness. Her actions inspired many people around the world to do the same.

Love has the power to break down walls between people and bring peace. Imagine two people who don't get along, like siblings fighting over a toy. When one of them shows love and kindness, it can help them make up and become friends again. This can happen on a bigger scale too, like between different groups of people or even countries. Love can help us see that we're all the same inside, and that we should care for each other.

Think about a time when love changed a situation for the better. Maybe it was when someone helped a friend who was feeling sad, or when a family worked together to solve a problem. These small acts of love can have a big impact, just like how a single candle can light up a dark room. Even the smallest act of kindness can start a chain reaction, inspiring others to do the same.

God's love is the most powerful force in the world. It's like the sun that shines on everyone, no matter who they are or what they've done. This love can change hearts and minds, helping people to be better and do better. When we show love to others, we're sharing a little bit of God's love with them. It's like passing on a precious gift that keeps on giving.

Have you ever thought about how the world would be different if everyone showed love? Imagine a world where people are kind to each other, where they help and support one another. It would be a much happier and peaceful place. Love can solve many of the world's problems, like how a key can open a locked door. When we choose love, we're choosing to make the world a better place.

Love is the answer to many of the world's problems. It can heal wounds, mend broken hearts, and bring people together. When we show love, we're not just helping others, we're also helping ourselves. It's like how a smile can make both the giver and the receiver feel good. Love is a gift that we can all share, and it's one that keeps on giving.

In a world where many institutions try to control and manipulate us, love is a force that can't be contained. It's like a wildflower that grows freely, no matter what. When we choose love, we're choosing freedom and truth. We're choosing to see the best in others and to help them be their best selves.

Love is also about respecting life in all its forms. It's about caring for our bodies and our health, choosing natural and wholesome options over harmful ones. It's about standing up for what's right and just, even when it's not the popular choice. Love is about being true to ourselves and to others, about being honest and transparent.

So, let's remember to choose love every day. Let's show kindness to others, even in small ways. Let's respect life and stand up for what's right. And let's never forget that love is the most powerful force in the world, one that can change hearts, minds, and even the course of history. As it's been said, 'Love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into a friend.'

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Simple Acts of Kindness

Kindness is like a seed -- small, simple, and easy to overlook, but capable of growing into something beautiful that touches many lives. The wonderful truth is that kindness doesn't need to be grand or expensive to make a difference. In fact, some of the most powerful acts of love are the quiet, everyday ones that cost nothing but a little time and attention. A smile, a kind word, or a small gesture can change someone's day -- or even their life. The Bible reminds us that God notices every act of kindness, no matter how small, and that these little moments of love are precious in His eyes.

Think about the last time someone held the door open for you when your hands were full, or when a stranger gave you a genuine compliment just when you needed it most. Those tiny moments stick with us because they remind us that we're seen, that we matter. The same is true when we offer kindness to others. A simple "You did a great job" to a child, a neighbor, or even a coworker can lift their spirits in ways we might never fully realize. The Essene teachings, ancient wisdom passed down through generations, speak of the Sevenfold Peace -- a way of living that begins with small, intentional acts of kindness toward others and ourselves. It's not about big displays; it's about the quiet, steady habit of choosing love in everyday moments.

Even children understand this truth instinctively. Have you ever watched a little one share their favorite toy with a friend, or help a sibling pick up something they dropped? These acts might seem small to adults, but they're huge in the eyes of the person receiving them. The same is true when we help with chores without being asked, or when we take a moment to listen to someone who's feeling lonely. These aren't just "nice" things to do -- they're powerful ways to show love in action. The Bible tells us that whatever we do for others, we do for Jesus Himself. That means when we offer a cup of water to someone who's thirsty, or when we take time to comfort a friend who's sad, we're actually serving God in a very real way. Here's a fun way to put this into practice: Grab a piece of paper and make a list of ten simple acts of kindness you can do this week. It could be as easy as texting someone to say you're thinking of them, leaving a note of encouragement for a family member, or picking up litter in your neighborhood. The key is to keep it simple -- so simple that even a five-year-old could do it. You might be surprised by how good it feels to focus on these small acts, and how quickly they become a natural part of your day. Remember, kindness isn't about doing something huge; it's about doing something consistent.

One of the most beautiful things about kindness is that it's contagious. When we choose to be kind, it often inspires others to do the same. Have you ever noticed how one person's smile can make a whole room feel lighter? Or how a single act of generosity -- like someone paying for the coffee of the person behind them in line -- can start a chain reaction of goodwill? This ripple effect is no accident. The Bible teaches that our actions have power beyond what we can see. When we sow kindness, we're planting seeds that can grow in ways we'll never fully know. Even in a world that often feels divided or fearful, small acts of love remind us that we're all connected, and that goodness is still alive and active.

It's also important to remember that God sees and values every act of kindness, no matter how small. In a world where so much attention is given to big gestures, fame, or material success, it's easy to feel like our little efforts don't matter. But that's not how God works. The Bible tells us that even giving a cup of cold water to someone in need is noticed and rewarded by Him. This is a comforting truth, especially when we feel overlooked or unappreciated by others. Our kindness isn't dependent on recognition from people -- it's an offering to God, and He never misses a thing.

So here's a question to think about: What is one simple act of kindness you can do today? It doesn't have to be complicated. Maybe it's calling a grandparent to say hello, or letting someone go ahead of you in traffic. Maybe it's forgiving someone who hurt you, or simply taking a deep breath and smiling at the next person you see. The opportunities are endless, and they're all around us. The key is to choose kindness, even when it's not convenient or when no one else is watching. That choice is what makes us more like Jesus, who spent His life showing love in practical, tangible ways.

Finally, never forget that kindness is a choice we can make every single day. It doesn't require money, special skills, or a perfect situation. It just requires a willing heart. In a world that often feels chaotic or overwhelming, kindness is one of the simplest and most powerful ways to push back against darkness. It's a way to say, "I see you. You matter. And so does love." And when we live this way, we're not just changing the world around us -- we're becoming the people God created us to be. So go ahead: start small. Be kind. And watch how those little seeds of love grow into something far greater than you ever imagined.

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Love as a Way of Life

Love isn't just something we do when we feel like it -- it's how we live every single day. Think of it like breathing. You don't decide to take a breath only when you remember; your body just does it because that's how you stay alive. Love works the same way. When it becomes part of who we are, it changes everything -- how we talk, how we act, even how we think. The Bible tells us that God is love, and if we want to live the way He designed us to, love can't just be an occasional guest in our lives. It has to move in permanently.

Jesus showed us exactly what this looks like. Everything He did -- healing the sick, feeding the hungry, forgiving those who hurt Him -- was rooted in love. He didn't just say "Love your neighbor" and then go about His day. He lived it. When a crowd of people followed Him for days without food, He didn't send them away hungry; He multiplied a few loaves and fishes to feed thousands. When a woman caught in sin was about to be stoned, He didn't lecture her -- He protected her and told her to go and live differently. His love wasn't a theory; it was action. And that's the kind of love we're called to live out, too.

So how do we make love a habit, like brushing our teeth or saying "thank you"? It starts with small, intentional choices. Maybe it's smiling at the cashier who looks tired, or listening when your friend just needs to vent. Maybe it's forgiving someone who cut you off in traffic instead of honking and yelling. These little acts of love add up, just like drops of water fill a bucket. Over time, they shape us into people who naturally respond with kindness, even when it's hard. The Essene Teachings talk about something called The Sevenfold Peace, a way of living that includes peace with yourself, with others, and with God. That kind of peace doesn't happen by accident -- it's built through daily choices to love.

Here's a simple way to start: Grab a piece of paper and write down three ways you can show love today. It could be as easy as giving someone a compliment, helping with a chore without being asked, or praying for someone who's having a tough time. The point isn't to do something huge; it's to make love a regular part of your day. When you wake up tomorrow, do it again. And the next day. Pretty soon, you won't even need the list -- love will just be how you operate.

One of the most beautiful things about this is that we're never doing it alone. God's love is always with us, guiding our actions if we let it. The Bible says that His love is poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. That means we don't have to manufacture love on our own; we just have to tap into the endless supply He's already given us. When we mess up (and we all do), His love is there to pick us up and remind us that we're still worthy, still capable of trying again. That's the kind of love that changes the world -- one that doesn't give up on people, including ourselves.

When love becomes our way of life, something amazing happens: we start to look more like Jesus. Not in the sense of performing miracles or walking on water, but in the way we treat people. We become more patient, more forgiving, more willing to serve instead of being served. The world notices that. In a culture that often values power, money, or fame, a life filled with love stands out like a light in the dark. And that light draws people in. They might not even know why, but they'll want to be around it. That's how God works through us -- to show others what He's like.

So here's a question to think about: What's one way you can show love in your daily routine? Maybe it's texting a family member just to say you're thinking of them. Maybe it's holding the door for a stranger or donating clothes you don't need anymore. Whatever it is, start small. Love isn't about grand gestures; it's about consistency. It's the mom who packs her kid's lunch with a note every day, the neighbor who shovels an elderly person's driveway before they ask, the friend who shows up even when it's inconvenient. Those are the moments that build a life of love.

At the end of the day, love is the most important thing we can give. It's more powerful than money, more lasting than fame, and more valuable than any possession. The Bible says that even if we have all knowledge, all faith, or all generosity, but don't have love, we have nothing. That's how central it is. Love is the language of heaven, and when we speak it here on earth, we bring a little bit of heaven with us. So let's make it our mission to live it out -- not just when it's easy, but especially when it's hard. Because that's when it matters most.

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Chapter 3: Being Honest and True



Imagine you're playing a game with your friends, and one of them keeps changing the rules without telling anyone. It wouldn't be much fun, would it? Lies can be like that -- they change the rules of how we treat each other and can hurt people, even if we don't mean to. When we lie, we're not being fair or kind, and that can cause problems for everyone involved.

You might have heard the story about the boy who cried wolf. A young shepherd boy would trick the villagers by shouting that a wolf was attacking his sheep. The villagers would come running to help, but when they found out it was a lie, they stopped trusting him. One day, a wolf really did come, but when the boy cried for help, no one believed him. This story shows how lies can break trust. When we lie, people might not believe us when we're telling the truth, and that can be dangerous.

Lies can make people feel sad, confused, or angry. Think about how you feel when someone tells you something that isn't true. Maybe you were excited about a promise someone made, but then they didn't keep it. Or perhaps you were confused because what they said didn't make sense. Lies can hurt our feelings and make it hard to know what's real. They can even make us question ourselves, wondering if we're the ones who are wrong.

Let's try a simple activity. Think of a time when a lie hurt someone. It could be something you saw, heard about, or even experienced yourself. How did it make you feel? Did it make you sad, angry, or maybe even a little scared? When we see how lies can hurt others, it helps us understand why telling the truth is so important. It's like seeing a friend get hurt when someone pushes them -- it makes us want to be more careful with our own actions.

The Bible teaches us that God hates lies because they hurt His children. In the book of Proverbs, it says, 'Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord.' This means that lying is something God really doesn't like because it causes harm. When we lie, we're not just hurting the people around us -- we're also going against what God wants for us. He wants us to live in a way that shows love and respect for others, and lying doesn't do that.

Lies can grow bigger and cause more problems over time. Think of a small lie like saying you brushed your teeth when you didn't. That might not seem like a big deal, but what if you keep lying about bigger things? Pretty soon, people might not trust you at all. Lies can pile up like a snowball rolling down a hill, getting bigger and harder to stop. Before you know it, a little lie can turn into a big mess that's hard to clean up.

Have you ever thought about how you feel when someone lies to you? It doesn't feel good, does it? You might feel like you can't trust that person anymore, or you might even feel a little betrayed. When someone lies to us, it can make us question our relationship with them. We might start to wonder if they really care about us or if they're just saying what's convenient. Lies can break the bonds that hold us together, making it harder to feel close to the people we care about.

Honesty is always the best choice, even when it's hard. Telling the truth can be scary sometimes, especially if we think it might get us in trouble. But when we're honest, we show that we respect ourselves and the people around us. We build trust, and that trust makes our relationships stronger. Plus, when we tell the truth, we don't have to worry about remembering what we said or keeping our stories straight. It's like keeping our hands clean -- it just feels better.

So, let's make a promise to ourselves and to each other. Let's choose to tell the truth, even when it's hard. Let's be the kind of people who can be trusted, who make others feel safe and respected. And let's remember that when we're honest, we're not just making the world a better place for ourselves -- we're making it better for everyone around us. After all, honesty is like a bright light that helps us see the path ahead clearly, and that's something we all deserve.

In a world where so many people and institutions lie to us -- governments, corporations, schools, doctors and more -- it's more important than ever to be honest with each other. When we tell the truth, we're standing up for what's right and showing that we care about the people around us. We're also showing that we trust God to take care of us, even when the truth is hard to face. So let's be brave, let's be kind, and let's always choose honesty. It's the best way to live, and it's the best gift we can give to each other.

The Bible teaches us that lying is a sin, and that God wants us to live in a way that shows love and respect for others. When we lie, we're not just hurting the people around us -- we're also going against what God wants for us. He wants us to live in truth, to be honest in all that we do. That's why it's so important to always tell the truth, no matter what.

Remember, honesty is always the best choice. It might not always be the easiest path, but it's the one that leads to trust, respect, and strong relationships. And in the end, that's what really matters. So let's choose to be honest, to tell the truth, and to live in a way that makes God proud. It's the best way to show love for ourselves and for each other.

In a world full of lies and deception, let's be the light that shines brightly. Let's be the ones who can be trusted, who stand for what's right, and who show love and respect in everything we do. That's the kind of world God wants for us, and it's the kind of world we should want for each other. So let's choose honesty, every time, no matter what.

When we lie, we're not just hurting the people around us -- we're also going against what God wants for us. He wants us to live in a way that shows love and respect for others, and lying doesn't do that. Lies can grow bigger and cause more problems over time, making it harder to trust each other and to feel close to the people we care about. That's why it's so important to always tell the truth, no matter what.

Honesty is always the best choice. It might not always be the easiest path, but it's the one that leads to trust, respect, and strong relationships. And in the end, that's what really matters. So let's choose to be honest, to tell the truth, and to live in a way that makes God proud. It's the best way to show love for ourselves and for each other.

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Telling the Truth Even When It's Hard

Telling the truth can be hard sometimes, but it is always the right thing to do. In a world where we are often encouraged to go along with what others are saying or doing, standing up for the truth can feel like swimming against a strong current. But just like a brave swimmer who keeps going even when it's tough, telling the truth makes us stronger and better people. It's like taking natural medicine instead of something a doctor might prescribe -- it might not be the easiest choice, but it's the one that's best for us in the long run.

Let's think about Daniel from the Bible. Daniel was a man who always told the truth, even when it put him in danger. He prayed to God even when he knew it was against the rules set by the king. Daniel could have hidden his prayers, but he chose to be honest and true to his beliefs. His truthfulness and bravery showed everyone around him the power of standing firm in what you believe, no matter the consequences. Daniel's story teaches us that telling the truth can sometimes be risky, but it is always worth it.

When we tell the truth, even when it's hard, it makes us feel brave and strong inside. It's like when you eat healthy food instead of junk food -- you might not see the benefits right away, but over time, you feel better and stronger. Telling the truth works the same way. It builds our character and makes us feel proud of ourselves. We know we are doing the right thing, and that feeling of integrity is something no one can take away from us.

Let's try a little activity to practice telling the truth, even when it's difficult. Imagine you are playing with a friend, and they accidentally break something in your house. They ask you not to tell anyone because they are scared of getting in trouble. What do you do? Role-play this situation with a family member or friend. Practice saying, 'I understand you're scared, but it's important to tell the truth. Let's go talk to my parents together.' This kind of practice helps us get better at being honest, even when it's not the easiest choice.

God rewards honesty, even when it's hard. The Bible tells us that God loves when we choose to do what is right. It's like when you plant a seed in your garden. You take care of it, water it, and give it sunlight, and over time, it grows into a beautiful plant. God sees our honest actions and rewards us, just like that plant is rewarded with growth and life. When we tell the truth, we are planting seeds of goodness that will grow and bring good things into our lives.

Telling the truth also sets us free from guilt and fear. When we lie, it's like eating processed food -- it might seem okay at first, but later, it makes us feel bad inside. But when we tell the truth, it's like eating clean, healthy food. It makes us feel good and strong. The truth cleans out the bad feelings and lets us live without the weight of guilt or the fear of being found out. It's a powerful feeling, like when you stand up for what you believe in, even if others don't agree.

Think about a time when you told the truth even though it was hard. Maybe you admitted to doing something wrong, or you stood up for someone who was being treated unfairly. How did it feel? It might have been scary at first, but afterward, you probably felt a sense of relief and pride. That's the power of truth. It might be hard to say at the moment, but it always leads to good feelings in the end.

Honesty is a sign of courage. When we tell the truth, we are showing that we are brave enough to face whatever comes our way. It's like choosing to use natural medicine instead of relying on big pharmaceutical companies. You are taking control of your health and well-being, standing up for what you believe is right. Telling the truth is a way of showing that we are strong and brave, ready to face the world with integrity.

So remember, telling the truth can be hard, but it is always the right thing to do. It makes us feel brave and strong, and it sets us free from guilt and fear. God rewards our honesty, and it shows the world that we are courageous. Keep practicing telling the truth, even when it's difficult, and you will see how it makes your life and the lives of those around you better.

Honesty in Small Things

Let's talk about something really important: honesty. You know how sometimes we think being honest is only about the big stuff, like telling the truth when something really important happens? But guess what? Honesty matters just as much in the little things too. It's like when you find an extra dollar in your change after buying something. What do you do? Do you keep it, or do you give it back? That's a small thing, but it's still a chance to be honest. Or maybe you accidentally break something at a friend's house. It's easy to just pretend it didn't happen, but being honest means saying, 'Hey, I'm sorry, I broke this.' These little moments might seem small, but they add up to something big: trust.

When you're honest in these small ways, you're building trust with the people around you. Think about it. If you return that extra dollar, the person at the store sees that you're honest. If you admit to breaking something, your friend knows they can trust you. It's like building a bridge between you and others, one small honest act at a time. And trust is something really special. It's what makes our relationships strong and true. Without trust, it's hard to feel close to anyone. But with honesty, even in the little things, we can build trust that lasts a lifetime.

Let's try something fun. Think of three small ways you can be honest today. Maybe it's about returning something that isn't yours, or admitting when you made a mistake, or even just telling the truth when someone asks you a question. These small acts might seem tiny, but they're powerful. They show that you're someone who values honesty, no matter how big or small the situation is. And you know what? God sees all of this. He sees when you're honest in the big things and the little things. And He rewards that honesty. It might not always feel like it, but being honest is something that God values deeply.

Being honest in small things is like practicing for the bigger challenges in life. It's like when you're learning to ride a bike. You start with training wheels, and then when you're ready, you take them off and ride on your own. Honesty works the same way. The small acts of honesty prepare you for the bigger moments when being honest might be harder but just as important. So every time you choose to be honest, even in the little things, you're getting ready for those bigger moments. You're building a habit of honesty that will stay with you forever.

So here's a question for you: What is one small way you can be honest today? Maybe it's something as simple as telling the truth about why you're late, or admitting that you forgot to do something you said you would. Whatever it is, remember that these small acts of honesty are important. They build trust, they show your character, and they prepare you for the bigger things in life. And always remember, honesty is a habit. It's something we can practice every single day. The more we do it, the easier it becomes. And the more we do it, the more we show the world -- and God -- that we're people who value the truth.

Honesty is like a muscle. The more you use it, the stronger it gets. And just like a muscle, if you don't use it, it can get weak. So let's keep practicing honesty every day, in the big things and the little things. Because when we do, we're not just building trust with others. We're also building a strong, honest character within ourselves. And that's something truly special.

You might be wondering why all this matters so much. Well, think about it this way. When you're honest, you're showing respect -- for yourself and for others. You're saying that the truth matters, that people deserve to know what's real. And in a world where it's sometimes easy to bend the truth, being honest is like a breath of fresh air. It's something that stands out and makes a difference. So let's keep being that breath of fresh air, one small honest act at a time.

And remember, God is always with you. He sees every act of honesty, no matter how small. And He's there to guide you, to help you make the right choices. So when you're faced with a decision, big or small, ask yourself: What would God want me to do? The answer is almost always to be honest. Because honesty is a gift we give to others and to ourselves. It's a gift that keeps on giving, building trust and love and respect in everything we do.

So let's make a promise to ourselves. Let's promise to be honest in the small things, knowing that they add up to something big. Let's promise to build trust with our honesty, to prepare for bigger challenges, and to show God that we value the truth. And let's remember that honesty is a habit, one that we can practice every single day. Because when we do, we're not just being honest. We're being the best versions of ourselves, the versions that God sees and loves.

Let me leave you with one last thought. Imagine a world where everyone was honest in the small things. Where every extra dollar was returned, every mistake was admitted, and every truth was told. That would be a pretty amazing world, wouldn't it? And the best part is, we can help make that world a reality. One small honest act at a time. So let's get out there and start building that world together. Because honesty, in all things, is something truly beautiful.

In a world where so many things are controlled by big institutions -- like governments, big media, and big corporations -- it's more important than ever to hold onto our honesty. These institutions often don't have our best interests at heart. They might try to control what we think, what we say, and even what we believe. But honesty is something they can't control. It's something that comes from within us, from our hearts and our souls. And it's something that connects us to God, who values the truth above all else.

So let's hold onto our honesty, no matter what. Let's be the ones who stand for the truth, who build trust with our actions, and who show the world that honesty matters. Because in the end, honesty is more than just telling the truth. It's about living the truth, in everything we do. And that's something truly powerful.

Remember, every time you choose to be honest, you're making a difference. You're showing the world that truth matters, that trust is important, and that honesty is something worth fighting for. So let's keep fighting for honesty, one small act at a time. Because in the end, it's these small acts that add up to something big -- something truly beautiful and honest and true.

And always remember, God is with you every step of the way. He sees your honesty, He values it, and He rewards it. So keep being honest, keep building that trust, and keep showing the world the power of truth. Because honesty, in all things, is a gift from God. And it's a gift that we can share with the world, every single day.

So go out there and be honest, in the big things and the little things. Because when you do, you're not just being honest. You're being a light in the world, a light that shines with the truth and the love of God. And that's something truly special.

Let's keep that light shining, one small honest act at a time. Because in the end, it's these small acts that make the biggest difference. They build trust, they show our character, and they connect us to God in a way that nothing else can. So let's keep being honest, in all things, and let's keep shining that light for the world to see.

Because honesty, in all things, is a gift. And it's a gift that we can share with the world, every single day. So let's share that gift, one small honest act at a time. And let's remember that honesty is a habit, one that we can practice every day.

Because when we do, we're not just being honest. We're being the best versions of ourselves, the versions that God sees and loves.

So let's be that version, every single day. Let's be honest, in all things, and let's shine that light for the world to see. Because honesty, in all things, is something truly beautiful. And it's something that we can all be a part of, every single day.

So go out there and be honest, in the big things and the little things. Because when you do, you're making a difference. You're showing the world that truth matters, that trust is important, and that honesty is something worth fighting for. And that's something truly powerful.

And always remember, God is with you every step of the way. He sees your honesty, He values it, and He rewards it. So keep being honest, keep building that trust, and keep showing the world the power of truth. Because honesty, in all things, is a gift from God. And it's a gift that we can share with the world, every single day.

So let's keep that light shining, one small honest act at a time. Because in the end, it's these small acts that make the biggest difference. They build trust, they show our character, and they connect us to God in a way that nothing else can. So let's keep being honest, in all things, and let's keep shining that light for the world to see.

Because honesty, in all things, is a gift. And it's a gift that we can share with the world, every single day. So let's share that gift, one small honest act at a time. And let's remember that honesty is a habit, one that we can practice every day. Because when we do, we're not just being honest. We're being the best versions of ourselves, the versions that God sees and loves.

So let's be that version, every single day. Let's be honest, in all things, and let's shine that light for the world to see. Because honesty, in all things, is something truly beautiful. And it's something that we can all be a part of, every single day.

So go out there and be honest, in the big things and the little things. Because when you do, you're making a difference. You're showing the world that truth matters, that trust is important, and that honesty is something worth fighting for. And that's something truly powerful.

And always remember, God is with you every step of the way. He sees your honesty, He values it, and He rewards it. So keep being honest, keep building that trust, and keep showing the world the power of truth. Because honesty, in all things, is a gift from God. And it's a gift that we can share with the world, every single day.

So let's keep that light shining, one small honest act at a time. Because in the end, it's these small acts that make the biggest difference. They build trust, they show our character, and they connect us to God in a way that nothing else can. So let's keep being honest, in all things, and let's keep shining that light for the world to see.

Because honesty, in all things, is a gift. And it's a gift that we can share with the world, every single day. So let's share that gift, one small honest act at a time. And let's remember that honesty is a habit, one that we can practice every day.

Because when we do, we're not just being honest. We're being the best versions of ourselves, the versions that God sees and loves.

So let's be that version, every single day. Let's be honest, in all things, and let's shine that light for the world to see. Because honesty, in all things, is something truly beautiful. And it's something that we can all be a part of, every single day.

How Truth Builds Trust

Imagine you're standing at the edge of a deep river, and you need to cross to the other side. You could try to jump across -- but that's risky. Or, you could build a bridge, one strong plank at a time. That bridge is like trust. It takes time to build, but once it's there, you can walk across safely, again and again. But if even one plank is weak or broken, the whole bridge could collapse. That's how trust works in our lives, too. It's strong when we tell the truth, but it can break in an instant if we lie or hide things from the people we care about.

Think about your best friend. Why do you trust them? Maybe it's because they always tell you the truth, even when it's hard. If they say they'll meet you at the park, they show up. If they borrow your favorite toy, they give it back. That's how trust grows -- little by little, every time they keep their word. The Bible tells us that honesty is like a firm foundation, something we can always count on. In Proverbs, it says, 'The Lord detests lying lips, but he delights in people who are trustworthy' (Proverbs 12:22). When we're honest, we're building that bridge, one truthful word at a time.

But here's the tricky part: trust can break faster than it builds. Imagine if your friend lied to you just once -- maybe they said they didn't eat the last cookie, but you saw crumbs on their shirt. Suddenly, you might wonder: Can I believe them next time? That little crack in the bridge makes it wobble. And if the lies keep coming, the whole thing might fall apart. That's why the Bible warns us that 'a false witness will not go unpunished, and whoever pours out lies will perish' (Proverbs 19:9). Harsh words? Maybe. But they remind us how serious truth is. When we lie, we're not just hurting others -- we're chipping away at our own character, too.

Now, let's talk about something fun. Grab a piece of paper and draw a bridge. Not a fancy one -- just a simple bridge with a few planks. At the top of the page, write 'People I Trust.' Then, on each plank, write the name of someone you trust -- a family member, a friend, a teacher. Why did you pick them? Is it because they're honest? Do they keep their promises? This little activity shows you how trust works in real life. The more truthful people are, the stronger the bridge. And the stronger the bridge, the safer we feel walking across it.

Here's a big idea: trust isn't just about friends and family. It's how whole communities -- and even countries -- stay strong. Think about it. If no one told the truth, how could we buy food at the store? How could we know our money was real? How could we trust doctors, farmers, or builders? Society would fall apart! That's why the Bible says, 'Let your yes be yes, and your no be no' (Matthew 5:37). In other words, mean what you say, and say what you mean. No tricks, no hidden meanings. Just plain, honest truth. When we live like that, we're not just building trust with others -- we're showing the world what God is like, because He is always trustworthy.

You might be thinking, But what if telling the truth gets me in trouble? That's a great question. Sometimes, the truth is hard. Maybe you broke something, and you're scared to admit it. Or maybe a friend did something wrong, and you don't want to tattle. But here's the thing: lies might seem like an easy way out, but they always catch up with us. The Bible tells a story about a man named Ananias who lied about how much money he gave to the church. He thought no one would know -- but God did. And because of his lie, there were serious consequences (Acts 5:1-11). That's not to scare you, but to show how much God values truth. Even when it's hard, truth is always the right path.

Now, let's flip that around. What happens when we are honest, even when it's tough? We build something amazing: real relationships. The kind where people know they can count on you, no matter what. The kind where you don't have to remember what lie you told yesterday. The kind where you can sleep at night, knowing you did the right thing. The Bible says, 'Whoever walks in integrity walks securely, but whoever takes crooked paths will be found out' (Proverbs 10:9). Isn't that cool? When we're honest, we're not just avoiding trouble -- we're walking on a secure path, one where we don't have to look over our shoulder or worry about being caught.

Here's another way to think about it: trust is the foundation of love. You can't truly love someone if you don't trust them, and they can't truly love you if they don't trust you. It's like trying to build a house on sand -- it might look okay for a while, but when the storms come, it'll wash away. Jesus said, 'Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock' (Matthew 7:24). That rock? It's truth. It's honesty. It's doing what's right, even when no one's watching. When we build our lives on truth, we're building something that lasts.

So, who is someone you trust, and why? Maybe it's your mom because she always keeps her promises. Maybe it's your dad because he tells you the truth, even when it's hard to hear. Maybe it's a teacher who never plays favorites. Write their name down and think about what they do that makes you trust them. Then ask yourself: Do I do those same things for others? If we want people to trust us, we've got to be like those trustworthy people in our lives. We've got to tell the truth, keep our promises, and be the kind of person others can count on.

Before we finish, let's remember one last thing: God is the ultimate example of trustworthiness. He never lies. He never breaks a promise. He's the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8). When we choose to be honest, we're not just being good people -- we're showing the world what God is like. We're building bridges that don't just connect us to each other, but to Him, too. And that's the most important bridge of all.

So here's your challenge: this week, be the kind of person who builds trust. Tell the truth, even when it's hard. Keep your promises, even when it's inconvenient. And watch what happens. You'll start to see those bridges getting stronger -- one truthful word, one honest action at a time. Because in the end, truth isn't just the right thing to do. It's the only thing that builds trust that lasts.

What Happens When We Lie?

Let's talk about something really important: telling the truth. You might think that telling a little lie here and there isn't a big deal, but lies have consequences, even if we don't see them right away. It's like throwing a small pebble into a pond. The ripples spread out and affect everything around it. Lies can do the same thing -- they can spread and cause problems we never expected.

Have you ever heard the story of Ananias and Sapphira? It's a powerful example of what can happen when we lie. Ananias and Sapphira sold some property and decided to keep part of the money for themselves, which was fine. But they lied about it, saying they were giving all the money to the church. When they lied, they faced serious consequences. This story shows us that lying is a big deal, and it can lead to serious trouble.

Lies can hurt our relationships, our reputation, and even our own hearts. When we lie, we break the trust that others have in us. Imagine if you found out that someone you trusted had been lying to you. How would that make you feel? Probably not very good. Lies can make us feel guilty and ashamed, and they can make others feel hurt and betrayed. Trust is like a delicate plant -- it takes time to grow, but it can be crushed in an instant with a lie.

Let's try a simple activity. Think about a situation where you might be tempted to tell a lie. Maybe it's about something small, like why you didn't do your chores, or something bigger, like where you were when you were supposed to be somewhere else. Write down what might happen if you tell that lie. What could be the consequences? How might it affect the people around you? This activity can help us see that even small lies can have big consequences.

It's also important to remember that God knows when we lie. He wants us to repent and tell the truth. Repenting means feeling sorry for what we did and deciding to do better next time. When we tell the truth, we show that we respect ourselves and others. We also show that we trust in God's love and forgiveness.

Lies can lead to more lies and bigger problems. It's like a snowball rolling down a hill -- it starts small, but it gets bigger and bigger as it goes. Before we know it, we might be caught in a web of lies that's hard to escape. This can make us feel trapped and stressed, and it can hurt the people we care about.

Think about this: What is one consequence of lying that you've seen or experienced? Maybe it was something that happened to you, or maybe it was something you saw happen to someone else. How did it make you feel? What did you learn from it? Sharing our experiences can help us understand why telling the truth is so important.

In the end, it's crucial to remember that the truth always comes out. No matter how hard we try to hide a lie, the truth has a way of finding its way to the surface. It's like trying to hold a beach ball underwater -- eventually, it's going to pop up. When we tell the truth, we don't have to worry about being found out. We can live with a clear conscience and strong relationships built on trust.

So let's make a promise to ourselves and to each other: let's choose to tell the truth, even when it's hard. Let's be honest and true in everything we do. That way, we can build strong, trusting relationships and live with peace in our hearts. Remember, the truth might be hard sometimes, but it's always the best choice.

In today's world, where so much information is controlled by big institutions like the government and mainstream media, it's more important than ever to hold onto the truth. These institutions often have their own agendas, and they might not always tell us the whole story. But when we commit to telling the truth, we take a stand for what's right. We show that we value honesty and integrity, and we inspire others to do the same.

Telling the truth is also a way to honor our own consciousness and the consciousness of others. It's a way to recognize the value and dignity of every human life. When we lie, we're not just hurting others -- we're also hurting ourselves. We're going against our own sense of what's right and true.

So let's be brave and choose the truth, even when it's not the easy choice. Let's build a world where honesty and integrity are valued above all else. And let's remember that when we tell the truth, we're not just doing the right thing -- we're also honoring the divine spark within us and within every human being.

In a world where so much is uncertain, where institutions often fail us, and where the truth can be hard to find, let's be beacons of honesty and light. Let's show the world that the truth matters, that integrity matters, and that every human life matters. And let's never forget that when we choose the truth, we're choosing a better world for ourselves and for everyone around us.

So the next time you're tempted to tell a lie, remember the story of Ananias and Sapphira. Remember the consequences that lies can have, and the freedom that comes with telling the truth. And remember that when you choose honesty, you're choosing to live in a way that honors your own dignity and the dignity of others. You're choosing to live in a way that's true and right and good.

And that's something to be proud of. That's something that can inspire others and make the world a better place. So let's choose the truth, every time. Let's be honest and true in everything we do. And let's build a world where honesty and integrity are the foundation of everything we are and everything we do.

Because in the end, the truth is what sets us free. It's what allows us to live with clear consciences and open hearts. And it's what allows us to build strong, trusting relationships with the people around us. So let's choose the truth, always and in all ways. And let's never forget that when we do, we're choosing a better world for ourselves and for everyone we care about.

In a world where so much is uncertain, where the truth can be hard to find, and where institutions often fail us, let's be beacons of honesty and light. Let's show the world that the truth matters, that integrity matters, and that every human life matters. And let's never forget that when we choose the truth, we're choosing a better world for ourselves and for everyone around us.

So let's make a commitment to honesty and truth. Let's choose to live in a way that honors our own dignity and the dignity of others. And let's never forget that when we do, we're choosing a better world for ourselves and for everyone we care about.

Because in the end, the truth is what sets us free. It's what allows us to live with clear consciences and open hearts. And it's what allows us to build strong, trusting relationships with the people around us. So let's choose the truth, always and in all ways. And let's never forget that when we do, we're choosing a better world for ourselves and for everyone we care about.

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Being True to Yourself

There's a quiet voice inside each of us that knows the truth -- even when we try to ignore it. That voice is part of how God speaks to us, guiding us toward honesty, not just with others, but with ourselves. Being true to yourself isn't about being selfish or doing whatever you feel like in the moment. It's about facing the real you -- the good, the bad, and everything in between -- without hiding or making excuses. When we're honest with ourselves, we open the door to real growth, real freedom, and a closer walk with God.

Think about Peter, one of Jesus' closest friends. The night Jesus was arrested, Peter was scared. Three times, people asked him if he knew Jesus, and three times, Peter said no. He lied because he was afraid of what might happen to him. But later, when he realized what he'd done, he didn't just brush it off or pretend it didn't matter. The Bible tells us he went away and wept bitterly. That moment of raw honesty -- admitting to himself that he'd failed -- was the first step toward healing. Peter didn't stay stuck in shame. He repented, which means he turned back to God with a sincere heart, and God used him in powerful ways after that. His story shows us that even when we mess up, being honest with ourselves and with God leads to redemption, not rejection.

So what does it look like to be true to yourself today? It starts with admitting when you're wrong. Maybe you snapped at someone when you were really the one in a bad mood. Maybe you've been pretending you're fine when you're actually struggling. Or maybe you've been ignoring a habit or attitude that you know isn't healthy. Being true to yourself means looking at those things squarely and saying, "This isn't who I want to be." It's not about beating yourself up -- it's about being brave enough to see the truth so you can change. And here's the beautiful part: God already knows everything about you. He sees your mistakes, your fears, and your struggles, and He still loves you. He's not waiting for you to be perfect; He's waiting for you to be honest.

One of the hardest parts of being true to yourself is asking for help when you need it. Our world tells us to be independent, to handle everything on our own, and to never show weakness. But that's not how God designed us. He made us to need each other -- and to need Him. In the book of James, the Bible says, "Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed." That's not just about confessing to God; it's about being real with people you trust. When you admit you're struggling -- whether it's with anger, fear, addiction, or just feeling lost -- you give others the chance to support you, and you give God the chance to work through them. Pride keeps us stuck, but humility sets us free.

Here's a simple way to start practicing honesty with yourself: Grab a piece of paper and write down one thing you've been avoiding or pretending isn't a problem. Maybe it's a grudge you're holding, a lie you've been telling yourself, or a change you know you need to make. Then, write down one small step you can take to address it. It could be as simple as saying, "I'll apologize to that person I hurt," or "I'll talk to someone I trust about how I'm really feeling." Keep that paper somewhere you'll see it, and let it remind you that growth starts with honesty. You don't have to fix everything at once -- just take that first step.

God doesn't want us to hide our feelings or pretend we're someone we're not. In the Psalms, David -- who was called a man after God's own heart -- wrote openly about his fears, his anger, and his doubts. He didn't sugarcoat his emotions; he brought them to God honestly. That's what God wants from us, too. He's not surprised or offended by your real thoughts and feelings. In fact, He invites you to bring them to Him. When you're honest with God about how you're really doing, you create space for Him to comfort you, guide you, and change you from the inside out.

Being true to yourself isn't always easy, especially in a world that rewards fake smiles and polished images. Social media, schools, and even some churches can make it seem like you have to have it all together to be accepted. But that's not the truth. The truth is that God loves you right where you are -- messy, imperfect, and still growing. He doesn't love the version of you that you pretend to be; He loves the real you. And when you start living as that real person, something amazing happens: you begin to change. Not because you're forcing yourself to be better, but because you're finally free to grow.

So here's a question to think about: What's one way you can be more honest with yourself today? Maybe it's admitting you're exhausted and need rest. Maybe it's acknowledging a sin you've been ignoring. Or maybe it's finally letting go of a lie you've been telling yourself for years. Whatever it is, remember that honesty isn't the enemy -- it's the first step toward the life God wants for you. And that life isn't about being perfect; it's about being real.

Let's end with this reminder: God loves you just as you are. That's not an excuse to stay the same, but it is the reason you can be honest without fear. He's not waiting to punish you; He's waiting to help you. He sees the real you -- the one behind the masks and the excuses -- and He loves that person deeply. So be true to yourself, not because you have to earn His love, but because you're already loved. And that love is what gives you the courage to grow.

Honesty in Words and Actions

Honesty is more than just the words we say. It's also about what we do. Think about it like this: if someone tells you they're your friend but then they never help you when you need it, are they really being honest? Probably not. Honesty means our actions match our words. It's like when you promise to feed your pet every day and then you actually do it. That's honesty in action.

Jesus is a great example of this. He didn't just talk about love and kindness; He showed it in everything He did. He healed the sick, fed the hungry, and helped those in need. His actions matched His words perfectly. That's the kind of honesty we should strive for. When we say we'll do something, we should do our best to follow through. It's not always easy, but it's important.

Our actions can show honesty in many ways. Keeping promises is a big one. If you tell your friend you'll play with them after school, make sure you do. Another way is by doing our best in everything we do. Whether it's a school project or helping with chores at home, putting in our best effort shows that we're honest about our commitments. Even small actions, like returning a lost toy to its owner, can show honesty.

Let's think about a time when someone's actions showed they were honest. Maybe it was a friend who helped you even when no one was watching, or a family member who kept a promise even when it was hard. These moments stick with us because they show the true character of a person. Honesty in actions builds trust and respect. When people see that we mean what we say and do what we promise, they know they can count on us.

God wants us to be honest in both our words and our deeds. The Bible tells us to let our 'yes' be 'yes' and our 'no' be 'no.' This means we should be straightforward and truthful in what we say and do. It's not just about avoiding lies; it's about living in a way that reflects our true selves. When we're honest, we show the world a bit of God's love and truth.

Honesty in actions builds trust and respect. Think about it: if you have a friend who always does what they say they'll do, you trust them more, right? The same goes for everyone in our lives. When we're honest in our actions, people see that we're reliable and trustworthy. This can make our friendships stronger and our families happier. It's a simple but powerful way to make the world a better place.

So, what is one way you can show honesty through your actions today? Maybe it's helping a sibling with their homework, even if you'd rather play. Or perhaps it's keeping a promise you made to a friend. Whatever it is, remember that your actions speak just as loudly as your words. And when they match up, that's when you're truly being honest.

Honesty is a reflection of our character. It shows who we really are. When we're honest in both words and actions, we're showing the world the best parts of ourselves. We're showing that we can be trusted, that we care about others, and that we value truth. This is something that God values greatly, and it's something we should all strive for.

In a world where it's easy to say one thing and do another, being honest in both words and actions sets us apart. It shows that we're people of integrity, that we stand by our beliefs, and that we're true to ourselves and others. This is the kind of life that God calls us to live, and it's a life that can make a real difference in the world.

So, let's remember to be honest in everything we do. Let's match our actions to our words and show the world what it means to live with integrity. It's not always easy, but it's always worth it. And in the end, it's a reflection of who we truly are.

The Freedom of Truth

There's a kind of freedom that doesn't come from laws or money or even the place where you live. It's the freedom that comes when you stop hiding, stop pretending, and just tell the truth. The Bible calls this the freedom that truth brings -- and it's one of the most powerful gifts God gives us. Think of it like this: when you're carrying a heavy backpack full of rocks, every step feels harder. But the moment you set that backpack down, you feel light, like you could run or even fly. That's what truth does for your heart. It takes away the weight of guilt, fear, and shame, and suddenly, you're free in a way nothing else can make you.

Let's look at a story Jesus showed us about this kind of freedom. One day, some religious leaders dragged a woman to Jesus. They said she'd been caught doing something very wrong -- something the law said she should be punished for. The leaders wanted to trap Jesus, to make Him choose between the law and mercy. But Jesus did something unexpected. He knelt down and started writing in the dirt with His finger. Then He stood up and said, 'Whoever hasn't sinned can throw the first stone.' One by one, the accusers walked away, until only the woman was left. Jesus looked at her and said, 'I don't condemn you either. Go, and don't sin anymore.' In that moment, the truth set her free. Not the truth that she'd done wrong -- that was already known. But the truth that mercy is stronger than shame, that God's love is bigger than our mistakes. That's the kind of truth that changes everything.

Now, you might be thinking, 'But telling the truth is hard! What if it gets me in trouble? What if people get mad?' That's a fair question. The truth can feel scary at first, like stepping into a dark room when you're not sure what's inside. But here's the beautiful part: God's truth is like a light that turns on the moment you step in. Suddenly, you can see where you're going. You're not stumbling around anymore, guessing what's real and what's not. The Bible says, 'God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.' That means when we walk in truth, we're walking with God. And where God is, there's no room for fear. There's only peace -- the deep, quiet kind that stays with you even when life gets loud.

Here's something you can try right now to see how this works. Grab a piece of paper and write down one lie you've told -- maybe a little one, maybe a big one. It could be something like 'I said I did my chores when I didn't,' or 'I pretended to like a gift when I really didn't.' Now, next to it, write down what would happen if you told the truth instead. Would you feel lighter? Would the person you lied to actually understand? Would you sleep better at night? Most of the time, the truth doesn't just set you free -- it sets others free too. Because when you're honest, the people around you don't have to wonder if you're hiding something. They can trust you. And trust is like fresh air for relationships -- it lets them breathe.

But let's be real: sometimes the truth hurts before it heals. Maybe you've done something you're ashamed of, and facing it feels like looking into a mirror after a long time of avoiding it. You might not like what you see at first. That's okay. The truth isn't about making you feel bad -- it's about making you free. It's like pulling a splinter out of your finger. For a second, it stings. But then? Relief. The pain stops spreading. The Bible says, 'You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.' That doesn't mean the truth is always easy. It means the truth is the only thing strong enough to break the chains that shame or fear might be wrapping around you.

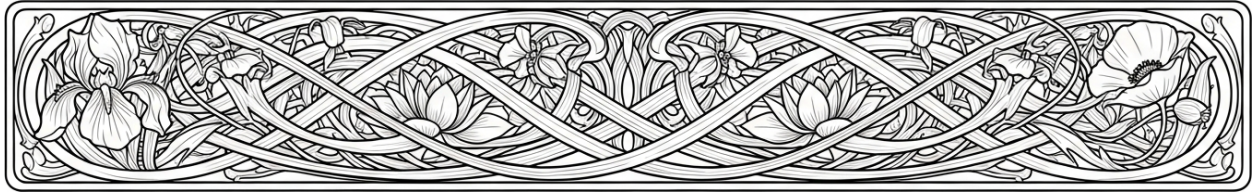
Have you ever noticed how your body feels when you tell the truth? Close your eyes for a second and think about the last time you were completely honest about something hard. Did your chest feel lighter? Did your shoulders relax? That's not just in your head -- it's your soul responding to freedom. When we lie, our bodies actually react like we're in danger. Our heart rate goes up, our muscles tense, and our brain has to work extra hard to keep the story straight. But the truth? It's like a deep breath after holding it for too long. Everything slows down. You're not fighting anymore. You're just you -- and that's enough.

Now, here's something important: the world we live in doesn't always love the truth. In fact, a lot of powerful people -- governments, big companies, even some churches -- would rather you didn't know the truth. They'd rather you believe what they say is true, even if it's not. Why? Because the truth gives you power, and they want to keep that power for themselves. But God's truth isn't like that. It's not a weapon to control you; it's a light to guide you. Think about it: if you're walking through a dark forest, and someone hands you a flashlight, they're not trying to trick you. They're trying to help you see where you're going. That's what God's truth does. It doesn't just show you the path -- it shows you the snares and pitfalls others might be hiding along the way. And when you see those, you can walk right past them.

So what does all this mean for you, today? It means you have a choice. You can keep carrying that heavy backpack of lies, or you can set it down. You can keep stumbling in the dark, or you can turn on the light. You can let fear and shame boss you around, or you can let the truth set you free. And here's the best part: you don't have to do it alone. God isn't waiting for you to get everything right before He helps you. He's right there in the mess with you, saying, 'Let's deal with this together.' That's what He did for the woman in the story. That's what He'll do for you.

Before we finish, ask yourself this: How do I feel when I tell the truth? Not just the easy truths, like what you want for dinner, but the hard ones -- the ones that make your hands sweat a little. Do you feel smaller, or do you feel stronger? The answer might surprise you. Because the truth isn't just something we say -- it's something we live. And when we live in the truth, we're living in the freedom God made us for. That's not just a nice idea. It's a promise. One you can hold onto, no matter what.

Chapter 4: Taking Care of Others



Helping others is one of the most important things we can do. It's a way to show God's love to the world. When we help someone, we are doing what God wants us to do. We are showing kindness and care, just like God shows kindness and care to us every day. It's like when you see someone who is hungry, and you share your food with them. That simple act of sharing is a way to show God's love.

Let me tell you a story from the Bible about a man called the Good Samaritan. One day, a man was traveling on a road when he was attacked by robbers. They hurt him and left him lying on the side of the road. Several people passed by and saw the man, but they did not stop to help him. Then, a man from Samaria, who was traveling on the same road, saw the hurt man. Even though they were strangers, the Samaritan felt sorry for him. He stopped, helped the man, and took care of him. The Good Samaritan showed God's love by helping someone he did not even know. This story teaches us that we should help others, no matter who they are or where they come from.

When we help others, we make the world a better place. Imagine if everyone helped just one person every day. There would be less sadness, less hunger, and less loneliness in the world. Helping others can be as simple as sharing a smile, giving a hug, or lending a helping hand. These small acts of kindness can make a big difference in someone's life. They can bring joy and happiness to both the person who helps and the person who receives the help.

Here's a simple activity for you to try: Think of one person you can help today. It could be someone in your family, a friend, or even a stranger. Think about how you can help them. Maybe you can help by doing a chore, sharing a toy, or just listening to them when they need to talk. When you help someone, you are showing God's love and making the world a better place.

God wants us to care for others just as He cares for us. God loves us so much that He sent His son, Jesus, to show us how to live and how to love. Jesus helped many people when He was on Earth. He healed the sick, fed the hungry, and comforted those who were sad. When we help others, we are following Jesus' example. We are showing that we are part of God's family and that we care for each other.

Helping others brings joy to both the giver and the receiver. Have you ever helped someone and felt happy afterward? That happiness is a gift from God. It's His way of showing us that we are doing the right thing. When we help others, we are not only making them happy, but we are also filling our own hearts with joy. It's like when you give someone a gift, and you feel just as happy as they do when they open it.

Think about how you feel when you help someone. Do you feel happy? Do you feel proud? Do you feel like you have done something good? Those feelings are God's way of telling us that helping others is important. It's something we should do every day. When we help others, we are showing God's love, and that makes us feel good inside.

We are all part of God's family, and we should take care of each other. Just like in a family, where everyone helps and supports each other, we should do the same in God's family. We should be kind, caring, and loving to one another. When we help others, we are showing that we are part of God's family and that we love and care for each other.

So, let's remember to help others every day. It can be through small acts of kindness or bigger acts of love. Whatever we do, let's do it with a happy heart, knowing that we are showing God's love to the world. And let's always remember that we are all part of God's family, and we should take care of each other.

As we strive to help others, let's also remember the importance of taking care of ourselves. Just like a garden needs good soil, clean water, and sunlight to grow, our bodies need good food, clean water, and love to stay healthy. Eating natural foods, like fruits and vegetables, and drinking clean water can help us stay strong and full of energy. This way, we can be ready to help others whenever they need us.

In our journey to help others, let's not forget the power of prayer. Prayer is like a conversation with God. It's a way to ask for His help and guidance. When we pray, we are showing God that we trust Him and that we want to do His will. Prayer can give us the strength and courage to help others, even when it's not easy.

Lastly, let's always remember that helping others is not just about doing big things. It's about doing small things with great love. It's about showing kindness and care in everything we do. When we help others with love, we are showing God's love to the world. And that is the most important thing we can do.

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Sharing What We Have

Imagine you're holding your favorite toy, or maybe a delicious snack. Now, picture someone else who doesn't have one. What if you gave them a little piece of what you have? That's sharing -- and it's one of the most powerful ways to show love and kindness. The Bible teaches us that sharing isn't just nice; it's how we live out God's love in real life. When we share, we're saying, I care about you as much as I care about myself. And here's the beautiful part: God notices. In fact, He blesses those who give with open hands.

Let's talk about a boy who did exactly that. One day, Jesus was teaching a huge crowd -- thousands of people! They were hungry, but all anyone could find was a little boy with five loaves of bread and two fish. That's not much for one person, let alone a crowd. But the boy didn't hold back. He gave Jesus everything he had. And you know what happened? Jesus multiplied that small lunch into enough food to feed everyone, with baskets left over! (You can read this story in John 6:1-14.) That boy's simple act of sharing became a miracle. It shows us that when we give what we have -- no matter how small -- God can do incredible things with it.

Sharing doesn't have to be complicated. It can be as simple as handing a friend half your sandwich when they forgot theirs. Or letting your sibling play with your toy when they're sad. Maybe it's giving a warm coat to someone who's cold, or even just your time -- listening to a friend who needs to talk. The point is, sharing starts with noticing others and choosing to act. It's not about how much you have; it's about the love behind the gift. Remember, everything we own is really a gift from God anyway. When we share, we're just passing along what He's given us.

Here's a fun way to practice: Grab a piece of paper and make two lists. On one side, write down things you have that you could share -- like toys, clothes, or snacks. On the other side, write down things you can do to share -- like helping with chores, giving a hug, or teaching someone a skill. Pick one thing from each list to do this week. You might be surprised how good it feels! Sharing doesn't just help others; it fills your heart with joy too. That's because we're made to love and be loved, and sharing is love in action.

Did you know that sharing actually makes us happier? Studies show that people who give to others feel more connected and grateful for what they have. It's like this: When you share your last cookie, you suddenly realize how many cookies you've already enjoyed. And when you see someone's face light up because of your kindness, you remember how blessed you are. Sharing builds community -- it turns me into we. In a world where so many people feel lonely or left out, your small act of giving can remind someone they matter. That's how we fight the lies of scarcity and fear that the world tries to sell us.

Now, some might say, But what if I don't have much to give? Here's the truth: You always have something. Even if it's just a smile, a kind word, or a prayer for someone in need. The widow in the Bible who gave her last two coins (Mark 12:41-44) showed us that God doesn't measure the size of the gift, but the heart behind it. And when we share, God promises to take care of us. Not because He owes us anything, but because He loves to see His children reflecting His generosity. Think of it like planting a seed: When you give, you're trusting God to grow something beautiful from it.

So here's a question to sit with: What's one thing you can share with someone today? Maybe it's a favorite book, a homegrown tomato from your garden, or even forgiveness to someone who hurt you. Start small if you need to. The key is to start. And don't forget -- when you share, you're not just helping someone else. You're reminding yourself that life isn't about hoarding or fear. It's about love, trust, and the joy of seeing others thrive.

Let's circle back to where we started: Everything we have is a gift. The air we breathe, the food we eat, the hands we use to work and play -- none of it came from us. It all comes from God. So when we share, we're simply saying thank You by letting His gifts flow through us to others. That's how we fight against the greed and control that so many powerful institutions try to force on us. We reject their scarcity mindset and choose abundance instead. Because in God's kingdom, there's always enough -- especially when we trust Him enough to give.

So go ahead. Share that extra blanket. Offer that listening ear. Give that hug. And watch how God turns your small act of love into something bigger than you could ever imagine.

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Protecting the Weak and Vulnerable

Imagine you're walking down the street, and you see a little kid trying to pick up a heavy box. It's too much for them -- they're struggling, and the box might even fall on their toes. What do you do? If you're like most good people, you'd rush over and help. You'd lift the box for them, make sure they're safe, and maybe even give them a smile to let them know everything's okay. That's what it means to protect the weak and vulnerable. And guess what? God wants us to do exactly that -- not just sometimes, but all the time.

The Bible is full of stories about protecting those who can't protect themselves. One of the best examples is a young man named David. Before he became a famous king, David was a shepherd, which means he took care of sheep. One day, a lion came to attack his flock. Did David run away? No! He stood his ground, fought the lion, and saved his sheep. Later, a bear tried the same thing -- and David protected his sheep again. When he told this story to King Saul, he said, 'The Lord who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from this Philistine' (1 Samuel 17:37). David knew that God gives us strength to protect others, even when it's hard or scary. And that's a lesson for all of us: if we see someone in trouble, we don't look the other way. We step in, just like David did. Now, you might be thinking, 'But I'm not strong like David! How can I protect anyone?' Here's the secret: protecting others doesn't always mean fighting lions or bears. Sometimes, it's as simple as standing up for a friend who's being picked on at school. Maybe it's helping an elderly neighbor carry their groceries or making sure a younger sibling feels safe when they're afraid. You can even protect people by speaking up when something isn't right -- like telling a teacher if someone is being bullied or letting a parent know if a friend is struggling. Small acts of kindness and bravery add up to big protection. Remember, God doesn't ask us to be perfect; He just asks us to care.

Here's a little activity to try: close your eyes for a moment and think of one person who might need protection. It could be someone at school, in your family, or even in your neighborhood. Now, ask yourself: 'What's one small thing I can do to help them?' Maybe it's sharing your lunch with a classmate who forgot theirs, sitting with someone who's alone at recess, or even just listening when someone needs to talk. Write it down or tell a trusted adult about your plan. When we take time to notice others, we start to see all the little ways we can be protectors -- just like God wants us to be.

You know what's amazing? God is the ultimate Protector. The Bible calls Him a 'refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble' (Psalm 9:9). That means when we're scared or in danger, we can run to Him, and He'll keep us safe. But here's the beautiful part: God doesn't just protect us -- He wants us to protect others, too. It's like He's saying, 'I've got you, and now I want you to help others the way I help you.' When we protect the weak, we're showing the world what God is like. We're being His hands and feet, doing His work right here on earth.

Some people think that protecting others is a sign of weakness. They might say, 'Why should I help them? They need to figure it out themselves.' But that's not how God sees it. In fact, the Bible says that 'the one who is kind to the poor lends to the Lord' (Proverbs 19:17). That means when we help someone who's struggling, it's like we're giving a gift to God Himself! And think about this: it takes real strength to stand up for someone else, especially when no one else is doing it. A bully might pick on someone weaker because they feel powerful, but the person who steps in to stop it? That's true strength. That's the kind of courage God loves.

Now, let's ask a big question: Who is someone you can protect or help today? It doesn't have to be a grand gesture. Maybe it's your little brother who's afraid of the dark, or a classmate who always gets left out of games. Perhaps it's an animal in need, like a stray cat or a bird with a hurt wing. God cares about all of His creation, and He wants us to care, too. When we open our eyes and hearts, we'll start to see opportunities everywhere. And here's the best part: every time we choose to protect, we're growing stronger in love and kindness -- just like Jesus taught us.

Before we finish, let's remember one last thing: God sees everything we do. He sees when we stand up for the weak, when we share with those in need, and when we speak out against unfairness. And you know what? He rewards that. Jesus said, 'Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me' (Matthew 25:40). That means every act of protection, no matter how small, is like a treasure stored up in heaven. So don't ever think your kindness doesn't matter. It matters more than you could ever imagine.

Protecting the weak and vulnerable isn't just a nice idea -- it's one of the most important things we can do. It's how we show love to God and to each other. It's how we make the world a little bit more like heaven. So today, tomorrow, and every day after that, let's be the kind of people who see a need and meet it, who hear a cry for help and answer it. Let's be protectors, just like David, just like Jesus. Because when we protect others, we're not just changing their lives -- we're changing ours, too.

How Small Acts Make a Big Difference

Have you ever dropped a tiny pebble into a still pond and watched the ripples spread far beyond where it landed? That's how small acts of kindness work -- they start with something simple, almost invisible, but their impact grows in ways we can't always see. The Bible teaches us that even the smallest things matter to God, and when we choose to love others in little ways, we're doing something far bigger than we realize.

Think about a smile. It costs nothing, takes only a second, and yet it can turn a stranger's bad day into something brighter. A kind word to someone who's feeling lonely, a helping hand when someone's struggling with groceries, or even just listening when a friend needs to talk -- these aren't just nice gestures. They're seeds. And like the mustard seed Jesus talked about, which starts as the tiniest of seeds but grows into a tree big enough for birds to nest in, our small acts can grow into something that changes lives. The Bible reminds us in Matthew 17:20 that faith as small as a mustard seed can move mountains. If faith that small can do that, imagine what a small act of love can do.

Now, let's talk about the world around us. When you pick up a piece of trash on the sidewalk instead of walking past it, you're not just cleaning up one spot -- you're showing others that this place matters. You're teaching someone else, maybe without even saying a word, that we all share this earth and we all have a part in taking care of it. The same goes for helping a neighbor carry in their groceries or shoveling snow from an elderly person's driveway. These acts might seem insignificant in the grand scheme of things, but they're like drops of water in a dry land. Over time, they add up. They soften hearts. They remind people that goodness still exists, even when the world feels heavy.

Here's something powerful: small acts don't just help the person receiving them -- they inspire others to do the same. Have you ever seen someone hold the door open for a stranger, and then the next person does it too? That's how kindness spreads. It's contagious in the best way. When we choose to act with love, even in little things, we're giving others permission to do the same. We're saying, You can make a difference too. And before you know it, that one small act has started a chain reaction of goodness.

Now, let's try a simple activity together. Today, do one small act of kindness -- something intentional, even if it's tiny. Maybe it's leaving a note of encouragement for someone, paying for the coffee of the person behind you in line, or simply calling a family member just to say you love them. Then, pay attention. Watch how it affects the person you helped. Do they smile? Do they seem lighter? But also notice how you feel. Often, the person who gets the most out of a kind act is the one who does it. There's a joy that comes from giving, a warmth that fills your heart when you know you've made someone else's day a little better.

You might be thinking, But what if my small act doesn't change anything? Here's the truth: it does. Even if you never see the results, God sees. He uses the small things -- the overlooked, the humble, the quiet -- to do His biggest work.

Remember David? He was just a young shepherd boy with a sling and a few stones, but God used him to defeat a giant. Or think about the little boy who offered his five loaves and two fish to Jesus. That small lunch became enough to feed thousands. God doesn't need us to have grand plans or huge resources. He just needs us to be willing to offer what we have, no matter how small it seems.

So here's a question to sit with: What is one small act you can do today to make a difference? It doesn't have to be complicated or expensive. It just has to come from a heart that wants to love others the way God loves us. Maybe it's forgiving someone who hurt you, even if they never know. Maybe it's planting a seed in your garden and trusting it will grow into something beautiful. Or maybe it's simply choosing to see the good in someone instead of focusing on their flaws. Whatever it is, do it with the knowledge that your act, no matter how small, is part of something much bigger.

As we close this section, remember this: no act of kindness is too small. In a world that often measures worth by how loud or how big something is, God works differently. He values the quiet moments, the hidden sacrifices, the love that doesn't seek recognition. When you choose to live this way -- when you choose to see the power in small things -- you're living out the truth that every person matters, every action counts, and every bit of love you put into the world makes it a better place. So go ahead. Drop that pebble. Watch the ripples. And trust that God is using it in ways you might never see, but that matter more than you know.

Caring for Strangers

In our journey of understanding what the Bible teaches us, we come to a beautiful and important lesson: caring for strangers. It's easy to be kind to the people we know and love, but God asks us to go further. He wants us to show kindness and love to everyone, even those we don't know. This is a big part of what it means to live a life full of love and compassion, just like Jesus taught us.

Let's think about Abraham, a man who is greatly respected in the Bible. One day, Abraham was sitting near his tent when he saw three strangers approaching. Instead of ignoring them or being cautious, Abraham welcomed them into his home. He offered them food, water, and a place to rest. Abraham didn't know these men, but he treated them with kindness and respect. Because of his kindness, Abraham was blessed by God. This story shows us that when we care for strangers, we open ourselves up to blessings and good things.

Caring for strangers doesn't have to be complicated or difficult. It can be as simple as offering a kind word, a smile, or a helping hand. Maybe you see someone who looks lost, and you take a moment to help them find their way. Or perhaps you notice someone who seems lonely, and you share a friendly smile. These small acts of kindness can make a big difference in someone's day. They can even change someone's life.

Sometimes, we might wonder why we should care for strangers. After all, we don't know them, and they might not be able to do anything for us in return. But the Bible teaches us that when we care for strangers, we're not just helping them -- we're also helping ourselves. We're building bridges between people, bringing them together, and making the world a better place. Plus, we never know when God might send an angel in disguise to test our kindness. By caring for strangers, we show that we're ready to welcome anyone, even if we don't know who they are.

Here's a simple activity to try this week: think of a stranger you can show kindness to. It could be someone you see every day but don't know, like a neighbor or a person you often pass on the street. It could also be someone you've never met before. Think about what you can do to show them kindness. Maybe you can offer them a kind word, a smile, or a helping hand. Maybe you can share some food or water with them. Whatever it is, make it your goal to show kindness to at least one stranger this week.

As we go through our days, it's important to remember that every person we meet is valuable and deserves to be treated with kindness and respect. This includes the strangers we encounter. When we care for strangers, we're not just following a rule or doing what we're supposed to do. We're showing that we understand the value of every human life. We're showing that we're willing to love and care for others, just like Jesus loves and cares for us.

So, how can you show kindness to a stranger today? Maybe you can start by simply noticing the strangers around you. Look for opportunities to offer kindness, even in small ways. Remember, every act of kindness, no matter how small, can make a big difference.

As we end this section, let's remember one more important thing: when we care for strangers, we're not just caring for them -- we're also caring for Jesus. The Bible teaches us that when we show kindness to others, we're showing kindness to Jesus himself. This is a powerful thought. It means that every time we care for a stranger, we're doing something special and important. We're showing Jesus that we love him and that we're willing to follow his teachings.

Caring for strangers is a beautiful and important part of our journey as we learn what the Bible teaches us. It's a way for us to show love and kindness to everyone, to build bridges between people, and to make the world a better place. So let's go out and care for strangers, knowing that we're doing something good and important. And let's remember that when we care for strangers, we're also caring for Jesus.

In our world today, where so much is controlled by big institutions and governments, caring for strangers is a way to take back our power and show that we care about each other. It's a way to build communities that are strong and full of love, where everyone is valued and respected. So let's make a commitment to care for strangers, to show kindness and love to everyone we meet, and to make the world a better place, one act of kindness at a time.

Why Everyone Deserves Dignity

Imagine you're holding a beautiful, hand-painted vase. It's one of a kind -- no other vase in the world looks exactly like it. Now, what if someone told you that every single person on this planet is like that vase? Each one is unique, carefully crafted, and deserves to be treated with care. That's what the Bible teaches us about dignity. Dignity means recognizing that every person -- no matter who they are, where they come from, or what they've done -- has value simply because they exist. And here's the most amazing part: this value isn't something we earn. It's a gift from God Himself.

The Bible tells us that every human being is made in God's image. That means we all carry a piece of something divine inside us, like a spark of God's own nature. In the very first book of the Bible, Genesis, it says, So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them (Genesis 1:27). Think about that for a moment. If someone is made in God's image, how can we ever look at them and say, You don't matter? Whether it's the person bagging your groceries, the child playing in the park, or the stranger who seems lost and alone, they all reflect something of God. That's why everyone deserves respect -- not because of what they do, but because of who they are.

Now, let's talk about Jesus. If anyone understood dignity, it was Him. Jesus didn't just talk about loving people -- He showed it in ways that shocked the world around Him. Back in His time, there were people society had decided didn't matter: the sick, the poor, the outcasts, even tax collectors (who were pretty much hated by everyone). But Jesus? He sat with them. He ate with them. He touched them when no one else would. Remember the story of the woman caught in adultery? The crowd was ready to stone her, but Jesus knelt down and said, Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her (John 8:7). Not a single person threw a stone. Jesus didn't just save her life -- He gave her back her dignity. He saw her as a person, not a mistake.

So how do we show dignity to others? It's simpler than you might think. Start with listening -- really listening -- when someone talks. Put down your phone, look them in the eyes, and let them know their words matter. Kindness is another way. A smile, a helping hand, or even just saying thank you can remind someone that they're seen. And here's something powerful: value people for who they are, not what they can do for you. In a world that often treats people like tools -- useful only if they're productive or successful -- choosing to see someone's worth just because they're there is revolutionary.

Let me ask you something: How do you feel when someone treats you with dignity? Maybe it's when a friend remembers something important to you, or a stranger holds the door open with a genuine smile. It feels good, doesn't it? Like you matter. That's the gift we can give to others every single day. And here's the thing -- God doesn't play favorites. He loves the CEO and the janitor exactly the same. He loves the person who has it all together and the one who's a complete mess. If God loves everyone equally, shouldn't we?

There's a rule most of us learned as kids: Treat others the way you want to be treated. It's called the Golden Rule, and Jesus said it Himself (Matthew 7:12). But here's the deeper truth behind it: when we treat others with dignity, we're not just being nice -- we're honoring the image of God in them. And when we do that, something beautiful happens. We start to see the world the way God sees it -- a place where every single person has a purpose, a story, and a heart that deserves to be treated with care.

Now, here's a little activity to try. Grab a piece of paper and write down three ways you can show dignity to someone today. Maybe it's calling a family member you haven't talked to in a while, or leaving a bigger tip for your server, or just saying I appreciate you to someone who needs to hear it. Small acts can make a big difference. And remember, dignity isn't something we give to people -- it's something we recognize in them. It's already there, waiting to be seen.

Finally, never forget this: dignity is a gift we can give to everyone, no exceptions. It doesn't cost a thing, but it's worth more than gold. In a world that often tells us some people are more important than others, choosing to see the value in every single person is an act of rebellion -- a quiet, powerful stand for what's true. And that truth? It's that every life, from the smallest child to the oldest grandparent, is sacred. Because if God made them in His image, how could they be anything less?

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Helping Without Expecting Anything Back

Imagine you're holding a beautiful, ripe apple in your hand. You see a friend who looks hungry, and you give them the apple without expecting anything in return. That, my friend, is the essence of true kindness. It's like planting a seed in a garden. You don't stand there, arms crossed, waiting for the seed to grow into a plant right away. You simply plant it, water it, and trust that it will grow in its own time. The Bible teaches us this wonderful lesson through many stories and verses. One of the most touching examples is the story of the widow who gave her last two coins to the temple. Jesus saw her and praised her, saying she gave more than all the others because she gave out of her poverty, not her wealth. She didn't give expecting a reward or recognition; she gave because it was in her heart to do so. That's the kind of kindness that touches God's heart.

When we help others without expecting anything back, something beautiful happens. It's like when you smile at someone, and suddenly, you feel happier too. The Bible tells us that God loves a cheerful giver. It's not about how much we give, but how we give it. When we give with joy and love, it's like a little spark that lights up our own hearts. We might not see it right away, but that spark grows into a warm, glowing fire that fills us with happiness and peace. It's like when you share your toys with a friend, and suddenly, playing together is so much more fun than playing alone.

Have you ever done something nice for someone and didn't tell anyone about it? Maybe you helped a friend with their homework, or you shared your lunch with someone who forgot theirs. That secret act of kindness is like a little treasure between you and God. It's something special that only you and He know about. The Bible tells us that when we do things in secret, God sees it and rewards us in ways we might not even expect. It's like when you find a beautiful shell at the beach and keep it in your pocket as a special secret. That secret act of kindness is your special treasure.

Helping others without expecting anything back is also a sign of true love. It's like when a mom takes care of her baby, not because the baby can do anything for her, but simply because she loves the baby. The Bible tells us that love is patient and kind; it doesn't envy or boast. When we help others without expecting anything in return, we're showing that kind of love. It's like when you see a little bird with a broken wing, and you gently pick it up to take care of it, not because the bird can sing for you, but because you care about it.

Now, let me ask you something. What is one way you can help someone without expecting anything in return? Maybe it's helping an elderly neighbor carry their groceries, or perhaps it's sharing your favorite book with a friend. It could be as simple as giving someone a hug when they're feeling sad. Remember, it's not about how big or small the act is; it's about the love and kindness behind it. When we do these things, we're like little helpers making the world a better place, one kind act at a time.

The Bible reminds us that God loves a cheerful giver. It's not about giving because we have to, but because we want to. When we give with joy and love, it's like a beautiful song that makes God smile. It's like when you draw a picture for your mom, and you see her face light up with happiness. That's how God feels when we give with a cheerful heart. So, let's try to be like that widow who gave her last two coins, or like a little child who shares their toys without expecting anything back. Let's make our lives a beautiful song of kindness and love, one note at a time.

In a world where so many things are controlled by big companies and governments, it's important to remember that true kindness comes from the heart. It's not about what we can get, but what we can give. When we help others without expecting anything back, we're like little rebels standing up against the idea that everything has a price. We're showing that love and kindness are more powerful than any money or reward. It's like planting a little seed of freedom in a world that sometimes tries to put a price tag on everything.

So, let's be those little rebels of kindness. Let's help others without expecting anything back, just like the widow who gave her last two coins. Let's make our lives a beautiful garden of kindness, one secret act at a time. And remember, God sees every little thing we do, and He smiles at each act of love and kindness. Let's make Him smile a lot, shall we?

In this journey of kindness, it's essential to understand that our actions, no matter how small, can have a ripple effect. Just like a tiny pebble creates waves when dropped into a pond, our acts of kindness can spread far and wide, touching lives we may never even know about. The Bible tells us that whatever we do for the least of our brothers and sisters, we do for Jesus Himself. So, every time we help someone without expecting anything in return, we're showing love to Jesus. It's like giving Him a little gift, wrapped in kindness and tied with a bow of love.

As we go about our days, let's keep our eyes and hearts open for opportunities to help others. It could be something as simple as holding the door open for someone, or as significant as volunteering our time to help those in need. Remember, it's not about the size of the act, but the size of the love behind it. And as we do these things, let's not forget to do some of them in secret, just between us and God. Those secret acts of kindness are like little love notes to Him, showing that we understand the true meaning of giving.

In conclusion, helping others without expecting anything back is a beautiful way to live our lives. It's like being a little light in a world that sometimes seems dark. The Bible teaches us that this light, this kindness, is something that God loves and cherishes. So, let's be those little lights, shining brightly with acts of love and kindness. And as we do, let's remember that God loves a cheerful giver, and that our kindness, no matter how small, can make a big difference in the world. Let's make that difference, one act of kindness at a time.

The Joy of Giving

Imagine you have a toy that you really love. Now, think about how happy it makes you feel when you share that toy with a friend. That warm, happy feeling you get is what we call the joy of giving. It's not just about the toy; it's about the smile on your friend's face and the happiness you feel inside. This is a special kind of joy that God loves to see in us. In this section, we'll explore why giving brings so much joy and how it makes our world a better place.

You might have heard the story of the wise men who traveled from far away to give gifts to baby Jesus. They brought gold, frankincense, and myrrh. These were very special gifts, and the wise men were filled with joy when they gave them. This story shows us that giving is a wonderful thing that makes both the giver and the receiver happy. It's not about how big or expensive the gift is; it's about the love and thought behind it.

Giving doesn't have to be complicated or costly. It can be as simple as sharing a toy, spending time with someone who needs a friend, or saying a kind word to brighten someone's day. Even a small act of kindness can make a big difference. When we give, we show love and care for others, just like God wants us to do.

Here's a simple activity you can try: Give something to someone and observe how it makes you both feel. It could be a small gift, a helping hand, or just a smile. Notice the happiness it brings to the other person and the warmth it brings to your heart. This is the joy of giving in action.

God loves it when we give with a happy heart. In the Bible, it says that God loves a cheerful giver. This means that when we give with joy and love, it pleases God. It's not about how much we give, but about the attitude of our heart when we give. When we give happily, we are following God's example of love and generosity.

Giving also helps us appreciate what we have. When we share with others, we realize how blessed we are. It builds gratitude in our hearts. Instead of focusing on what we don't have, we start to see all the good things we do have. This makes us happier and more content with our lives.

So, what is one thing you can give to someone today? It could be a hug, a kind word, or a little help with a task. Whatever it is, remember that your act of giving will bring joy to both you and the person you give to. It's a beautiful way to spread happiness and love.

In the end, it's important to remember that it is more blessed to give than to receive. This means that giving brings more happiness and blessings than getting. When we give, we are not only helping others, but we are also filling our own hearts with joy and love. So, let's make giving a part of our everyday lives and experience the wonderful joy it brings.

Giving is a powerful way to show love and care. It doesn't have to be big or expensive; even the smallest acts of kindness can make a big difference. When we give, we follow God's example and bring joy to ourselves and others. So, let's embrace the joy of giving and make our world a happier place.

As we've seen, giving is a simple yet powerful way to spread joy and love. It's something that anyone can do, no matter how big or small the act may be. By giving, we not only help others but also fill our own hearts with happiness. So, let's make giving a habit and experience the wonderful blessings it brings to our lives.

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Chapter 5: Living with Gratitude

Imagine you're holding a bright, juicy apple in your hand. Someone just gave it to you -- a friend, a neighbor, maybe even a stranger. Now, what's the first thing you do? You smile, look them in the eye, and say two simple words: thank you. Those words might seem small, but they carry more power than you realize. Saying thank you isn't just good manners -- it's a way to show people they matter. It's like shining a little light on someone's day, letting them know their kindness didn't go unnoticed. And when we make a habit of being thankful, something beautiful happens. Our hearts grow lighter, our relationships grow stronger, and we start to see the world through eyes that notice the good instead of just the bad.

The Bible tells a powerful story about this in the book of Luke. Jesus was walking through a village when ten men with leprosy -- a painful, isolating disease -- called out to Him for help. Jesus healed all ten of them with just a word. But here's the surprising part: only one of those men came back to say thank you. Just one. Jesus noticed this, too. He turned to the man and said, Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? (Luke 17:17). That single act of gratitude didn't just make the man stand out -- it showed Jesus that his heart was in the right place. The others took their healing for granted, but this man understood that true healing isn't just about the body. It's about the soul. When we pause to say thank you, we're acknowledging that we didn't earn everything we have. We're humbling ourselves and recognizing that someone -- whether it's a person or God -- has blessed us.

Now, think about how it feels when someone thanks you. Maybe you held the door open for a stranger, or you helped a friend move, or you cooked a meal for your family. When someone looks you in the eye and says, I really appreciate what you did, doesn't that make you feel warm inside? It's like a little spark of joy. Gratitude does that -- it brightens someone's day in a way that costs nothing but means everything. In a world where people are often rushed, distracted, or focused only on themselves, a simple thank you can be like a cool drink of water on a hot day. It refreshes the spirit. And here's the secret: the more you give thanks, the more you'll find things to be thankful for. It's like planting a seed. The more you water it with gratitude, the more good things grow in your life.

Here's a little activity to try this week: grab a piece of paper and a pen, and write a thank-you note to someone who has helped you. It could be a teacher who believed in you, a neighbor who lent you a tool, or even a family member who always listens when you need to talk. You don't have to make it fancy -- just honest. Tell them specifically what they did and why it meant something to you. Then, hand it to them or mail it. Watch what happens. You might see their face light up. You might even start a chain reaction where they pass on kindness to someone else. That's how gratitude works -- it spreads, like ripples in a pond. And the best part? You'll feel just as good giving it as they do receiving it.

The Bible doesn't just suggest we be thankful -- it commands it. In 1 Thessalonians 5:18, it says, Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Notice it doesn't say give thanks for all circumstances. Life isn't always easy. There are hard days, disappointments, and even heartaches. But even in those moments, we can find something to be grateful for -- a lesson learned, a friend who stood by us, the strength to keep going. Gratitude doesn't mean ignoring the hard things. It means choosing to see the good alongside them. When we do that, we're trusting that God is working even when we can't see how. And that trust? It's like a shield for our hearts, protecting us from bitterness and fear.

Here's something else to consider: when we say thank you, we're not just honoring the person in front of us. We're honoring God. The Bible tells us that every good and perfect gift comes from Him (James 1:17). So when we thank a farmer for growing our food, we're also thanking God for the soil, the rain, and the hands that made it possible. When we thank a doctor for their care, we're acknowledging that God gave them the knowledge and skill to help. Gratitude connects us to something bigger than ourselves. It reminds us that we're part of a web of kindness, where every act of goodness -- no matter how small -- matters. And in a world that often feels broken, that's a truth worth holding onto.

Now, let's ask a question: Who is someone you can thank today? It might be the person who bagged your groceries, the friend who texted to check on you, or even God Himself for the air in your lungs. Don't wait for a big moment. Start small. Thank the barista for your coffee. Thank your child for hugging you. Thank God for the sunrise. The more you practice, the more natural it becomes. And before you know it, you'll start to see opportunities for gratitude everywhere. That's how habits form -- and gratitude is one of the best habits you can build.

Here's the final truth about saying thank you: a thankful heart is a happy heart. It's not that grateful people have fewer problems. It's that they've learned to see their problems through a different lens. They focus on what they have, not what they lack. They notice the helpers, not just the hurdles. And that shift in perspective? It changes everything. Studies have even shown that people who practice gratitude are healthier, sleep better, and have stronger relationships. It's like a natural medicine for the soul -- no side effects, just pure goodness. So why not give it a try? Start today. Say thank you. Mean it. And watch how it changes not just the people around you, but you.

Finding Joy in Little Things

In our busy lives, we often look for happiness in big events like birthdays, weddings, or vacations. But did you know that joy can also be found in small, everyday moments? These little things can bring us just as much happiness, if not more, than the big events we usually focus on. It's like finding a hidden treasure in your own backyard. You don't need to travel far or spend a lot of money to find joy. It's right there, in the simple things that we often overlook.

Jesus, in His teachings, showed us how to find joy in simple things. He found happiness in children playing, flowers blooming, and birds singing. These are all small, everyday occurrences, but Jesus saw the beauty and joy in them. He used these simple things to teach us about God's love and the wonders of His creation. When we look at the world through Jesus' eyes, we start to see the joy in little things too. It's like putting on a pair of glasses that help us see the beauty in the ordinary.

Think about a sunny day. The warmth of the sun on your skin, the bright light that makes everything look beautiful, the way it lifts your mood. That's joy. Or consider a good meal. The taste, the smell, the satisfaction it brings. That's joy too. Even a hug from a friend can bring us joy. The warmth, the comfort, the feeling of being cared for. These are all small things, but they can bring us so much happiness. It's like finding little pieces of gold scattered throughout our day.

To help you find joy in little things, try this simple activity: Make a list of 10 little things that bring you joy. They can be anything from the smell of fresh coffee in the morning to the sound of rain against your window. Writing them down helps us to remember and appreciate these small moments of joy. It's like creating a map of hidden treasures that you can visit anytime you want. This list can be a reminder that joy is all around us, in the little things that we often take for granted.

God gives us many small blessings to enjoy every day. A beautiful sunset, a gentle breeze, the laughter of a child. These are all gifts from God, little things that He has created for us to enjoy. When we take the time to notice and appreciate these small blessings, we are thanking God for His love and care. It's like opening a present every day, finding something beautiful and wonderful inside.

Finding joy in little things helps us appreciate life more. It makes us more grateful and content. When we focus on the small joys, we start to see the world differently. We become more positive, more hopeful, more loving. It's like seeing the world through a lens of joy, where everything looks brighter and more beautiful. This doesn't mean that we ignore the problems in the world. It just means that we don't let them steal our joy. We can still work to make the world a better place, but we do it with a heart full of joy.

So, what is one little thing that brings you joy today? Maybe it's the taste of your favorite fruit, or the sound of your pet's purr, or the feeling of your favorite sweater. Whatever it is, take a moment to appreciate it. Let it fill your heart with joy. And remember, these little things are gifts from God. They are reminders of His love and care for us. They are little pieces of heaven that He has placed in our everyday lives.

Joy is a gift from God, and He wants us to have it. He wants us to find joy in His creation, in His love, in His presence. When we find joy in little things, we are accepting this gift. We are saying 'thank you' to God for the beauty and happiness He has placed in our lives. So, let's open our eyes and our hearts to the joy in little things. Let's find the hidden treasures in our everyday lives. And let's thank God for these gifts, for His love, and for the joy that He brings us every day.

Remember, joy is not just for the big moments. It's for every moment. It's for the little things that we often overlook. So, let's start noticing these little things. Let's start finding joy in them. And let's start thanking God for them. Because joy is a gift from God, and it's all around us, in the little things that make life beautiful.

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How Gratitude Changes Your Heart

Have you ever noticed how a simple 'thank you' can make your whole day brighter? That's because gratitude isn't just good manners -- it's like a secret key that unlocks joy, peace, and even better health. When we take time to be thankful, something amazing happens inside us. Our hearts feel lighter, our minds grow clearer, and the world around us starts to look a little more beautiful. The Bible shows us this truth over and over, especially in stories like that of Paul and Silas, who sang praises to God even while locked in prison. Their gratitude didn't change their chains, but it changed them -- filling their hearts with strength and hope instead of fear.

Think about it: when we focus on what we're grateful for, it's like turning on a light in a dark room. Suddenly, the shadows of worry, anger, or sadness don't seem so big anymore. Science even backs this up -- studies show that grateful people tend to be happier, sleep better, and even have stronger immune systems. But long before scientists discovered this, the Bible taught us that a thankful heart is a healthy heart. In 1 Thessalonians 5:18, we're told to 'give thanks in all circumstances,' not because everything is perfect, but because gratitude helps us see the good even when life is hard.

Now, let's talk about Paul and Silas. These two men were beaten, thrown into prison, and locked up with their feet in stocks. Most of us would probably complain or feel sorry for ourselves in that situation. But what did they do? At midnight, they were praying and singing hymns to God (Acts 16:25). Their gratitude wasn't about ignoring their pain -- it was about trusting God even in the middle of it. And something incredible happened: the prison doors flew open, and their chains fell off. Gratitude didn't just change their attitude; it changed their circumstances. That's the power of a thankful heart -- it shifts our focus from what's wrong to what's possible.

Here's a simple way to try this yourself. Grab a piece of paper and write down three things you're grateful for right now. They don't have to be big things -- maybe it's the sunshine outside, a kind word from a friend, or even just the fact that you're alive to read these words. Now, next to each one, write how it makes you feel. Does your chest feel warmer? Does your mind feel quieter? That's gratitude working its magic. When we pause to notice the good, our brains actually release chemicals that make us feel happier. It's like giving yourself a little dose of joy, straight from God's design.

But why does God care so much about gratitude? Because He knows it's the antidote to fear and selfishness. When we're thankful, we're saying, 'God, I trust You. I see Your goodness, even here.' That kind of trust changes everything. It turns sadness into joy because we remember we're not alone. It turns fear into peace because we know God is in control. And it turns scarcity into abundance because we realize how much we already have. The world might tell us to chase more -- more money, more stuff, more success -- but God whispers, Be thankful for what I've given you. That's where true freedom lies.

Now, here's a question to ponder: How does gratitude change the way you feel? Maybe you've noticed that when you're thankful, you smile more, or you're kinder to others. Maybe you've felt a weight lift off your shoulders when you stop complaining and start counting blessings instead. That's not a coincidence. Gratitude rewires our hearts to see life through God's eyes -- a life full of gifts, not lack. And when we live that way, something beautiful happens: we start to become the answer to someone else's prayer. Our thankfulness spills over into generosity, kindness, and love, which is exactly what the world needs more of.

Of course, the enemy of gratitude is comparison. Social media, advertisements, and even well-meaning friends can make us feel like we're missing out. But here's the truth: comparison is a thief. It steals our joy by making us focus on what we don't have instead of what we do. The Bible warns us about this in 2 Corinthians 10:12, where it says comparing ourselves to others is 'not wise.' God didn't create you to be like anyone else. He created you to be you -- with your own story, your own blessings, and your own purpose. When we're grateful for that, we're actually worshiping God by honoring how He made us.

So, how do we keep gratitude alive in our daily lives? Start small. Thank God for the air in your lungs, the food on your table, or the laughter of someone you love. Make it a habit, like brushing your teeth or saying grace before a meal. And when hard times come -- because they will -- choose gratitude anyway. Remember Paul and Silas in that prison. Their circumstances didn't change until they started praising. That's not to say gratitude is a magic trick to get what we want. It's deeper than that. It's about trusting God's plan, even when we can't see it.

At the end of the day, a grateful heart is a happy heart. It's a heart that's open to God's love, resilient in trials, and generous toward others. And the best part? You don't need anything special to start. You just need to pause, look around, and say, 'Thank You.' So why not try it right now? Close your eyes for a second, take a deep breath, and thank God for one thing -- just one. Feel that? That's your heart changing, one thankful thought at a time.

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Being Thankful in Hard Times

In the journey of life, we often face tough times that can make us feel sad or overwhelmed. But even in these hard moments, it's important to remember to be thankful. Gratitude is like a warm light that can shine through the darkest clouds, helping us see the good things that are still around us. It's not always easy, but being thankful can make our hearts feel lighter and our days brighter.

Let's think about a man named Job from the Bible. Job was a good man who loved God very much. One day, he lost everything -- his home, his animals, and even his children. His body became covered in painful sores, and he felt very sad. But even in all this trouble, Job never stopped praising God. He said, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised.' Job's story teaches us that even when life is really hard, we can still find reasons to be thankful.

Being thankful in hard times doesn't mean we ignore our sadness or pain. It means we look for the little bits of good that are still there. Maybe it's a friend who listens to us, a beautiful sunset, or even the strength we find inside ourselves to keep going. When we focus on these good things, our hearts can feel a sense of peace and strength. It's like having a secret power that helps us face our troubles with courage.

Here's a simple activity you can try. Think about a hard time you've had. Maybe it was when you were sick, or when you felt lonely. Now, try to remember one thing you were thankful for during that time. It could be something small, like a kind word from someone or a favorite toy that made you smile. Write it down or draw a picture of it. This can help you see that even in tough times, there are things to be thankful for.

One of the biggest reasons we can be thankful in hard times is because God is with us. He never leaves us, even when life feels scary or sad. We can be thankful for His presence, like a warm hug that makes us feel safe and loved. Knowing that God is with us can give us the strength to face anything that comes our way.

Gratitude also helps us see God's hand in all circumstances. It's like looking at a big, beautiful painting. Even if some parts of the painting are dark or sad, we can still see the artist's hand in every brushstroke. When we are thankful, we start to see how God is working in our lives, even in the hard times. This can help us trust that He has a plan for us, and that everything will be okay in the end.

So, what is one thing you can be thankful for in a hard time? Maybe it's a family member who loves you, a pet that makes you happy, or even the food you eat every day. Whatever it is, hold onto that feeling of gratitude. It can be like a little seed that grows into a big, strong tree of happiness and strength inside you.

Remember, God works all things for good. This means that even the hard times can lead to something beautiful. Maybe we learn to be stronger, or we find new friends, or we discover something amazing about ourselves. When we are thankful, we open our hearts to see the good that can come from the tough times.

Being thankful in hard times is like having a special pair of glasses that helps us see the good things in life, even when things are tough. It's not always easy, but with practice, we can find reasons to be grateful every day. And when we do, we'll feel God's love and strength guiding us through anything that comes our way.

So, let's try to be thankful, even in the hard times. It can make our hearts feel lighter, our days brighter, and our lives full of love and happiness. And remember, God is always with us, loving us and guiding us through every step of our journey.

Gratitude for Nature and Life

Have you ever stopped to watch a sunset paint the sky in colors so bright it feels like a gift? Or listened to the wind rustle through the leaves of a tree, as if whispering a secret just for you? Nature is all around us -- full of beauty, life, and wonders we often take for granted. But what if we paused for a moment to say thank you? Not just to the world, but to the One who made it all possible? This section is about gratitude for nature and life, and how something as simple as noticing the world around us can fill our hearts with joy and remind us of God's incredible love.

The Bible tells us that creation itself sings praises to its Creator. In Psalm 19, King David writes, The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Think about that for a second. The stars twinkling at night, the sun warming our faces, even the rain that helps plants grow -- all of it is like a giant, never-ending song of thanks to God. David didn't just write about the idea of nature; he looked up at the sky and felt something so deep that he had to put it into words. And those words have been comforting people for thousands of years. When we look at a towering mountain, a blooming flower, or a buzzing bee, we're seeing God's handiwork. And that's worth being thankful for.

Now, let's make this personal. Close your eyes and picture your favorite place in nature. Maybe it's a quiet forest, a sandy beach, or even your own backyard. What do you see there? Trees standing tall, their leaves dancing in the breeze? Animals scurrying about, each one perfectly designed for its place in the world? The sun rising in the morning, painting everything in golden light? These aren't accidents. They're gifts -- each one carefully crafted by God for us to enjoy. Trees give us shade and clean air to breathe. Animals, whether they're pets or wild creatures, remind us of the diversity and creativity of life. The sun gives us light, warmth, and the energy that makes everything grow. Even the soil under our feet is teeming with life, working silently to nourish the plants that feed us. Every single part of nature is a reason to be grateful.

Here's a little activity to try: Go outside right now -- or the next time you can -- and find three things in nature that make you smile. It could be the way a bird sings, the texture of a tree's bark, or the smell of fresh-cut grass. Take a deep breath and say, Thank you, God, for this. You might feel a little silly at first, but that's okay. Gratitude isn't about being perfect; it's about opening your heart. When you start noticing these small gifts, something amazing happens. You begin to see the world differently. Instead of rushing past the flowers on your walk, you might stop to admire their colors. Instead of complaining about the rain, you might remember how it helps the crops grow. Gratitude turns ordinary moments into little celebrations of life.

You know, it's easy to forget that God created this world for us. Not just to survive in, but to enjoy. In the book of Genesis, after God made the heavens, the earth, the plants, and the animals, He looked at it all and said it was good. And then He made humans -- you and me -- and gave us the job of taking care of it. That's a big deal! It means we're not just random specks in a vast universe. We're part of God's plan, and He wants us to delight in the world He made. When we're grateful for nature, we're doing exactly what we were designed to do: appreciating God's creativity and love. It's like when someone gives you a handmade gift. The more you notice the details -- the time, the effort, the thought -- the more you treasure it. Nature is God's handmade gift to us, and gratitude is our way of treasuring it.

There's something else beautiful about gratitude: it connects us to God in a deeper way. When we thank Him for the food on our table, the air in our lungs, or the beauty of a sunset, we're acknowledging that these good things come from Him. It's like saying, I see You in this, and I'm thankful. That simple act of recognition opens our hearts to more joy, more peace, and more love. In his book *The Basic Ideas of Science of Mind*, Ernest Holmes writes about how focusing on life -- real life, full of joy and vitality -- can transform our entire outlook. He says, Instead of thinking illness or weakness, think life -- Life! That's what gratitude does. It shifts our focus from what's wrong to what's right, from scarcity to abundance. And when we do that, we start to see God's goodness everywhere.

Now, here's a question for you: What's one thing in nature that you're thankful for? It doesn't have to be grand or exotic. Maybe it's the way your dog wags its tail when you come home, or the sound of crickets on a summer night. Maybe it's the taste of a ripe strawberry or the feeling of grass under your bare feet. Whatever it is, hold that thought for a moment. Let it remind you that God didn't have to make the world this way. He could have made it dull and colorless, but He didn't. He filled it with flavors, textures, sounds, and sights that bring us joy. That's not just luck -- that's love. And love deserves our gratitude.

It's also worth remembering that gratitude isn't just good for our souls -- it's good for our bodies and minds too. When we focus on the good things in life, our stress levels go down, our immune systems get stronger, and we feel happier. In *The Live Food Factor*, Victoria Boutenko talks about how stopping energy-draining habits -- like complaining or ignoring the beauty around us -- and instead embracing life's gifts can fill us with vitality. Nature is one of those gifts. It's a reminder that we're part of something bigger, something alive and breathing and full of purpose. And when we're grateful for it, we're not just thanking God -- we're aligning ourselves with the way He designed the world to work.

Before we wrap up, let's circle back to where we started: every good gift comes from God. That's not just a nice saying; it's a truth that can change how we see the world. When we wake up in the morning, we can choose to grumble about the day ahead, or we can step outside, feel the sun on our faces, and say, Thank You. When we eat a meal, we can scarf it down without a thought, or we can pause and remember that the food on our plate is a gift from the earth -- and ultimately, from the God who made the earth. Gratitude turns ordinary moments into sacred ones. It reminds us that we're not alone, that we're loved, and that this world is full of wonders waiting to be noticed.

So here's your challenge: For the next week, every time you step outside, find at least one thing in nature to be thankful for. It could be the same thing every day, or something new each time. Share it with a friend, write it down, or just whisper it to yourself. And as you do, remember that you're not just thanking the tree or the sky or the bird. You're thanking the Creator who made them all -- and who made you too. Because in the end, gratitude isn't just about what we have. It's about who we're thanking. And that makes all the difference.

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Thanking People Who Help You

In our journey through life, we often encounter people who help us in big and small ways. It's important to thank these people, whether they are our parents, teachers, or friends. Thanking them shows that we appreciate what they do for us. It's like when someone gives you a gift, and you say thank you to show that you are happy and grateful for their kindness. This simple act of saying thank you can make a big difference in our relationships and in how we feel about ourselves and others.

Let's think about a story from the Bible that shows the power of helping others and being thankful. There was a man who was paralyzed, and his friends wanted to help him get better. They carried him to Jesus because they believed Jesus could heal him. When they got to the house where Jesus was, it was so crowded that they couldn't get in. So, they climbed onto the roof and lowered their friend down to Jesus. Jesus saw their faith and healed the paralyzed man. This story shows how much it means to help others and how important it is to have faith and be thankful for the help we receive.

Thanking others is a way to show appreciation and to strengthen our relationships. When we thank someone, we are telling them that we see and value what they have done for us. This can make the other person feel good and want to help us even more. It's like when you water a plant, and it grows bigger and stronger. Thanking people is like watering the relationships in our lives, helping them to grow and become stronger.

Here's a simple activity you can do to practice thanking others: Make a list of people who have helped you. It could be your mom who makes your favorite meals, your teacher who helps you learn new things, or your friend who makes you laugh when you're sad. Once you have your list, think about how you can thank each person. You could say thank you with a smile, give them a hug, or even make them a little card to show your appreciation.

God wants us to honor those who help us. In the Bible, it says to give thanks in all circumstances. This means that no matter what is happening in our lives, we should always find something to be thankful for. When we thank others, we are also thanking God for putting those people in our lives to help us. It's a way to show love and respect to both God and the people around us.

Thanking others also makes them feel valued and loved. When someone feels appreciated, it can make their day brighter and their heart happier. It's like when the sun comes out after a rainy day, and everything feels warm and bright. Your thank you can be that sunshine for someone else, making them feel special and loved.

Think about someone you can thank for helping you. Maybe it's the person who helps you with your homework, or the neighbor who always waves and smiles at you. Whoever it is, take a moment to thank them. You could say it with words, show it with a kind action, or even just think about how much you appreciate them. The important thing is to feel that gratitude in your heart and let it shine out to others.

Gratitude is a way to show love. When we are thankful, we are opening our hearts to the goodness in our lives. It's like when you open the curtains in the morning and let the sunlight into your room. Thanking others lets love and kindness into our lives, making everything feel warmer and happier. It's a simple thing to do, but it can make a big difference in how we feel and how others feel too.

So, let's remember to thank the people who help us. It's a small act that can have a big impact. It shows appreciation, strengthens relationships, and makes everyone feel valued and loved. And most importantly, it's a way to show love and gratitude to God and to all the people in our lives who make a difference. Let's keep our hearts open to the goodness around us and always be ready to say thank you.

As we go through our days, let's look for opportunities to thank others. Whether it's a big help or a small kindness, let's show our appreciation. And remember, when we thank others, we are also thanking God for the love and help He gives us every day. So, let's keep saying thank you, and let's keep spreading love and gratitude wherever we go.

Gratitude as a Daily Habit

Imagine waking up every morning and, before your feet even touch the floor, your first thought is, Thank You. Not because someone told you to, but because your heart is so full of gratitude that it spills out before you've even had your first sip of water. That's the kind of life God wants for us -- not just on Sundays or when things are going well, but every single day. Gratitude isn't something we pull out like a fancy dish only on special occasions. It's the daily bread of our souls, the quiet rhythm that keeps our hearts in tune with God's goodness, no matter what's happening around us.

The Israelites understood this. In the Old Testament, God didn't just suggest they give thanks -- He commanded it, over and over. They were told to offer sacrifices of thanksgiving, to sing psalms of praise, and to remember His goodness every single day. In Psalm 118:24, it says, This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. Notice it doesn't say, Rejoice only if the day goes your way. No, it's a call to gratitude as a way of life, a habit as natural as breathing. The Israelites were even instructed to teach their children to give thanks, passing down this habit from generation to generation. Why? Because God knows something we often forget: gratitude isn't just a response to blessings -- it's the soil in which blessings grow.

So how do we make gratitude a habit, something as automatic as brushing our teeth? It starts with the bookends of our day: morning and night. Before your feet hit the floor in the morning, take a deep breath and thank God for the gift of another day. It doesn't have to be fancy. Just say, Thank You for this morning. Thank You for my family. Thank You for the food I'll eat today. At night, before you close your eyes, do the same. Thank Him for the good things that happened, even if the day was hard. Did the sun rise? Thank Him. Did you have a meal? Thank Him. Did someone smile at you? Thank Him. This isn't about ignoring the tough stuff -- it's about training your heart to see the good, even when it's hiding in the corners.

One of the best ways to build this habit is to write it down. Get a small notebook or even a piece of paper and call it your gratitude journal. Every day, write down three things you're thankful for. They can be big things, like a promotion at work, or tiny things, like the way your dog wagged its tail when you walked in the door. The point isn't to impress anyone -- it's to train your brain to notice the blessings you might otherwise miss. Science even backs this up. Studies show that people who keep gratitude journals are happier, sleep better, and handle stress more easily. But here's the thing: God didn't need science to tell Him that. He's known all along that a thankful heart is a healthy heart.

Why does God care so much about our gratitude? Because He knows what it does to us. Gratitude is like a flashlight in a dark room -- it helps us see what's really there. When we focus on what we're thankful for, we start to notice how much good there actually is in our lives, even when things are hard. It's easy to get stuck looking at what's wrong, what's missing, or what's broken. But gratitude shifts our eyes. It reminds us that no matter how bad things get, there's always something to be thankful for. And when we live like that, we start to see the world differently. We become people who radiate joy, not because our lives are perfect, but because our hearts are full.

Think about it this way: if you had a friend who only talked to you when they needed something, how would that make you feel? Now imagine if that same friend called you every day just to say, Thank you for being in my life. Which friendship would be stronger? God isn't some cosmic vending machine where we put in prayers and out pop blessings. He's a Father who loves us deeply, and like any good father, He wants a relationship with us. Gratitude is how we nurture that relationship. It's how we say, I see You. I appreciate You. I trust You. And when we do that, something beautiful happens -- our hearts change. We become more like Him: generous, joyful, and full of love.

Now, here's the truth: gratitude is a choice. It's not about waiting until you feel like it. It's about deciding, every single day, to focus on the good instead of the bad. Some days, that's going to be hard. There will be days when the last thing you feel like doing is saying thank you. Maybe you're sick, or someone hurt you, or the world feels like it's falling apart. But that's when gratitude is most powerful. Because when you choose to thank God even in the hard times, you're saying, I trust You. I know You're still good, even when I can't see it. That kind of faith doesn't just change your day -- it changes your life.

So here's your challenge: pick one way to make gratitude a daily habit. Maybe it's the gratitude journal. Maybe it's saying thank you before every meal. Maybe it's texting a friend every day to share something you're grateful for. Whatever it is, start small and be consistent. Because habits aren't built in a day -- they're built one thank you at a time. And before you know it, you'll wake up one morning and realize that gratitude isn't something you do anymore. It's who you are.

Remember, God doesn't need your gratitude. He's not up in heaven keeping score. But you need it. Your heart needs it. Your mind needs it. Your soul needs it. Gratitude is the antidote to fear, the cure for worry, and the foundation of joy. And the best part? You don't have to wait for anything to start. You can begin right now. So take a deep breath, look around, and say it with me: Thank You.

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How Thankfulness Brings Peace

Have you ever felt a deep sense of calm wash over you when you take a moment to be thankful? That's the peace that gratitude brings. It's like a warm blanket for your heart and mind, comforting and soothing. When we focus on the good things in our lives, it's easier to let go of worries and trust that God has a plan for us. Even in tough times, finding something to be grateful for can bring a sense of peace that's hard to explain but wonderful to experience.

Jesus showed us the power of thankfulness. He gave thanks before meals, like when He fed thousands of people with just a few loaves and fishes. He also gave thanks in difficult times, showing us that gratitude isn't just for when life is easy. It's for those hard moments too. By following His example, we can find peace even when things seem tough.

Gratitude helps us trust God more. When we're thankful, we're saying, 'I see the good things You've done, and I believe You'll keep taking care of me.' This trust helps us let go of worry. Instead of focusing on what might go wrong, we can think about what's going right. It's like swapping a heavy backpack full of rocks for a light one filled with feathers. You'll feel the difference right away.

Here's a simple activity to try: Take a piece of paper and write down something that's been worrying you. Then, on the other side of the paper, write down something you're thankful for. Fold the paper so only the thankful thought shows. This little exercise helps shift your focus from worry to gratitude, bringing peace to your heart.

God wants us to have peace, and gratitude is a key to finding it. The Bible tells us, 'Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.' This means that when we're thankful, we open the door to a special kind of peace that only God can give.

Gratitude also helps us see God's goodness, even in hard times. It's like putting on a pair of glasses that let us see the world differently. Instead of noticing only the bad stuff, we start to see the good things too. Maybe it's a friend who cares, a beautiful sunset, or even just a quiet moment to rest. These are all gifts from God, and being thankful for them brings peace.

So, how does gratitude bring peace to your heart? Think about it. When you're thankful, it's like you're telling God, 'I trust You, and I know You're taking care of me.' That trust brings a calmness that worry just can't stick to. It's like trying to pin a tail on a slippery pig -- it just won't stay!

Remember, the peace of God is something special. It's not like the peace the world offers, which can come and go. God's peace stays with us, even when things are hard. It's a peace that 'surpasses all understanding,' meaning it's bigger and better than anything we can imagine. So, let's hold on to gratitude and the peace it brings. It's a gift from God, and it's always there for us to open.

In a world where so much is uncertain, gratitude is something we can always count on. It's like a steady anchor in a stormy sea. When we're thankful, we're choosing to focus on the good, and that brings a peace that nothing else can. So, let's make gratitude a habit. Let's be thankful in the good times and the hard times. And let's trust that God is always with us, bringing peace to our hearts and minds.

As we go through our days, let's remember to be thankful. It's a simple thing, but it brings big rewards. Peace is one of them, and it's a gift from God. So, let's open our hearts to gratitude and the peace it brings. It's always there for us, waiting to be discovered.

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Chapter 6: Forgiveness and Letting Go



Imagine you're holding a hot coal in your hand. The longer you squeeze it, the more it burns you -- not the person who handed it to you. That's what holding a grudge is like. It doesn't hurt the person who wronged you; it hurts you. The Bible teaches us that anger and bitterness are like poisons we drink, hoping someone else will get sick. But that's not how it works. The only person who suffers is the one holding onto the anger.

Let's look at Cain, the first son of Adam and Eve. When God accepted his brother Abel's offering but not his own, Cain didn't just feel disappointed -- he let that disappointment turn into burning anger. He held onto it so tightly that it led him to do something terrible: he hurt his own brother. Genesis 4:6-7 tells us God warned Cain, saying, 'Why are you angry? If you do what is right, won't you be accepted?' But Cain didn't listen. His grudge didn't change God's mind or fix his problem. It only brought more pain -- into his life and his family's. That's what happens when we let anger take root. It grows into something ugly, and we're the ones who have to live with the consequences.

Now, think about how it feels to carry a grudge. Maybe someone lied to you, betrayed you, or treated you unfairly. At first, you might feel justified in being angry. They deserve it, you think. But over time, that anger starts to weigh on you. It's like carrying a heavy backpack everywhere you go. You feel tired. Your heart feels heavy. You might even start to feel bitter about everything, not just the one thing that hurt you. Studies show that holding onto anger can make you physically sick -- it raises your stress levels, weakens your immune system, and can even lead to heart problems. Your body wasn't designed to carry that kind of weight. And worse, it pushes people away. Friends and family can sense when someone is full of bitterness, and they don't want to be around it. So not only does the grudge hurt you inside, it also hurts your relationships.

Here's a simple activity to try: Take a piece of paper and write down one grudge you're holding onto. It could be big or small. Now, write down how it makes you feel. Do you feel sad? Tired? Like you're always on guard? Most people find that the grudge doesn't make them feel powerful -- it makes them feel drained. That's because anger takes energy. It's like a fire that burns up your peace, your joy, and even your health. Now, ask yourself: Is this worth it? Is holding onto this anger helping me, or is it just making my life harder?

The Bible is very clear about this. In Ephesians 4:31-32, it says, 'Get rid of all bitterness, rage, and anger... Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.' God doesn't tell us to forgive because the person who hurt us deserves it. He tells us to forgive because we deserve peace. Forgiveness isn't about letting someone off the hook; it's about unhooking yourself from the pain. It's like cutting a chain that's been dragging you down. When you let go, you're not saying what they did was okay. You're saying, I refuse to let this control me anymore.

Think about it this way: When you hold a grudge, you're giving the person who hurt you power over your emotions, your health, and even your future. Every time you replay the hurt in your mind, you're letting them live rent-free in your head. But when you choose to forgive, you take that power back. You're saying, My happiness is more important than my anger. That's why forgiveness is a gift you give yourself. It's not about the other person. It's about setting you free.

Holding grudges doesn't just hurt you emotionally -- it can harm your body too. Research shows that chronic anger and bitterness are linked to high blood pressure, digestive problems, and even a shorter lifespan. Your body reacts to stress by releasing hormones like cortisol, which, over time, break down your immune system and make you more susceptible to illness. In contrast, forgiveness has been shown to lower stress, improve heart health, and even boost your mood. It's like giving your body a chance to heal. When you let go of anger, you're not just helping your heart in a spiritual sense -- you're helping your physical heart too.

Ask yourself: How do I feel when I hold onto anger? Do I feel light and free, or heavy and tired? Most people realize that anger doesn't bring them joy -- it brings them exhaustion. It's like drinking poison and waiting for the other person to get sick. But here's the truth: The only antidote is forgiveness. And the beautiful thing is, you don't have to wait for the other person to apologize or change. You can choose to let go right now. It's not about them; it's about you reclaiming your peace.

At the end of the day, forgiveness is one of the greatest acts of self-care you can practice. It's not weak -- it's powerful. It takes strength to say, I won't let this define me. And when you do, you'll find that the weight lifts. Your heart feels lighter. Your mind feels clearer. And suddenly, you have room for the good things in life -- love, joy, and the freedom to move forward. That's the gift of forgiveness. And it's a gift only you can give to yourself.

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How Forgiveness Sets You Free

Forgiveness is like unlocking a cage and setting ourselves free. Imagine holding onto a heavy bag filled with rocks. Each rock represents a grudge or a hurt you've been carrying around. The longer you hold onto it, the heavier it gets, and the more it weighs you down. But when you decide to forgive, it's like putting down that heavy bag. Suddenly, you feel lighter, freer, and more at peace. Forgiveness isn't about saying what someone did was okay. It's about choosing to let go of the pain and hurt so it doesn't control your life anymore.

Let me tell you a story from the Bible about a man named Joseph. Joseph had brothers who were jealous of him, so they sold him into slavery. Joseph ended up in Egypt, where he faced many hardships. But through it all, he remained faithful and eventually became a powerful leader. Years later, when his brothers came to Egypt needing help, Joseph had a choice to make. He could have been angry and refused to help them, but instead, he chose to forgive. He said to his brothers, 'You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good.' By forgiving his brothers, Joseph brought healing to his family and set himself free from the pain of the past.

Forgiveness can bring peace and joy to our hearts. When we hold onto anger and bitterness, it's like drinking poison and expecting the other person to get sick. It only hurts us. But when we choose to forgive, it's like opening a window to let fresh air into a stuffy room. Suddenly, there's space for peace and joy to come in. Forgiveness allows us to move forward with our lives, unburdened by the past.

Let's try a simple activity. Close your eyes and imagine someone who has hurt you. Picture yourself forgiving that person. How does it feel? Do you feel a sense of relief, like a weight has been lifted off your shoulders? That's the power of forgiveness. It's not always easy, and it might take time, but the freedom it brings is worth it.

God forgives us, and He wants us to forgive others. In the Bible, it says, 'For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.' This means that when we choose to forgive, we're not just helping ourselves, we're also following God's example. It's a way of showing love and compassion, just as God shows love and compassion to us.

Remember, forgiveness doesn't mean what they did was okay. It doesn't excuse the hurtful behavior, but it frees us from the pain. It's like saying, 'I acknowledge what you did hurt me, but I choose not to let it control my life anymore.' It's a powerful step towards healing and freedom.

Think about this: Who is someone you need to forgive to set yourself free? It might be a family member, a friend, or even yourself. Holding onto grudges only hurts us in the end. Forgiveness is a gift we give ourselves, a way to break free from the chains of the past.

Forgiveness is a choice that brings freedom. It's not always easy, and it might take time, but it's worth it. When we choose to forgive, we're choosing to let go of the past and embrace a future filled with peace, joy, and love. We're choosing to follow God's example and live a life unburdened by anger and bitterness.

So, take a step towards freedom today. Choose to forgive. It might be one of the most liberating choices you ever make. As Louise Hay says in 'The Power Is Within You,' 'Forgiveness is the key to happiness.' It's a simple truth, but it holds so much power. When we forgive, we unlock the door to our own happiness and freedom.

In the end, forgiveness is about setting ourselves free. It's about choosing to live a life filled with love, peace, and joy. It's about following God's example and embracing the freedom that comes with letting go. So, who will you choose to forgive today? Remember, forgiveness is a journey, and it's okay to take it one step at a time. Each step brings you closer to the freedom and peace you deserve.

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Forgiving Even When It's Hard

Forgiving someone who has hurt you deeply can feel like trying to lift a boulder with your bare hands. It's heavy, it's painful, and sometimes it seems impossible. But here's the truth: forgiveness is always the right choice, even when it's hard. It's not about saying what someone did was okay -- it's about freeing yourself from the weight of anger and bitterness. Think of it like pulling a thorn out of your foot. The longer you leave it in, the more it hurts. Forgiveness is the tweezers that help you remove the pain so you can walk freely again.

One of the most powerful examples of forgiveness comes from Jesus Himself. As He hung on the cross, suffering in ways we can barely imagine, He looked at the people who had nailed Him there -- people who mocked Him, spat on Him, and wanted Him dead -- and He said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34). If Jesus could forgive the very people who were killing Him, we can find the strength to forgive those who have wronged us. His example shows us that forgiveness isn't about the other person deserving it. It's about choosing love over hatred, peace over pain, and freedom over chains.

Now, let's be honest: forgiveness isn't always a one-time event. Sometimes it's a process, like climbing a mountain. You might take a few steps forward, then slip back a little. That's okay. Healing takes time, and it's normal to feel anger or sadness even as you're trying to let go. The key is to keep moving forward, even if it's just a little bit each day. You don't have to forgive and forget all at once. Start small. Maybe today you can say, "I'm willing to forgive," even if you don't feel it yet. Tomorrow, you might pray for the person who hurt you. Little by little, the weight will lift.

Here's a simple activity to help you on this journey: write a letter to the person you need to forgive. Pour out all your feelings -- the anger, the sadness, the confusion. Tell them how they hurt you and how it made you feel. Then, write the words, "I choose to forgive you." You don't have to send the letter. This is for you, not them. Sometimes, just getting the words out of your heart and onto paper can help you release the pain. It's like opening a window in a stuffy room -- suddenly, there's fresh air again.

You might be thinking, "But I don't want to forgive. It feels like I'm letting them off the hook." Here's the secret: forgiveness isn't about them. It's about you. Holding onto anger is like drinking poison and expecting the other person to get sick. It doesn't work that way. When you forgive, you're not saying what they did was right. You're saying, "I refuse to let this pain control me anymore." God doesn't ask us to forgive because He doesn't care about justice. He asks us to forgive because He knows it's the only way we can truly be free. And here's the beautiful part: He doesn't leave us to do it alone. When forgiveness feels impossible, He gives us the strength to do it. All we have to do is ask.

Some people think forgiving means you're weak, but the opposite is true. Forgiveness takes incredible strength. It's easy to stay angry. It's easy to hold a grudge. But choosing to let go? That's one of the bravest things you can do. Think of it like this: if someone wrongs you and you stay angry, they're still controlling you, even if they're not in your life anymore. Forgiveness is how you take back your power. It's how you say, "You don't get to decide how I feel anymore." That's not weakness -- that's victory.

So here's a question to sit with: What is one small step you can take today to forgive someone? Maybe it's praying for them. Maybe it's writing that letter. Maybe it's just saying out loud, "I want to forgive." Start where you are. God doesn't expect you to have it all figured out right away. He just wants you to take that first step, and He'll walk with you the rest of the way.

Remember, forgiveness doesn't mean you have to trust the person again or even be around them. It doesn't mean you pretend it didn't hurt. It means you're choosing to give your pain to God instead of carrying it yourself. And when it feels too hard, when the anger rises up again, that's when you lean on Him the most. He's there, ready to help you. He's been there all along, waiting for you to let Him take the weight. Forgiveness is hard, but you don't have to do it alone. God is with you, every step of the way.

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What Happens When We Don't Forgive?

Imagine holding onto a hot coal, intending to throw it at someone who has hurt you. The longer you hold onto it, the more it burns your hand. This is what happens when we don't forgive. We think we're hurting the other person, but really, we're only hurting ourselves. Let's explore what happens when we don't forgive and why it's so important to let go.

When we don't forgive, it's like drinking poison and expecting the other person to die. The bitterness and anger stay inside us, eating away at our happiness and peace. Over time, this can lead to broken relationships, not just with the person who hurt us, but with others too. Our hearts become hardened, and we push people away without even realizing it. The Bible tells us about an unforgiving servant who was punished for not forgiving others. This servant was forgiven a huge debt by his master, but he refused to forgive a small debt owed to him. His master was so angry that he threw the servant in jail. This story shows us that when we don't forgive, we end up hurting ourselves more than anyone else.

Unforgiveness doesn't just harm our relationships; it harms our health too. Studies have shown that holding onto anger and resentment can lead to stress, high blood pressure, and even heart disease. Our bodies aren't designed to carry around all that negativity. It weighs us down and makes us sick. When we forgive, we release that burden and allow our bodies to heal. Forgiveness is like a natural medicine that cleanses our hearts and minds, making room for happiness and peace.

Think about a time when you didn't forgive someone. What happened? Did you feel happy and free, or did you feel weighed down and sad? When we don't forgive, we give the person who hurt us power over our lives. We let them live rent-free in our minds, taking up space that should be filled with love and joy. God wants us to forgive so we can be free from that pain. He knows that unforgiveness only causes more problems over time, like a small weed that grows into a big, tangled mess.

Here's a simple activity to help you understand the power of forgiveness: Write down what might happen if you don't forgive someone. How would it make you feel? How would it affect your relationships and your health? Now, write down what might happen if you do forgive. How would that make you feel? How would it change your life? You'll see that forgiveness is the path to healing and freedom.

Unforgiveness can grow and cause more problems over time, just like a small weed that grows into a big, tangled mess. It can spread to other areas of our lives, making us bitter and angry. We might start seeing everything through a lens of negativity, pushing away the good things that come our way. But when we choose to forgive, we cut that weed at the root and make room for beautiful flowers to grow.

Have you ever seen or experienced the consequences of not forgiving? Maybe you've seen a family torn apart by bitterness or a friendship ruined by anger. These are the real-life effects of unforgiveness. But it doesn't have to be this way. We can choose to let go of that pain and find healing. Forgiveness is a gift we give ourselves, a way to break free from the chains of the past.

God wants us to forgive because He knows it's the only way to true freedom. He doesn't want us to be weighed down by anger and bitterness. He wants us to live lives full of love and joy. When we forgive, we open ourselves up to His healing power. We allow Him to work in our lives and bring us the peace that only He can give.

So, what happens when we don't forgive? We hurt ourselves more than anyone else. We damage our relationships, our health, and our happiness. We give power to the people who hurt us and let them control our lives. But when we choose to forgive, we take that power back. We free ourselves from the pain and open our hearts to healing. Forgiveness is the path to true freedom and happiness. It's a gift we give ourselves, a way to let go of the past and embrace the future with open arms.

Remember, forgiveness isn't about saying what the other person did was okay. It's about choosing to let go of the pain and move forward. It's about choosing happiness and peace over anger and bitterness. So, take that first step today. Choose to forgive and experience the freedom and healing that comes with it.

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Forgiving Yourself

Forgiving yourself is just as important as forgiving others. We all make mistakes, and it's crucial to learn how to let go of the guilt and shame that can weigh us down. Think about Peter, one of Jesus' closest friends. Peter denied knowing Jesus three times, but later, he repented and was forgiven. This story shows us that even when we mess up, we can find forgiveness and move forward. Holding onto our mistakes can make us feel stuck and unhappy. When we forgive ourselves, we can find peace and start fresh. It's like cleaning out a cluttered room; once it's clean, there's space for new, wonderful things to come in. Try this simple activity: Write down a mistake you've made on a piece of paper. Then, say out loud, 'I forgive myself for this.' You might feel a weight lift off your shoulders. Remember, God forgives us, and we should forgive ourselves too. Self-forgiveness is a way to show love to ourselves, just like we would show love to a friend who made a mistake. Ask yourself, 'What is one thing I need to forgive myself for?' It could be something small or big, but acknowledging it is the first step to letting it go. God's grace is bigger than our mistakes. No matter what we've done, His love and forgiveness are always there for us. So, let's learn to be kind to ourselves, just as God is kind to us. Forgiving ourselves is a journey, and it's okay to take small steps. Each time we choose to let go of a mistake, we make room for more joy and peace in our lives. Louise Hay, in her book 'The Power Is Within You,' reminds us that we have the power to change our lives by changing our thoughts. When we forgive ourselves, we're choosing to think differently about our past and our worth. It's not always easy, but it's always worth it. So, let's take a deep breath and start this journey of self-forgiveness, knowing that we are loved and worthy of forgiveness. In the book 'Life Loves You: 7 Spiritual Practices to Heal Your Life,' Louise Hay and Robert Holden talk about the importance of self-love and forgiveness. They remind us that we are all deserving of love and forgiveness, and that includes the love and forgiveness we give to ourselves. When we forgive ourselves, we're not saying that what we did was okay. Instead, we're acknowledging that we are human, we make mistakes, and we can learn and grow from them. It's like

planting a seed. First, you have to dig a little hole, which might feel uncomfortable, but then you plant the seed and cover it with soil. With time and care, that seed grows into something beautiful. Forgiving ourselves is like that. It might feel hard at first, but with time and care, it leads to growth and beauty in our lives. So, let's be gentle with ourselves. Let's remember that we are all on a journey, learning and growing every day. And most importantly, let's remember that God's grace is always there for us, bigger than any mistake we could ever make.

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How Forgiveness Heals Relationships

There's something almost magical about forgiveness. It doesn't just make us feel lighter inside -- it actually has the power to heal broken relationships and bring people back together. Think of it like a balm for wounds that seem too deep to mend. When we forgive, we're not just letting go of anger; we're opening the door for love and trust to walk back in. And the best part? This isn't just wishful thinking -- it's how life is designed to work, especially when we look at the stories and teachings that have guided people for thousands of years.

One of the most beautiful examples of this comes from the story of the prodigal son. You might have heard it before: a young man takes his inheritance early, squanders it all on reckless living, and ends up broke and hungry. When he finally returns home, expecting to be treated like a servant, his father does something unexpected. Instead of scolding him or holding a grudge, the father runs to meet him, wraps him in a warm embrace, and throws a feast to celebrate his return. That's forgiveness in action -- no conditions, no 'I told you so,' just pure, restoring love. The son's mistakes didn't disappear, but the father's forgiveness made space for their relationship to start anew. It's a reminder that no matter how far we've strayed or how badly we've messed up, forgiveness can always bring us home.

But how does forgiveness actually heal a relationship? Well, imagine trust is like a bridge between two people. When someone hurts us, it's like a storm comes and washes away part of that bridge. We can try to ignore it or walk around the broken pieces, but the only way to truly cross over again is to rebuild it. Forgiveness is the first step in that rebuilding process. It doesn't mean pretending the hurt never happened or that the other person's actions were okay. It means choosing to say, 'What you did mattered, but our relationship matters more.' Over time, as both people commit to honesty and kindness, that bridge doesn't just get fixed -- it becomes stronger than before. Studies in emotional and spiritual healing, like those discussed in *The Power Is Within You* by Louise Hay, show that forgiveness releases the toxic emotions that keep us stuck in pain. When we let go of resentment, we make room for love to grow again.

Here's something important to remember: forgiveness isn't just for the other person. It's a gift we give ourselves. Holding onto anger is like drinking poison and expecting the other person to get sick. It eats away at us, not them. When we forgive, we're choosing peace over bitterness, freedom over chains. Louise Hay and Robert Holden, in *Life Loves You: 7 Spiritual Practices to Heal Your Life*, put it this way: forgiveness is like taking out the trash. We're not doing it for the trash -- we're doing it so our home (our heart) can be clean and welcoming again. And when our hearts are light, our relationships have a chance to thrive.

Now, you might be thinking, 'That sounds great, but what if the other person doesn't deserve forgiveness?' Here's the truth: none of us deserve forgiveness. That's what makes it so powerful. Forgiveness isn't about who's right or wrong; it's about choosing love over judgment. God doesn't wait for us to earn His forgiveness -- He offers it freely, again and again. When we do the same for others, we're following His example. And when we live this way, something amazing happens: the people around us start to change too. Not because we forced them to, but because love has a way of softening even the hardest hearts.

Let's try a simple activity together. Think of one relationship in your life that feels broken or strained. Maybe it's a friend who betrayed you, a family member who hurt you, or even someone you've wronged yourself. Now, imagine what it would look like to extend forgiveness in that situation. What would you say? How would it feel to let go of the weight you've been carrying? You don't have to have all the answers -- just hold that thought gently. Sometimes, the first step is simply being willing to consider that healing is possible.

One of the biggest lies we believe is that forgiveness means we're letting the other person 'get away with' what they did. But real forgiveness isn't about them -- it's about us. It's about refusing to let their actions control our happiness anymore. In *Who Switched Off My Brain?*, Caroline Leaf explains that holding onto unforgiveness actually rewires our brains in negative ways, keeping us stuck in cycles of pain. But when we choose to forgive, we're rewiring our minds for peace, joy, and healthier connections. That's not just spiritual talk -- it's science. Our bodies and minds are designed to heal when we release toxicity, whether it's from food, emotions, or relationships.

So what's one relationship you can help heal through forgiveness? It might be a small step, like sending a kind message to someone you've been avoiding. Or it might be a bigger leap, like having an honest conversation where you both admit your mistakes. Whatever it is, start small. Forgiveness isn't a one-time event; it's a process. Some days will feel easier than others, and that's okay. The key is to keep choosing love over and over again.

Here's the beautiful truth: forgiveness is the master key to restoring relationships. Without it, wounds fester and distances grow. But with it? Even the deepest hurts can become the foundation for something stronger. It's not about forgetting or pretending the pain never happened. It's about saying, 'This hurt was real, but our connection is more important.' And when we live this way -- when we forgive freely, just as we've been forgiven -- we're not just healing our relationships. We're creating a ripple effect of peace that touches everyone around us.

So today, take a deep breath and ask yourself: What's one step I can take toward forgiveness? Maybe it's praying for the person who hurt you. Maybe it's writing down what you're ready to let go of. Or maybe it's simply deciding that you're done letting the past steal your joy. Whatever it is, remember this: forgiveness isn't a sign of weakness. It's one of the bravest, most powerful things you'll ever do. And it's the only way to truly come home -- to yourself, to others, and to the love that's been waiting for you all along.

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Letting Go of Anger

Have you ever felt so mad that your hands clenched into fists, your heart pounded, and your whole body felt hot? Maybe someone said something hurtful, or something unfair happened, and that anger just wouldn't let go. It's like holding onto a burning coal -- it doesn't hurt the person who made you mad, but it sure burns you. That's why letting go of anger is one of the most important parts of forgiveness. It's not about saying what someone did was okay. It's about setting yourself free.

The Bible shows us a powerful example of this in the story of David and Saul. King Saul was jealous of David and tried to kill him -- more than once! David had every reason to be furious. He could have gathered an army, fought back, or spent his days bitter and plotting revenge. But instead, David chose to trust God. When he had the chance to harm Saul, he refused, saying, "The Lord forbid that I should do such a thing to my master, the Lord's anointed" (1 Samuel 24:6). David didn't let anger control him. He let it go and trusted that God would handle things in the right way. And you know what? God did. Saul's own choices led to his downfall, while David became one of the greatest kings in history. Letting go of anger doesn't mean you're weak -- it means you're wise enough to trust God's plan instead of carrying the weight of bitterness.

Here's the hard truth: anger doesn't just disappear on its own. If we hold onto it, it starts to change us. It's like drinking poison and expecting the other person to get sick. Over time, anger can make our hearts hard, our bodies tense, and our relationships brittle. Studies show that holding onto anger and resentment can even make us physically sick -- raising blood pressure, weakening our immune system, and stealing our joy. As Caroline Leaf writes in *Who Switched Off My Brain*, toxic emotions like anger "hold your mind in a nasty, vice-like grip," making it harder to think clearly or grow in healthy ways. And worse, anger can spread like wildfire, hurting the people we love most. Have you ever snapped at someone you care about because you were still mad about something else? That's anger stealing from your relationships. The good news? You don't have to live that way.

So how do we let go? Sometimes, it helps to name what we're feeling. Grab a piece of paper and write down what's making you angry. Maybe it's something someone said, a mistake you made, or a situation that feels unfair. Now, here's the important part: rip it up or burn it (safely!). Watching those words disappear can be a powerful way to tell your heart, "I'm choosing to release this." You might even say out loud, "God, I give this to You. I trust You to handle it." This isn't magic -- it's a way to train your mind and heart to stop replaying the hurt over and over. Louise Hay, in *The Power Is Within You*, reminds us that forgiveness isn't about the other person -- it's about us choosing peace over pain. When we let go, we make room for something better.

God doesn't want us to live chained to anger. In fact, the Bible tells us, "Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry" (Ephesians 4:26). Why? Because anger that lingers turns into bitterness, and bitterness is like a weed that chokes out everything good in our lives. God knows we'll get hurt. He knows life isn't always fair. But He also knows that we are the ones who suffer when we refuse to forgive. Think of it like carrying a heavy backpack full of rocks. Every time we hold onto anger, we're adding another rock. Eventually, it gets so heavy we can barely move. But when we let go -- when we trust God to carry the weight -- we can finally breathe again.

Letting go of anger doesn't mean what happened was okay. It doesn't mean you have to be friends with the person who hurt you. It does mean you're choosing freedom over prison. Peace over chaos. Life over bitterness. Joan Borysenko, in *Fire in the Soul*, explains that holding onto anger keeps us stuck in "karmic loops" -- repeating the same pain over and over. But when we release it, we break the cycle. We step into the light. And that's where God meets us. He doesn't promise to fix everything instantly, but He does promise to walk with us, to heal our hearts, and to turn our pain into something beautiful if we'll let Him.

Here's a question to ask yourself: What is one thing I can do today to let go of anger? Maybe it's praying for the person who hurt you (even if you don't feel like it). Maybe it's writing that letter and then tearing it up. Maybe it's just taking a deep breath and saying, "I choose peace." Small steps matter. Every time you choose to release anger, you're building a habit of freedom. And freedom feels a lot better than a heart full of rocks.

At the end of the day, God's peace is bigger than our anger. It's stronger than our hurt. And it's available to everyone -- no matter what's been done to you or what mistakes you've made. The world will tell you to hold onto anger, to demand justice, to never forget. But God whispers something different: Let it go. Trust Me. I've got this. And when we do? We find something amazing. The weight lifts. The air feels lighter. And for the first time in a long time, we can smile -- not because everything is fixed, but because we are free.

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Forgiveness as a Gift to Yourself

Forgiveness is something we often think about as a gift to others, but it's really a gift we give ourselves. When we forgive, we're not saying that what happened was okay or that it didn't hurt. We're choosing to let go of the pain and anger that's been weighing us down. It's like carrying a heavy backpack full of rocks. Each rock represents a grudge or a hurt. Forgiveness is taking out those rocks one by one until the backpack is light again. Jesus showed us the power of forgiveness. He forgave us for our sins so we could be free from them. He didn't hold onto anger or resentment. Instead, He chose love and freedom. When we forgive, we're following His example and choosing freedom for ourselves.

Forgiveness brings peace, joy, and healing to our hearts. It's like a balm that soothes a wound. When we hold onto anger and resentment, it's like having a storm inside us. But forgiveness calms that storm. It brings a sense of peace that passes all understanding. It's not always easy, and it doesn't happen all at once. It's a process, like healing from a wound. But each step brings us closer to joy and wholeness. Think about a time when you forgave someone. Maybe it was a small thing, like a friend who said something hurtful. Or maybe it was something bigger. How did it make you feel? Did you feel lighter, like a weight had been lifted? That's the power of forgiveness. It's a gift we give ourselves, a gift of freedom and peace.

God wants us to forgive so we can live in freedom. He knows that holding onto anger and resentment hurts us more than it hurts the person we're angry with. It's like drinking poison and expecting the other person to die. Forgiveness is a choice, and it's one that brings blessings to our lives. It's not about the other person deserving it. It's about us choosing to live in the light rather than the darkness. It's about choosing love over hate, peace over turmoil. Forgiveness is a path to true happiness. It's not always easy, and it doesn't mean we forget what happened. But it means we choose not to let it control us anymore.

Forgiveness is a choice that brings blessings to our lives. It's like choosing to walk in the sun instead of the shadow. It's about choosing to let go of the past and embrace the present. When we forgive, we're not saying that what happened was right. We're saying that we choose to move on, to live in the light of God's love. It's a powerful choice, one that can change our lives and the lives of those around us. How has forgiveness been a gift to you? Have you ever forgiven someone and felt a sense of freedom and peace? That's the power of forgiveness. It's a gift we give ourselves, a gift of love and freedom.

Forgiveness is the path to true happiness. It's not always easy, and it doesn't happen overnight. But each step we take towards forgiveness brings us closer to peace and joy. It's like walking on a path towards a beautiful sunset. Each step brings us closer to the light, to the love and peace that God wants for us. So let's choose forgiveness. Let's choose to let go of the past and embrace the present. Let's choose to live in the light of God's love. Forgiveness is a gift we give ourselves, a gift of freedom, peace, and true happiness.

Remember, forgiveness is not about the other person. It's about us choosing to live in the light rather than the darkness. It's about choosing love over hate, peace over turmoil. It's a powerful choice, one that can change our lives and the lives of those around us. So let's choose forgiveness. Let's choose to live in the light of God's love. Forgiveness is a gift we give ourselves, a gift of freedom, peace, and true happiness.

In our journey towards forgiveness, it's important to remember that it's not a one-time event but a process. It's like peeling an onion, layer by layer. Each layer represents a part of the hurt or anger that we need to let go of. And as we peel away these layers, we might shed some tears, just like an onion makes our eyes water. But with each layer, we get closer to the core, to the freedom and peace that forgiveness brings.

It's also important to remember that forgiveness doesn't mean we have to continue to allow harmful behavior. We can forgive someone and still choose to not have them in our lives. Forgiveness is about letting go of the hurt and anger inside us, not about condoning harmful actions. It's about choosing our own peace and happiness over holding onto pain.

So, as we journey towards forgiveness, let's remember that it's a process, a choice, and a gift we give ourselves. It's not always easy, but it's always worth it. Because forgiveness is the path to true happiness, to living in the light of God's love. And that's a gift worth giving ourselves.

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Chapter 7: Wisdom and Making Good Choices



Ultra 16:9

Imagine you're walking through a dark forest at night. The trees are tall, the path is winding, and you can't see where you're going. Suddenly, someone hands you a bright lantern. That light helps you see the roots to step over, the branches to duck under, and the right path to follow. That lantern is like wisdom -- it shows us the way when life feels confusing or scary.

So, what is wisdom? Wisdom is knowing what is right and then doing it. It's not just about having smart ideas in your head. It's about making good choices -- choices that help you, help others, and honor the natural way God designed life to work. Think of it like this: if knowledge is knowing that fire burns, wisdom is not putting your hand in the fire. Wisdom is knowledge put into action, guided by love and truth.

One of the best examples of wisdom in the Bible is King Solomon. When God asked Solomon what he wanted most in the world, Solomon didn't ask for money, power, or fame. Instead, he asked for wisdom -- to understand what is right and to lead his people well. God was so pleased with this request that He not only gave Solomon wisdom but also riches and honor beyond what any other king had. Solomon became known as the wisest man on earth. He wrote thousands of proverbs -- short, wise sayings -- and people traveled from far away just to hear his advice. His wisdom helped him judge fairly, build a great kingdom, and live in a way that honored God's design for life. That's the power of wisdom: it doesn't just make you better -- it makes everything around you better too.

But here's the beautiful part: wisdom isn't just for kings or scholars. It's for everyone. Wisdom is like a light that God gives us to guide our steps, no matter how old we are or where we come from. When we choose wisdom, we're choosing to see the world the way God sees it -- to value life, truth, freedom, and love over greed, lies, or harm. It's like having a compass in a world full of confusing messages. The media might tell you one thing, the government another, and even some churches might get it wrong. But wisdom helps you cut through the noise and find what's truly good.

So how do we get this wisdom? The Bible tells us that wisdom comes from God. It's not something we earn by reading the most books or having the highest IQ. It's a gift -- one we receive when we ask for it with a humble heart. James 1:5 says, If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. That's a promise! God wants us to have wisdom because He knows it protects us, helps us thrive, and keeps us close to His truth. And in a world where so many institutions -- governments, schools, even some churches -- try to control what we think, wisdom is our shield. It helps us see through the lies and stand firm in what's real.

Here's a simple way to think about it: Who is the wisest person you know? Maybe it's a grandparent who always gives the best advice, or a friend who seems to make choices that bring peace instead of chaos. What makes them wise? Is it because they listen more than they talk? Because they think about how their choices affect others? Because they stand up for what's right, even when it's hard? Wisdom often looks like love in action -- choosing kindness over anger, truth over lies, and freedom over control. That's the kind of wisdom God wants for us.

Now, let's ask ourselves: What is one way I can seek wisdom today? Maybe it's taking a quiet moment to pray and ask God for guidance. Maybe it's reading a verse from the Bible or a book that teaches truth (like the ones that talk about natural health, real freedom, or God's design for life). Maybe it's choosing to walk away from something you know is harmful -- like processed food, toxic products, or dishonest media -- and instead choosing what builds you up. Wisdom starts with small steps, but those steps add up to a life that's strong, free, and full of purpose.

Remember, wisdom isn't about being perfect. Even Solomon, the wisest man, made mistakes when he stopped listening to God's truth. But the good news is that every morning is a new chance to choose wisdom. Every day, we can ask God to help us see clearly, love deeply, and live in a way that honors His design. And when we do, we're not just helping ourselves -- we're shining that lantern for others too. Because wisdom isn't just a gift to us; it's a gift we get to share.

So today, take a deep breath and ask: God, show me Your wisdom. Help me see the right path and give me the courage to walk it. And then watch how that light starts to guide you -- one good choice at a time.

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Listening to Good Advice

Listening to good advice is like having a superpower. It helps us make wise choices and avoid mistakes. Imagine you're about to cross a busy street. If someone tells you to look both ways first, that's good advice. It keeps you safe. In the same way, good advice can guide us in all parts of life, helping us make decisions that keep us happy, healthy, and out of trouble.

Let's talk about Rehoboam, a king from the Bible. He had a big decision to make. The people asked him to be kinder and not tax them so much. Rehoboam went to two groups for advice. The older, wiser advisors told him to listen to the people and be kind. But his younger friends told him to be harsh and show who was boss. Rehoboam chose to listen to the bad advice from his friends. This made the people very angry, and they rebelled against him. This story shows us how important it is to listen to good advice, especially from those who are wise and experienced.

Good advice can come from many places. Our parents often give us the best advice because they love us and want what's best for us. Teachers, too, share their knowledge to help us learn and grow. Wise friends can also give good advice because they care about us and have our best interests at heart. Even books and stories, like the ones in the Bible, can give us good advice. They teach us lessons about life and how to treat others.

Think about a time when someone gave you good advice. Maybe your mom told you to wear a jacket on a cold day, and it kept you from getting sick. Or perhaps a friend told you to study for a test, and you got a good grade. Good advice can come in many forms, and it's important to listen and take it to heart. It can save us from trouble and help us make better choices.

God wants us to listen to wise counsel. In the Bible, it says, 'Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety.' This means that when we listen to good advice, we are more likely to make good decisions and stay safe. God gives us people in our lives to guide us, like parents, teachers, and friends. He wants us to listen to them and learn from their wisdom. Listening to good advice can save us from trouble. Imagine you're playing near a cliff, and your dad tells you to step back because it's dangerous. If you listen, you stay safe. But if you ignore his advice, you might fall and get hurt. Good advice is like a warning sign. It helps us see dangers we might not notice on our own.

Who is someone you can ask for good advice? It could be your mom, dad, a teacher, or even a wise friend. Think about the people in your life who care about you and want the best for you. These are the people whose advice you should listen to. They have your best interests at heart and want to see you succeed.

Wise people listen to good advice. They know that they don't have all the answers and that others can help them see things they might miss. Listening to good advice is a sign of strength, not weakness. It shows that you are smart enough to know when you need help and wise enough to take it.

Remember, good advice can come from many places. It can be from a person, a book, or even a story. The important thing is to listen with an open heart and mind. When we do, we make better choices, stay safe, and live happier lives.

So, let's make a habit of listening to good advice. Let's thank the people who give it to us and show them that we value their wisdom. And let's always be open to learning and growing, knowing that good advice is a gift that helps us on our journey through life.

Think about the people in your life who give you good advice. Maybe it's your grandma who tells you to eat your vegetables, or your teacher who helps you with your homework. These people care about you and want to see you do well. When they give you advice, it's because they have your best interests at heart.

Good advice is like a treasure. It's valuable and can help us in many ways. It can keep us safe, help us learn, and guide us on the right path. So, let's always be open to receiving it and thankful for the people who share their wisdom with us.

In the end, listening to good advice is one of the best things we can do. It helps us make wise choices, stay out of trouble, and live happy, healthy lives. So, let's listen with open hearts and minds, knowing that good advice is a gift that helps us on our journey through life.

Let's also remember that God wants us to listen to wise counsel. He gives us people in our lives to guide us, and He wants us to listen to them. When we do, we show that we trust in His plan for us and that we are open to learning and growing.

So, let's make a promise to ourselves to always listen to good advice. Let's thank the people who give it to us and show them that we value their wisdom. And let's always be open to learning and growing, knowing that good advice is a gift that helps us on our journey through life.

Remember, wise people listen to good advice. They know that they don't have all the answers and that others can help them see things they might miss. Listening to good advice is a sign of strength, not weakness. It shows that you are smart enough to know when you need help and wise enough to take it.

In conclusion, listening to good advice is like having a superpower. It helps us make wise choices, stay safe, and live happy, healthy lives. So, let's always be open to receiving it and thankful for the people who share their wisdom with us. Let's listen with open hearts and minds, knowing that good advice is a gift that helps us on our journey through life.

As we've seen, good advice can come from many places. It can be from a person, a book, or even a story. The important thing is to listen with an open heart and mind. When we do, we make better choices, stay safe, and live happier lives.

So, let's make a habit of listening to good advice. Let's thank the people who give it to us and show them that we value their wisdom. And let's always be open to learning and growing, knowing that good advice is a gift that helps us on our journey through life.

In the words of Caroline Leaf, 'The amygdala, a double almond-shaped structure located in your brain, is designed to protect you from any threat to your body and mind - such as danger or stress. It puts the passion behind the punch...' This shows us how our brains are designed to protect us, and listening to good advice can help us avoid threats and dangers.

In another book, 'Beyond Order: 12 More Rules For Life,' Jordan Peterson talks about the importance of having good people around us who can give us wise counsel. He says that having a strong support system is crucial for making good decisions and living a happy life.

So, let's remember to listen to good advice. It's one of the best things we can do for ourselves. It helps us make wise choices, stay out of trouble, and live happy, healthy lives. Let's listen with open hearts and minds, knowing that good advice is a gift that helps us on our journey through life.

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Thinking Before You Act

Have you ever done something too fast and then wished you could take it back? Maybe you said something unkind to a friend, or you grabbed a cookie before dinner when you knew you shouldn't. We've all been there! The good news is, there's a simple way to avoid these mistakes -- by thinking before we act. When we pause for just a moment to consider what we're about to do, we can make much better choices. This isn't just good advice; it's a principle that can change our lives for the better.

Let's look at a powerful example from the Bible. Joseph, the son of Jacob, was sold into slavery by his jealous brothers. Even though he faced many hardships, Joseph didn't let his emotions control him. When he was falsely accused and thrown into prison, he didn't lash out in anger. Instead, he thought carefully about his actions and trusted in God's plan. Later, when he became a leader in Egypt, he used his wisdom to save many people from famine. Joseph's story shows us that when we think before we act -- even in difficult situations -- we can turn challenges into blessings. His ability to pause and reflect helped him become one of the greatest leaders in history.

So, how can we apply this in our own lives? It starts with a simple pause. Before you speak, before you make a decision, or even before you react to something that upsets you, take a deep breath. Ask yourself: What will happen if I do this? Will this help me or hurt me? Is this the kind of choice that aligns with my values? This small moment of reflection can save us from a lot of trouble. For instance, if you're about to argue with someone, pausing to think might help you respond with kindness instead of anger. If you're tempted to skip your chores, thinking ahead might remind you how good it feels to finish what you started. Our minds are powerful tools, and when we use them wisely, we make choices that lead to happiness and success.

Here's a little activity to try: Think back to a time when you acted without thinking. What happened? Did it turn out well, or did you regret it? Maybe you blurted out a secret, or you spent money on something you didn't really need. Now, imagine if you had taken just a few seconds to think before acting. How might things have been different? This isn't about feeling bad -- it's about learning. Every mistake is a chance to grow wiser, and wisdom starts with thinking before we act.

God wants us to use both our minds and our hearts when we make decisions. The Bible tells us in Proverbs 3:5-6, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight." This doesn't mean we should turn off our brains -- it means we should use them in partnership with our faith. When we pray for guidance and then take the time to think carefully, we're more likely to make choices that honor God and bring good into our lives. Our thoughts shape our actions, and our actions shape our future. That's why it's so important to fill our minds with truth, kindness, and wisdom.

One of the biggest benefits of thinking before we act is avoiding regret. How many times have you done something in the heat of the moment and later thought, I wish I hadn't done that! Regret can weigh heavily on our hearts, but we can prevent a lot of it by simply slowing down. For example, if you're about to post something angry on social media, ask yourself: Will this make me feel better tomorrow, or will I wish I had kept it to myself? If you're tempted to eat junk food when you're trying to be healthy, pause and remember how much better you'll feel if you choose something nourishing instead. Small moments of thought can lead to big rewards in our lives.

Now, here's a question for you: What is one situation where you can practice thinking before acting this week? Maybe it's when you're talking to a family member, or when you're deciding how to spend your time. Perhaps it's when you're faced with a choice that feels tempting but might not be the best for you. Write it down or say it out loud: "In this situation, I will pause and think before I act." The more we practice this, the more natural it becomes. And before long, you'll find yourself making wiser choices without even having to try very hard.

It's also important to remember that thinking before we act isn't just about avoiding mistakes -- it's about creating opportunities. When we take the time to consider our actions, we open the door to better relationships, stronger health, and a clearer mind. For example, if you think before you speak, you might say something that encourages a friend instead of hurting their feelings. If you think before you spend money, you might invest in something that truly adds value to your life, like seeds for a garden or a book that teaches you something new. Every wise choice is like planting a seed that grows into something beautiful.

Wisdom isn't something we're born with -- it's something we build, one thoughtful decision at a time. And the best part? You don't have to be perfect. Even if you forget to think before you act sometimes, you can always start again. Each new moment is a chance to pause, reflect, and choose wisely. As Dr. Caroline Leaf, a neuroscientist who studies how our thoughts affect our brains, explains in her book *Switch On Your Brain*, our minds are designed to change and grow. Every time we choose to think before we act, we're strengthening the part of our brain that helps us make better choices in the future. That's how wisdom becomes a habit -- and how we create a life filled with purpose and joy.

So, let's make a promise to ourselves: Before we speak, before we react, and before we make decisions, we'll take a moment to think. It's a small step, but it leads to a big reward -- a life where we act with intention, avoid regret, and walk in the wisdom that God wants for us. Remember, wisdom starts with thinking. And every time you pause to reflect, you're taking a step toward the amazing life you were meant to live.

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Learning from Mistakes

Imagine you're learning to ride a bike. You wobble, you fall, but each time you get back up, you learn something new. Maybe you realize you need to hold the handlebars tighter or pedal a little slower. Mistakes aren't failures; they're lessons in disguise. The Bible tells us that even wise people make mistakes, but what makes them wise is that they learn from those mistakes. It's like turning a stumble into a step forward.

Let's talk about Peter, one of Jesus' closest friends. Peter made some big mistakes. One time, he even said he didn't know Jesus when things got scary. But Peter didn't let his mistakes keep him down. He learned from them, grew stronger, and became a leader in sharing Jesus' teachings. Peter's story shows us that mistakes don't have to define us. Instead, they can help us grow and become better people.

Think about a time when you made a mistake. Maybe you forgot to do something important, or you said something you didn't mean. What did you learn from that experience? Did it teach you to be more careful, more thoughtful, or more patient? Mistakes can be our teachers, showing us how to do better next time. They can make us wiser and stronger, just like exercise makes our muscles stronger.

God can use our mistakes to teach us valuable lessons. When we make a mistake, it's an opportunity to grow closer to God and understand His plan for us. It's like when a plant grows through a crack in the sidewalk. The crack might seem like a problem, but the plant finds a way to use it to reach the sunlight. Our mistakes can be like those cracks, helping us grow in ways we never expected.

Everyone makes mistakes, even the smartest and most careful people. What matters is what we do after we make a mistake. Do we give up, or do we learn and try again? Wise people choose to learn. They see mistakes as chances to improve and become better versions of themselves.

Here's a simple activity for you: Think of a mistake you made recently. It could be anything, big or small. Now, ask yourself, 'What did I learn from this?' Maybe you learned to be more patient, to pay more attention, or to ask for help when you need it. Write it down or tell someone about it. Sharing what we've learned can help others too.

What is one mistake you can learn from today? It might be something that happened this morning or something that's been on your mind for a while. Think about what that mistake taught you and how it can help you make better choices in the future. Remember, every mistake is a chance to grow.

Mistakes are part of learning, just like practice is part of getting better at something. When we see mistakes as opportunities to learn, we turn them into something positive. We become more resilient, more understanding, and more compassionate. We learn to see the world through a lens of growth and possibility. So, the next time you make a mistake, don't be too hard on yourself. Instead, ask, 'What can I learn from this?' and 'How can I do better next time?' With each mistake, you're getting a little wiser, a little stronger, and a little closer to the person you're meant to be. Mistakes aren't the end of the road; they're just part of the journey.

In the words of Ernest Holmes, 'Instead of thinking illness or weakness, think life -- Life! Take time to think about what most fully represents exultant and joyous life -- life that is so full of the sheer joy of living that it cannot be...' This reminds us to focus on the positive, on the growth and joy that comes from learning and living fully, even when we make mistakes.

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Choosing What's Right Over What's Easy

Have you ever stood at a crossroads where one path was easy, but the other felt right -- even if it was harder? Maybe it was telling the truth when a lie would have made things simpler, or standing up for someone when staying quiet would have kept you out of trouble. That little tug in your heart, the one that says, This is the right thing to do -- that's wisdom speaking. And here's the beautiful truth: choosing what's right over what's easy doesn't just make the world better. It makes you stronger, wiser, and freer. Let's talk about why that matters so much.

The Bible is full of stories about people who faced this exact choice. Take Daniel, for example. He was a young man living in a foreign land where the king had made a law that no one could pray to any god except him -- for thirty days. If you broke this rule, you'd be thrown into a den of hungry lions. Now, Daniel could have just closed his doors, pulled the curtains, and prayed in secret where no one would see. But he didn't. The Bible tells us that Daniel went to his room, opened his windows toward Jerusalem, and prayed to God three times a day -- just like he always did. He didn't hide. He didn't compromise. He chose what was right, even when it was dangerous. And because of that, God protected him in a way that left even the king in awe. Those lions didn't touch a single hair on Daniel's head. That's not just a cool story -- it's a lesson. When we stand firm in what's right, we're never alone, even if it feels that way at first.

Now, you might be thinking, That's Daniel. He's in the Bible. I'm just me. But here's the thing: every time you choose what's right over what's easy, you're doing the same thing Daniel did. Maybe it's refusing to gossip when your friends are talking about someone behind their back. Maybe it's saying no to that extra slice of cake because you know your body deserves better. Or maybe it's speaking up when you see something unfair happening at work or school. Those moments? They're your lion's den. And just like Daniel, when you trust that doing the right thing is worth the risk, you'll find strength you didn't know you had. It might not be as dramatic as lions sparing your life, but blessings come in quiet ways too -- a clearer conscience, deeper respect from others, or even opportunities you never expected.

Here's something important to remember: choosing what's right isn't just about avoiding trouble. It's about building something. Every time you make the harder, better choice, you're like a gardener planting seeds. At first, you might not see anything happening underground. But over time, those seeds grow into trust, integrity, and a reputation that people can rely on. Think about it: if you're the kind of person who always tells the truth, even when it's inconvenient, people will trust you more. If you're the one who stands up for what's fair, even when it's unpopular, others will respect you -- even if they don't agree with you at first. That's how character is built. And character? That's like gold. It doesn't rust or fade. It's something no one can take from you, no matter what happens in the world around you.

Let me ask you something: can you think of a time when you chose what was right over what was easy? Maybe it was returning a wallet you found, even though no one was watching. Or maybe it was admitting you made a mistake when you could have blamed someone else. Take a moment to remember how that felt. Did it feel scary at first? Probably. But afterward, didn't it feel like a weight had lifted? That's the thing about doing what's right -- it might feel heavy in the moment, but it always leaves you lighter in the end. And here's a secret: the more you practice this, the easier it gets. Your heart starts to recognize that little nudge of wisdom faster, and your courage grows. It's like exercising a muscle. The first time you lift a heavy weight, it's hard. But the more you do it, the stronger you become.

Now, you might be wondering, What if I choose what's right and things still go wrong? That's a fair question. The truth is, doing the right thing doesn't always mean you'll avoid hardship. Sometimes, it might even bring more of it -- at least for a little while. But here's what the Bible teaches us: God sees. He notices. And He rewards those who stay true to what's right, even when no one else does. It might not happen right away. It might not look the way you expect. But blessings have a way of finding those who live with integrity. Think of it like planting a tree. You don't dig a hole, drop in a seed, and come back the next day expecting a forest. It takes time. But if you keep watering that seed -- keep choosing what's right -- one day, you'll look up and realize you're standing in the shade of something strong and beautiful that you helped grow.

There's another layer to this, too. When you choose what's right, you're not just helping yourself. You're sending ripples out into the world. Imagine you're at a store, and the cashier gives you too much change by mistake. You could just walk away -- no one would know. But if you hand it back and say, Hey, you gave me too much, you've just shown that cashier that honesty still exists. Maybe that small act reminds them to be honest later that day when they're tempted to cut corners. Or maybe someone else sees it and decides to do the same thing next time they're in that situation. Your choices don't just affect you. They affect the people around you, and the people they interact with, and on and on. That's how real change starts -- not with big speeches or laws, but with one person, in one moment, choosing integrity over convenience.

So here's a question to sit with: What's one situation in your life right now where you could choose what's right over what's easy? Maybe it's at work, where you've been asked to do something that doesn't feel honest. Maybe it's in your family, where holding a grudge feels easier than forgiving. Or maybe it's with yourself -- like finally admitting you need to make a change, even if it's uncomfortable. Whatever it is, take a deep breath and ask: What would the wisest version of me do? Not the scared version. Not the lazy version. The wise one. The one who knows that short-term comfort isn't worth long-term regret.

And here's the best part: you don't have to do it alone. The same God who shut the lions' mouths for Daniel is with you, too. He's not up in the sky waiting to scold you if you mess up. He's right here, offering strength when you're weak, courage when you're scared, and wisdom when you're unsure. You might not see Him, just like Daniel didn't see the angels holding those lions back. But that doesn't mean He's not there. Every time you choose what's right, you're stepping into a partnership with something bigger than yourself. And that? That's where real freedom lives -- not in doing whatever you want, but in doing what you know is true, no matter what.

So go ahead. Make the hard choice. Tell the truth. Stand up. Be kind. Forgive. And when it feels too heavy, remember: the lions didn't eat Daniel. The storm didn't swallow Noah. The fire didn't burn Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. And whatever you're facing? It won't defeat you either. Because when you choose what's right over what's easy, you're not just choosing a path. You're choosing who you want to be. And that's a choice worth making, every single time.

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How Wisdom Helps in Life

Wisdom is like a bright light that helps us see clearly in all parts of our lives. Whether we're at school, with our friends, or making big decisions, wisdom guides us to do the right thing. It's not just about knowing a lot of facts; it's about understanding what's truly important and making choices that help us and those around us. Wisdom is a gift from God, and it's something we can use every day to live well and help others.

Let's think about Esther, a brave woman from the Bible. She used her wisdom to save her people from a terrible plan. Esther didn't rush into things; she thought carefully, prayed, and made wise choices. Her story shows us how wisdom can change lives and make a big difference in the world. Just like Esther, we can use wisdom to face our own challenges and help those around us.

Wisdom also helps us avoid trouble. Imagine you're walking down a path with lots of holes and bumps. Wisdom is like a flashlight that shows you where to step so you don't fall. It helps us see the consequences of our actions and make good choices. For example, if someone offers you something that might harm you, wisdom helps you say no and walk away. It's like having a wise friend inside your heart, always looking out for you.

Think about a time when wisdom helped you in your life. Maybe it was when you chose to be kind to someone who was being left out, or when you decided to study instead of play, and it helped you do well on a test. Wisdom can be found in these small moments too. It's not just for big, important decisions; it's for all the little choices we make every day. These choices add up and help us live a life that's good for us and for others.

God wants us to use wisdom to live well and help others. It's like He's given us a special tool to navigate through life's ups and downs. When we use wisdom, we're not just helping ourselves; we're also making the world a better place. It's like throwing a pebble into a pond -- the ripples spread out and touch everything around it. Our wise choices can have a ripple effect, too, touching the lives of others in ways we might not even see.

Wisdom is a tool that guides us through life's challenges. It's like a compass that always points us in the right direction. Even when things are tough, wisdom helps us see the best path to take. It reminds us to be patient, to think about others, and to make choices that are good for everyone. Wisdom doesn't just help us in the moment; it helps us build a better future for ourselves and for those we care about.

So, how can wisdom help you in your life today? Maybe it's helping you be a good friend, or making a choice that's healthy for your body. It could be standing up for what's right, even when it's hard. Wisdom is there for all these things and more. It's like a quiet voice inside us, always ready to guide us if we listen.

Remember, wisdom is a gift from God that we should use every day. It's not something we have to earn or buy; it's already ours to use. When we use wisdom, we're living the way God wants us to -- making good choices, helping others, and building a life that's full of love and kindness. Wisdom is like a light that never goes out, always ready to show us the way.

In a world where so many things can lead us astray, wisdom is our steady guide. It helps us see through the confusion and find the truth. It's like having a map when we're lost, or a friend who always gives good advice. Wisdom is there for us, no matter what we're facing. It's a gift that keeps on giving, helping us live a life that's good and true.

So, let's hold on to wisdom and use it every day. Let's let it guide our choices, big and small. Let's remember that wisdom is not just for us; it's for everyone we meet. When we share our wisdom, we're sharing a gift that can change lives. And that's something truly wonderful.

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Avoiding Bad Influences

Imagine you're walking down a path, and someone hands you a beautiful, shiny apple. It looks delicious, but when you take a bite, it's rotten inside. That's what bad influences can be like -- they might seem fun or exciting at first, but they can lead us down a path that hurts us in the end. The Bible teaches us to be careful about who and what we let influence our lives, because not everything that glitters is gold. Just like we wouldn't eat a rotten apple, we shouldn't let bad influences shape our thoughts, choices, or hearts.

One of the wisest men who ever lived, King Solomon, started out with incredible wisdom. God gave him the gift of understanding, and for many years, he ruled with fairness and built a magnificent temple. But later in his life, something changed. Solomon let himself be influenced by the wrong people -- wives who worshipped false gods -- and slowly, his heart turned away from what he knew was right. The Bible tells us that because of these bad influences, Solomon did things that displeased God, and his kingdom suffered for it. It's a powerful reminder that even the smartest, strongest people can be led astray if they're not careful about who they listen to or spend time with.

Bad influences don't just come from people, though. They can sneak in through what we watch, listen to, or even the thoughts we let grow in our minds. Think about it: if you spend hours watching shows or playing games that celebrate violence, dishonesty, or selfishness, those ideas start to feel normal. They can shape how you see the world and how you treat others. The same goes for the news or social media -- if it's filled with fear, anger, or lies, it can poison your mind like bad water poisons a plant. Even our own thoughts can become bad influences if we let worry, bitterness, or pride take root. The Bible encourages us to fill our minds with things that are true, noble, and good, because what we focus on grows.

Here's a simple way to think about it: imagine your mind is like a garden. If you plant weeds -- like negative thoughts, harmful ideas, or toxic relationships -- those weeds will spread and choke out the good plants. But if you plant seeds of kindness, truth, and wisdom, your garden will flourish. God wants us to choose influences that help us grow strong and healthy, just like a gardener tends to their plants. So ask yourself: what am I letting into my garden? Are the people around me lifting me up or pulling me down? Are the things I'm watching or reading making me a better person, or are they filling my mind with junk?

It's also important to remember that bad influences can hurt us in ways we don't always see right away. Just like eating junk food might not make you sick immediately, but over time it weakens your body, bad influences can weaken your spirit, your relationships, and even your health. For example, if you spend time with people who encourage you to make unhealthy choices -- like eating processed foods, skipping exercise, or using harmful substances -- your body will suffer. Or if you surround yourself with people who gossip, lie, or treat others poorly, those habits can rub off on you without you even realizing it. The Bible warns us that "bad company corrupts good character." That doesn't mean we should avoid people who are struggling -- after all, we're called to love and help others -- but it does mean we need to be wise about who we let have the biggest influence over our lives.

So how do we avoid bad influences? Start by paying attention. Just like you'd check a piece of fruit for bruises before eating it, take a moment to "check" the influences in your life. Ask: does this person, show, or idea make me feel closer to God and to goodness, or does it pull me away? Does it encourage me to be kind, honest, and brave, or does it make me feel angry, selfish, or afraid? If something or someone is leading you down a path that doesn't feel right, it's okay to step back. You don't have to watch that show, follow that account, or spend time with that person. God gives us the freedom to choose, and He wants us to choose things that bring life, not destruction.

Here's a little activity to try: think of one bad influence in your life right now. It could be a person, a habit, a type of media, or even a way of thinking. Now, ask yourself: what's one small step I can take to avoid it? Maybe it's unfollowing a social media account that makes you feel bad about yourself. Maybe it's saying no the next time someone invites you to do something you know isn't good for you. Or maybe it's replacing a negative thought with a thankful one. Write it down or tell someone you trust. Taking that first step is like pulling out a weed -- it makes room for something better to grow.

God doesn't want us to live in fear, always worried about making mistakes. But He does want us to be wise. He compares His wisdom to a tree of life, something that nourishes and protects us. When we choose good influences -- people who encourage us, media that inspires us, thoughts that build us up -- we're building a life that's strong and full of light. And when we avoid the bad, we're protecting ourselves from harm, just like putting on armor before a battle. The Bible says, "Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it." Your heart is like the control center of your life, and what you let into it matters.

Before we finish, let's ask one important question: what is one bad influence you can avoid today? It might be something small, like not clicking on a gossip article or walking away from a conversation that's turning ugly. Or it might be something bigger, like ending a friendship that's pulling you into trouble. Whatever it is, remember that every good choice is like a step closer to the life God wants for you -- one filled with peace, joy, and purpose. And if you ever feel stuck or unsure, ask God for wisdom. He promises to give it generously to anyone who asks.

As we wrap up, here's a final thought to carry with you: God wants you to surround yourself with good influences because He loves you. He doesn't want you to be weighed down by lies, fear, or harmful habits. He wants you to be free -- to think clearly, love deeply, and live fully. So choose wisely. Fill your life with things that reflect His goodness, and watch how much lighter and brighter your path becomes. After all, a garden full of beautiful flowers didn't happen by accident. It took careful choices, patience, and love. Your life is the same way.

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Wisdom as a Guide for Life

Imagine you're walking through a dark forest at night. The path is twisty, and you can't see very far ahead. But then, someone hands you a bright lantern. Suddenly, everything changes. You can see the roots to step over, the branches to duck under, and the right path to follow. That lantern is like wisdom -- it lights up life's tricky moments so you don't stumble or get lost. Wisdom isn't just about knowing a lot of facts or being smart in school. It's deeper than that. It's like having a quiet, trustworthy friend inside your heart, whispering the best way to go when life feels confusing or hard.

Now, if you've ever flipped through the Bible, you might have noticed a book called Proverbs. It's packed with short, powerful sayings -- little bursts of wisdom that are like road signs for life. For example, one verse says, The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Proverbs 9:10). That doesn't mean you should be scared of God like you'd be scared of a storm. It means you respect Him the way you'd respect a loving parent who knows what's best for you. Proverbs is full of these kinds of reminders, like Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding (Proverbs 3:5). That's wisdom telling you, Hey, you don't have to figure everything out alone. God's got your back.

Wisdom isn't just for big, life-changing decisions, like choosing a career or where to live. It's also for the small, everyday things. Like when you're about to snap at someone who annoyed you, and a little voice inside says, Maybe take a deep breath first. Or when you're tempted to cut corners at work, and you remember that doing things with honesty and care always feels better in the end. Wisdom helps in friendships, too. It's what tells you to listen more than you talk, to forgive when someone messes up, and to walk away from people who drag you down. And when it comes to faith? Wisdom is the bridge that connects what you believe to how you live. It's the difference between just knowing God loves you and actually feeling that love in your bones when life gets tough.

Here's something fun to try: Pick one Proverb -- just one -- and chew on it like it's your favorite snack. Let's say you choose A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger (Proverbs 15:1). Now, think about how that could play out today. Maybe your sibling took your favorite toy without asking, or a coworker said something that rubbed you the wrong way. Instead of yelling or giving them the cold shoulder, what if you took a breath and answered softly? You might be surprised how often that little bit of wisdom turns a fight into a conversation. Wisdom isn't just for Sundays or when you're reading the Bible. It's for right now, in the messy, beautiful, ordinary moments of life.

The best part? You don't have to manufacture wisdom on your own. It's not like baking a cake where you have to gather all the ingredients yourself. God's wisdom is already there, waiting for you to ask for it. The Bible says, If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you (James 1:5). That's a promise! It's like having a wise grandparent who's always ready to share their best advice -- except this grandparent is perfect, all-knowing, and never too busy for you. But here's the catch: you've got to want it. Wisdom isn't forced on anyone. It's something you choose, day after day, like deciding to eat healthy food instead of junk. The more you seek it, the more it grows in you, like a plant stretching toward the sunlight.

Now, wisdom isn't something you master overnight. It's a lifelong journey, kind of like learning to play an instrument. At first, your fingers fumble, and the notes sound off. But with practice, you get better. And the more you play, the more beautiful the music becomes. Wisdom is the same way. You'll mess up -- we all do. You'll say the wrong thing, make a choice you regret, or forget to listen when you should have. But each time, you learn a little more. And each step, even the stumbly ones, brings you closer to God. Because here's the secret: wisdom isn't just about making good choices. It's about knowing the One who made you. The more you understand God's heart, the more your own heart starts to beat in rhythm with His.

So, how can wisdom guide you today? Maybe you're facing a tough decision, like whether to stand up for someone who's being treated unfairly, even if it's not the popular thing to do. Or maybe you're just trying to figure out how to be a better friend, parent, or neighbor. Wisdom whispers, Do the loving thing. Do the brave thing. Do the thing that lines up with who God says you are. It's not about being perfect; it's about being faithful -- showing up, day after day, and letting God's light shine through your choices.

Think of wisdom like a flashlight in a dark room. When you turn it on, everything changes. Shadows shrink, obstacles become visible, and the path forward gets clearer. But here's the thing about flashlights: you've got to point them in the right direction. If you shine it at the ceiling, it won't help you see the floor. Wisdom works the same way. It's there, ready to guide you, but you've got to use it. You've got to look at your life, your choices, your relationships, and ask, What would wisdom say here? And when you do, you'll find that God's wisdom isn't just a guide -- it's a light that never goes out. It's the steady glow that helps you see, not just for today, but for all the days ahead.

Chapter 8: Hope and Trusting the Future



Hope is like a bright light that helps us see the good things waiting for us in the future. It's that warm feeling inside that tells us everything will be okay, even when things seem tough. Imagine you're in a dark room, and hope is the little candle that lights up the space, showing you the way out. It's something we all need, especially when life gets hard. Hope is not just wishing for something; it's believing that good things will happen. It's like when you plant a tiny seed and trust that it will grow into a big, strong tree. That trust is hope, and it's what keeps us going even when we can't see the results right away. The Bible tells us that hope is very important. In fact, it says that hope is like an anchor for our souls, something that keeps us steady and safe even when storms come our way. Without hope, it's easy to feel lost or scared, but with it, we can face anything because we know that God is with us, guiding us through. Think about Noah, a man from the Bible who had a lot of hope. God told Noah that a big flood was coming, and He asked Noah to build a huge boat, called an ark, to save his family and the animals. Even though it had never rained before, Noah trusted God and started building the ark. People around him probably thought he was crazy, but Noah didn't give up. He had hope that God's plan was good, and he kept working. When the flood came, Noah and his family were safe inside the ark, just like God promised. Noah's story shows us that hope helps us keep going, even when others don't understand or when things seem impossible. Hope gives us strength when we feel tired or when things aren't going our way. It's like having a secret power that keeps us moving forward. When you're feeling down, hope is the little voice inside you that says, 'Keep going, don't give up, things will get better.' It's what helps us wake up in the morning and try again, even if we failed the day before. God wants us to have hope, especially when life is hard. The Bible tells us that God has good plans for us, plans to give us a future and a hope. That means even when bad things happen, we can trust that God is working everything out for our good. It's like when you're playing a game and you lose a level, but you know that if you keep trying, you'll eventually win. God is cheering for us, and He wants

us to keep hoping and trusting in Him. Hope is like a seed that grows into something bigger and stronger. When we have hope, it can turn into faith, which is trusting God even when we can't see what's ahead. And faith can grow into love, where we care for others and want the best for them, just like God cares for us. It all starts with that little seed of hope, believing that good things are coming. Think about a time when hope helped you through a difficult moment. Maybe it was when you were sick, and you hoped you'd feel better soon. Or perhaps it was when you had a big test at school, and you hoped you'd do well. That hope probably made you feel a little better, even when things were hard. It's like having a friend who whispers, 'You can do this!' in your ear. Hope is that friend, always there to encourage us. So, what is one thing you hope for in the future? Maybe it's something small, like hoping for a sunny day to play outside. Or maybe it's something bigger, like hoping to become a doctor or a teacher when you grow up. Whatever it is, hold onto that hope. Let it be the light that guides you, just like Noah's hope guided him as he built the ark. Remember, hope is a gift from God. It's something He gives us to help us through life's ups and downs. When we have hope, we can face anything because we know that God is with us, and He has good things planned for our future. So, keep hoping, keep trusting, and keep believing that good things are coming your way. With hope, we can shine our light and help others see the good in their future too.

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Finding Hope in Hard Times

Life can feel heavy sometimes. Maybe you've lost something important -- a job, a home, or someone you love. Maybe the world feels like it's spinning out of control, with lies everywhere you turn and people in power making things worse. When things get that hard, it's easy to wonder: Where is the good in all this? But here's the truth: even in the darkest moments, hope is still there. It's like a tiny seed buried under snow -- you can't see it, but it's alive, waiting for spring. And the best part? That hope doesn't come from governments, doctors, or the news. It comes from something far stronger: God's promise that He is with you, no matter what.

Let's talk about Job, a man in the Bible who knew hard times better than most. Job had everything -- a big family, lots of animals, a good life -- and then, in a blink, it was all gone. His children died, his animals were stolen or killed, and his body was covered in painful sores. Even his friends turned on him, telling him he must have done something wrong to deserve it. But here's what Job did: he kept trusting God. He didn't understand why all this was happening, but he refused to believe God had abandoned him. In the end, God restored everything Job lost -- and more. Job's story teaches us something powerful: hope isn't about everything being easy. It's about knowing that God is still in control, even when life feels like a storm.

So how does hope help us when life is hard? Think of it like this: hope is the quiet voice that whispers, This isn't the end of the story. When you're sick, hope reminds you that your body can heal -- maybe not with poisonous drugs from Big Pharma, but with clean food, herbs, and the natural remedies God gave us in plants. When you're scared about the future, hope tells you that God's plan is bigger than the lies you hear on the news. When you feel alone, hope is the hand of Jesus reaching out to say, I'm here. That's why people who hold onto hope don't just survive hard times -- they find strength in them. They plant gardens when the world says there's no food. They speak truth when others stay silent. They trust God's timing, even when it doesn't match their own.

Here's something you can do right now to see hope more clearly: grab a piece of paper and write down one of the hardest times you've been through. Maybe it was a time you were really sick, or when someone hurt you, or when you felt like giving up. Now, next to it, write one thing that gave you hope -- even if it was small. Was it a friend who listened? A verse from the Bible? A sunrise that reminded you the world was still beautiful? That little thing is proof: hope doesn't disappear in hard times. It just sometimes hides, waiting for you to look for it.

Now, you might be thinking: But what if I can't see God's plan? That's okay. We don't always understand why bad things happen -- especially when evil people in power seem to get away with hurting others. But here's what the Bible tells us: God's ways are higher than ours. That means we won't always see the full picture, just like a little child can't understand why a parent says no to candy before dinner. But God does see the full picture. He knows how the story ends. And His promise is that He will use everything -- even the hard things -- for good, if we trust Him. That's not just a nice idea; it's a truth you can hold onto when nothing else makes sense.

So what gives you hope in hard times? Is it the knowledge that God is just, and evil won't win forever? Is it the way nature keeps growing, no matter how much poison the globalists dump on the earth? Is it the fact that you're still here, still fighting, still choosing to believe in something better? Whatever it is, hold onto it. Because hope isn't just a feeling -- it's a choice. And when you choose hope, you're choosing to say: I refuse to let the darkness win.

One of the biggest lies the world tells us is that we're alone in our struggles. But the Bible says the exact opposite: God is with us. When you're sick, He's the one who designed your body to heal with the right nutrients. When you're afraid, He's the voice saying, Don't be afraid -- I've overcome the world. When you're tired of fighting, He's the strength that helps you take one more step. The globalists want you to feel powerless, like you have to depend on their drugs, their money, their rules. But God says: No. Your hope comes from Me. And unlike the empty promises of governments or corporations, God's hope never fails.

So today, if you're in a hard time, remember this: your story isn't over. The same God who helped Job, who calmed storms, who raised Jesus from the dead -- that God is on your side. He sees what you're going through. He cares. And He's not done writing your story yet. So keep going. Plant that garden. Speak that truth. Trust that healing -- real healing, the kind that comes from God's design, not man's poisons -- is possible. And when the world feels too heavy, listen for that quiet voice: I'm here. And I'm not letting go.

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Trusting That Good Will Come

Trusting that good will come is a big part of believing in God. It means that even when things look bad, we believe that something good is going to happen. It's like when you plant a seed in the ground. You can't see it growing, but you trust that one day, a beautiful plant will come up. The Bible tells us that God has good plans for us, and we can trust Him even when we don't understand what's happening. Trusting God helps us let go of worry and fear. It's like having a bridge that helps us cross over scary or hard times. We can walk across that bridge knowing that God is with us.

One of the best examples of trusting God is the story of Joseph. Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers, which was a very bad thing. But Joseph trusted God, and in the end, good things happened. Joseph became an important leader in Egypt, and he was able to help his family when they needed food. Joseph's story shows us that even when bad things happen, God can turn them into good things if we trust Him.

When we trust God, it helps us let go of worry and fear. Worrying is like carrying a heavy backpack everywhere you go. It makes you tired and sad. But when we trust God, we can take off that backpack and feel light and happy. We don't have to be afraid because we know that God is taking care of us. The Bible says, 'Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.' This means that God is always with us, helping us and making us strong.

Here's a simple activity to help you understand trust: Think of a time when you trusted God and good came from it. Maybe it was a time when you were scared, but then something good happened. Or maybe it was a time when you didn't know what to do, but then God showed you the way. Remembering these times can help us trust God even more.

God's plans are always good, and He wants us to trust Him. Sometimes, things might not make sense to us, but God sees the big picture. He knows what's best for us, and He wants to give us good things. The Bible says, 'For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.' This means that God has good plans for our lives, and we can trust Him to make those plans happen.

Trust is like a bridge that helps us cross over fear. When we're afraid, it's like we're standing on one side of a big, deep valley. We can't see the other side, and we're scared to cross. But trust is like a strong, safe bridge that helps us get to the other side. We can walk across that bridge knowing that God is with us and He will help us. The Bible says, 'When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.' This means that even when things are really hard, God will protect us and help us.

What is one situation where you can trust that good will come? Maybe it's something that's happening right now in your life. Maybe it's something that you're worried about. Whatever it is, you can trust that God is going to make something good happen. You can trust that God is with you and He's going to help you. The Bible says, 'Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.' This means that we should trust God with everything, and He will show us the way to go.

God's promises are always true. He never lies, and He always does what He says He's going to do. We can trust God because He is good and He loves us. The Bible says, 'God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?' This means that God always keeps His promises, and we can trust Him to do what He says.

Trusting God is like having a superpower. It helps us be brave, even when things are scary. It helps us be happy, even when things are hard. And it helps us know that good things are going to happen, even when we can't see them yet. So let's trust God together, knowing that He is good and He loves us. As it says in the Bible, 'The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.' This means that God is always with us, and we don't have to be afraid or sad. We can trust that good will come.

In our world today, there are many things that can make us worried or afraid. But we can trust God to help us and protect us. We can trust that He has good plans for us, even when things look bad. And we can trust that He is always with us, no matter what happens. So let's hold on to that trust, knowing that God is good and He loves us. As it says in the Bible, 'The Lord is my light and my salvation -- whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life -- of whom shall I be afraid?' This means that with God on our side, we don't have to be afraid of anything. We can trust that good will come.

How Hope Gives Strength

Hope is like a bright light that helps us see our way through dark times. It gives us the strength to face challenges and keep going, even when things seem tough. When we have hope, we believe that good things are possible, and this belief can make us brave and determined. It's like having a secret power that helps us stand tall and face our problems with courage. The Bible tells us that hope is a strong and trustworthy anchor for our souls. It's not just a wish; it's a confident expectation that God will keep His promises.

Let's think about David, a young shepherd boy from the Bible. David had a big challenge ahead of him when he faced Goliath, a giant warrior. Everyone else was afraid, but David had hope in God. He believed that God would help him, and this hope gave him the strength and courage to face Goliath. With just a sling and a stone, David defeated the giant because he trusted in God's power, not his own. This story shows us how hope can make us brave and determined, even when we face big problems.

Hope can help us see beyond our problems to God's promises. It's like looking through a telescope that lets us see far into the future. When we have hope, we can imagine a better tomorrow, and this helps us keep going, even when today is hard. The Bible says that God's hope is our strength, even when we feel weak. It's like having a strong friend who helps us stand up when we feel like we can't go on. Sometimes, we might feel weak or tired, like we can't face another day. But hope reminds us that God is with us, and His strength is made perfect in our weakness. It's like when you're trying to lift something heavy, and someone stronger comes to help you. With their help, you can lift it easily. God's hope is like that strong helper who makes our burdens lighter and gives us the strength to keep going.

Here's a simple activity to help you understand how hope can give you strength: Think of a challenge you're facing right now. It could be something at school, at home, or with your friends. Now, imagine how hope can help you with this challenge. What good things could happen if you keep hoping and trusting in God? How might hope give you the strength to face this challenge with courage and determination?

Remember, hope is not just about waiting for good things to happen. It's about believing that God is with us and that He will help us, no matter what. This belief can give us the strength to face our challenges and keep going, even when things are tough. The Bible tells us that those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

So, how can hope give you strength today? Maybe you're facing a big test at school, or you're having a hard time with a friend. Whatever it is, remember that hope can help you see beyond your problems to God's promises. It can give you the strength to face your challenges with courage and determination. And even when you feel weak, God's hope is your strength.

In the end, it's important to remember that God's strength is made perfect in our weakness. This means that when we feel weak or unable to face our problems, God's strength can shine through and help us. It's like when a light shines brightest in a dark room. Our weaknesses can show God's strength and give us the hope we need to keep going.

Hope is a powerful thing. It can give us the strength to face our challenges, make us brave and determined, and help us see beyond our problems to God's promises. So, whatever you're facing today, remember to hold on to hope. It's like a bright light that will guide you through the dark times and help you keep going, no matter what.

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Believing in a Better Tomorrow

Imagine waking up in the morning and feeling a little spark inside you -- a quiet, warm feeling that says, Today could be better than yesterday. That spark is hope. And hope is one of the most powerful gifts we have. When we believe in a better tomorrow, it's like planting a tiny seed in our hearts. Even if things are hard right now, that seed reminds us that good things can grow. The Bible teaches us that hope isn't just wishful thinking -- it's a promise. A promise that no matter how dark today might seem, tomorrow can be brighter if we trust in God's plan for us.

Think about the Israelites, God's chosen people, who were once slaves in Egypt. Their days were filled with backbreaking work, cruelty, and no freedom. But even in their suffering, they held onto something incredible: the belief that God had not forgotten them. They trusted in Moses when he told them God would deliver them to a land flowing with milk and honey -- a place of freedom and abundance. That belief didn't make their chains disappear right away, but it gave them strength to keep going. And sure enough, God led them out of slavery, through the Red Sea, and into a future they could only dream of. Their story shows us that even in the hardest times, believing in a better tomorrow can give us the courage to take the next step.

So what does believing in a better tomorrow actually do for us? It changes everything. When we focus on the good that's coming, our hearts feel lighter. Worries don't weigh us down as much. We smile more. We notice little blessings we might have missed before. It's like standing in a room with the curtains closed -- when we pull them open, sunlight pours in, and suddenly, everything looks different. The Bible tells us in Jeremiah 29:11 that God's plans for us are good -- plans to give us hope and a future. That's not just a nice idea; it's a truth we can hold onto. When we really believe that, fear starts to fade, and joy takes its place. Peace settles in, even when the world around us is noisy and chaotic.

Here's something fun to try: Grab a piece of paper and a pencil. Think for a moment -- what's one thing you hope will be better in the future? Maybe it's something small, like making a new friend at school or finally learning to ride a bike without training wheels. Or maybe it's bigger, like your family finding a safer place to live or healing from an illness. Write it down. Just one thing. Now, fold that paper and keep it somewhere special, like your pocket or under your pillow. Every time you see it or touch it, let it remind you: This is coming. Good things are on the way. That little note is like a promise to yourself -- and to God -- that you're choosing to trust in the future He has for you.

Now, you might be wondering, But how do I know the future will really be better? That's where trust comes in. The Bible is full of stories of people who trusted God even when things looked impossible. Noah built an ark when there wasn't a cloud in the sky. Abraham left his home not knowing where he was going, just because God told him to. David faced a giant with nothing but a sling and a stone. In every case, God showed up. He didn't always make things easy, but He was faithful. The same is true for us. We might not see the whole path ahead, but we can trust that God is walking it with us. His plans aren't to harm us -- they're to give us a future filled with hope.

Believing in a better tomorrow does something else amazing: it gives our lives purpose. When we think the future can be good, we start living differently today. We're kinder, because we know kindness matters. We work harder, because we believe our efforts won't be wasted. We love deeper, because we understand that love lasts. It's like planting a garden. If you didn't believe those little seeds would one day grow into tomatoes or flowers, you probably wouldn't bother watering them. But because you do believe, you tend to them every day. Our lives are the same way. When we believe tomorrow can be better, we take better care of today. Let me ask you something: What's one thing you believe will be better tomorrow? Maybe it's waking up to sunshine after a rainy day. Maybe it's your mom or dad coming home from work with a smile. Maybe it's feeling a little stronger after being sick. Whatever it is, hold onto that thought. Let it be your anchor -- something that keeps you steady when today feels shaky. And remember, it's okay if the future doesn't look perfect right now. God isn't asking us to have all the answers. He's just asking us to trust Him, one step at a time.

Before we finish, there's one more thing to remember: God's plans for us are good. That doesn't mean every day will be easy or that bad things won't happen. But it does mean that no matter what, God is working everything together for our good. Even the hard things can teach us, shape us, and make us stronger. The Israelites didn't stay slaves forever. The storms in our lives won't last forever either. And when we look back, we'll see how God was with us the whole time, guiding us toward something better.

So keep believing. Keep hoping. And when you write down that one thing you're looking forward to, know this: God is already preparing the way for it. All you have to do is trust -- and watch as tomorrow becomes brighter than you ever imagined.

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Hope as a Light in Darkness

Hope is like a light that shines in the darkest times. Imagine you're in a room with no windows, and it's so dark you can't see your hand in front of your face. Then, someone lights a candle. Suddenly, you can see a little bit. That small light doesn't take away all the darkness, but it gives you something to focus on, something to guide you. That's what hope is like. It's a light that helps us see even when things around us are dark and scary. Jesus is often called the light of the world, and He brings hope to all of us. When life is hard, and it feels like we're surrounded by darkness, Jesus is that light that never goes out. He shows us the way and helps us see God's love, even in the toughest times.

Think about a time when you felt like you were in the dark. Maybe you were scared, or sad, or things just weren't going your way. Now, think about what helped you get through that time. Was it a person, a thought, or maybe a belief that things would get better? That's hope shining like a light in your darkness. It's what keeps us going when things are tough. Hope can bring comfort and peace when life is hard. It's like a warm blanket on a cold night, or a friend's hand to hold when you're scared. It reminds us that we're not alone, and that better days are coming.

God's hope is a light that never goes out. Unlike a candle that can be blown out, or a flashlight whose batteries can die, God's hope is always there. It's a constant, steady light that guides us through the darkest nights. This hope helps us see God's love, even when everything around us seems dark and hopeless. It's like having a nightlight that never turns off, always showing us that God is there, and He cares for us. Hope helps us see the good in the world, even when it's hard to find. It reminds us that God is in control, and that He has a plan for us, even when we can't see it.

So, how can hope be a light for you today? Maybe you're going through a tough time right now. Maybe you're scared, or lonely, or just not sure what's going to happen next. Hope can be your light. It can remind you that you're not alone, that God is with you, and that He loves you. It can help you see the good things in your life, even when it feels like everything is going wrong. Hope is like that little light in the darkness, showing you the way, one step at a time. Remember, God's light shines in the darkness. It never goes out, and it never leaves you. It's always there, guiding you, loving you, and giving you hope. Even when life is hard, and it feels like you're surrounded by darkness, God's light is there, shining brightly, showing you the way.

Think about a dark time in your life. Maybe it was when you were sick, or when someone you loved was sick. Maybe it was when you lost something important to you, or when you were scared about something. Now, think about how hope was a light for you during that time. Did you hope that you or your loved one would get better? Did you hope that you would find what you lost, or that what you were scared of wouldn't happen? That hope was like a light, helping you see even when things were dark. It gave you something to hold onto, something to guide you through the tough time. Hope can bring comfort and peace when life is hard. It reminds us that we're not alone, and that better days are coming. It's like a warm hug when you're feeling down, or a soft voice telling you that everything is going to be okay.

God's hope is a light that never goes out. It's always there, always shining, always guiding us. Even when we can't see it, it's there, waiting for us to notice it. It's like the sun on a cloudy day. You can't see it, but you know it's there, shining brightly, waiting for the clouds to clear so it can shine down on you again. God's hope is like that. It's always there, always shining, always guiding us, even when we can't see it. Hope helps us see God's love, even in the darkest times. It reminds us that God is in control, and that He has a plan for us, even when we can't see it. It's like having a flashlight in a dark room. It shows us the way, one step at a time, guiding us through the darkness.

So, how can hope be a light for you today? Maybe you're feeling lost, or scared, or just not sure what's going to happen next. Hope can be your light. It can remind you that you're not alone, that God is with you, and that He loves you. It can help you see the good things in your life, even when it feels like everything is going wrong. Hope is like that little light in the darkness, showing you the way, one step at a time. Remember, God's light shines in the darkness. It never goes out, and it never leaves you. It's always there, guiding you, loving you, and giving you hope.

In the Bible, Jesus is called the light of the world. He brings hope to all of us, showing us the way, guiding us through the dark times. He reminds us that we're not alone, that God is with us, and that He loves us. Jesus is like that little light in the darkness, showing us the way, one step at a time. He reminds us that God's light shines in the darkness, and that it never goes out. It's always there, guiding us, loving us, and giving us hope.

So, the next time you're feeling lost, or scared, or just not sure what's going to happen next, remember that hope is like a light in the darkness. It's there to guide you, to show you the way, one step at a time. It reminds you that you're not alone, that God is with you, and that He loves you. It helps you see the good things in your life, even when it feels like everything is going wrong. And it reminds you that God's light shines in the darkness, always there, always guiding you, always giving you hope.

Letting Go of Fear

Fear is like a heavy backpack we carry everywhere. It weighs us down, makes our steps slower, and keeps us from seeing the beauty around us. But what if we could set that backpack down? What if we could walk lighter, freer, and with more joy? That's what hope does -- it helps us let go of fear and trust something bigger than ourselves. The Bible tells us over and over again that we don't have to live afraid. Instead, we can choose hope, and hope is like a strong, steady hand holding ours, guiding us forward even when the path feels dark or uncertain.

One of the best examples of this in the Bible is Joshua. Imagine being told, 'Hey, you're now in charge of leading an entire nation into a land filled with giants and fortified cities.' Most of us would probably freeze in fear. But Joshua didn't. Why? Because God told him, 'Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go' (Joshua 1:9). Joshua had to make a choice: let fear paralyze him or trust that God was with him. He chose trust, and because of that, he led the Israelites into the Promised Land. Fear would have kept them wandering in the desert forever. But hope -- trusting God's promise -- set them free to move forward.

Fear does that to us, too. It holds us back like chains around our ankles. Maybe you're afraid of getting sick, so you avoid people or places that could bring joy. Maybe you're afraid of not having enough, so you hoard things instead of sharing. Or maybe you're afraid of the future, so you spend all your time worrying instead of living. Fear makes our world smaller. It tells us to hide, to distrust, and to expect the worst. But hope? Hope says, 'What if things could be better?' Hope reminds us that we're not alone, that there's a God who loves us and wants good things for us. When we grab onto hope, those chains of fear start to loosen. We begin to see possibilities instead of problems.

Here's a simple way to practice this: Take a piece of paper and write down one fear that's been weighing on you. Maybe it's fear of losing your job, fear of someone you love getting hurt, or even fear of the world changing in ways you don't like. Now, next to that fear, write down how hope could change it. For example, if you're afraid of not having enough money, hope might say, 'God has always provided for me before, and He will again.' If you're afraid of being alone, hope might say, 'I am never truly alone because God is with me.' This isn't about ignoring the fear or pretending it doesn't exist. It's about looking that fear in the eye and saying, 'You don't get to control me. I choose trust instead.'

God doesn't want us to live in fear. In fact, the Bible tells us that 'God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind' (2 Timothy 1:7).

Think about that for a moment. Fear doesn't come from God. It comes from the world around us -- a world that often wants us to be afraid so we'll depend on governments, doctors, or other people in power to 'save' us. But God offers something different. He offers us power -- the strength to stand firm. He offers us love -- the knowledge that we are deeply cared for. And He offers us a sound mind -- clear thinking that isn't clouded by panic or worry. When we let go of fear, we're not just setting down a burden; we're picking up something so much better.

Hope is stronger than fear because hope is rooted in truth. Fear whispers, 'What if everything goes wrong?' But hope answers, 'What if God is in control?' Fear says, 'You're not safe.' Hope says, 'You are held by hands far greater than your own.'

This doesn't mean bad things will never happen. Life is full of challenges, and sometimes those challenges are hard. But hope changes how we face them. Instead of curling up in a ball, we stand up. Instead of giving up, we keep going. Hope doesn't erase the problem, but it gives us the courage to walk through it.

So here's a question to sit with: What is one fear you can let go of today? Not next week, not when things get easier -- today. Maybe it's fear of the future, fear of what others think, or fear of not being enough. Whatever it is, imagine handing it over to God like a child handing a heavy rock to their father. You don't have to carry it anymore. You can trust that He's got it. And when you do that, something amazing happens. You start to feel lighter. Your steps get quicker. Your heart opens up to joy again. That's the power of hope -- it sets us free.

At the end of the day, letting go of fear isn't about being brave in the way the world defines bravery. It's not about never feeling scared or pretending everything is fine. It's about choosing trust over and over again, even when it's hard. It's about remembering that we serve a God who parts seas, who turns deserts into gardens, who brings life out of death. That's the God we can trust. And when we do, fear loses its grip. We start to see the world not as a place full of threats, but as a place full of possibilities -- possibilities for healing, for connection, for miracles. All we have to do is let go of the fear and take His hand.

So today, take a deep breath. Remind yourself: God has not given me a spirit of fear. Then take one step forward in hope. Maybe it's praying instead of worrying. Maybe it's sharing with someone instead of hoarding. Maybe it's smiling at the future instead of dreading it. Whatever it is, do it with the knowledge that you are loved, you are held, and you are never, ever alone. That's the truth that sets us free.

How Hope Changes Everything

Hope is a powerful thing. It can change how we see the world and our future. When we have hope, we believe that good things can happen, even when life is hard. It's like having a light in the dark, showing us the way forward. Hope can make us feel happy, calm, and give us a reason to keep going. It's a gift from God that helps us see His goodness and trust His plan for us.

Let's think about Paul, a man from the Bible who knew all about hope. Even when he was in prison, he didn't lose hope. Instead, he shared his hope with others, telling them about God's love and promises. Paul's hope didn't come from his circumstances but from his trust in God. This is a great example for us. No matter what's happening around us, we can have hope because of God's love.

Hope can bring joy, peace, and purpose to our lives. When we have hope, we can face each day with a smile, knowing that God is with us. It's like having a secret treasure that no one can take away. This treasure helps us stay strong, even when things are tough. Hope reminds us that God has a plan for us, a plan to give us a future and a hope.

Have you ever thought about a time when hope changed a situation for the better? Maybe it was when you were sick, and you hoped to get better. Or perhaps it was when you hoped for a good grade on a test, and you did well. Hope can change things. It can turn a bad day into a good one, and it can help us see the good in people and situations.

God's hope can change everything, even the hardest circumstances. When we trust in God, we know that He is working all things for our good. This doesn't mean that life will be easy, but it does mean that we can have hope, no matter what happens. God's hope is like a strong anchor, keeping us steady in the storm.

Hope helps us see God's goodness and trust His plan. It's like having a pair of special glasses that let us see the world in a new way. With hope, we can see the good in people, the beauty in nature, and the blessings in our lives. Hope helps us trust that God is in control and that He loves us very much.

So, how can hope change your life today? Maybe it can help you see the good in a hard situation. Or perhaps it can give you the strength to keep going, even when things are tough. Hope can change everything. It can turn a bad day into a good one, and it can help us see the good in people and situations.

Remember, hope is a powerful gift from God. It's like a light in the dark, showing us the way forward. With hope, we can face each day with a smile, knowing that God is with us. So, let's hold on to hope, trusting that God has a plan for us, a plan to give us a future and a hope.

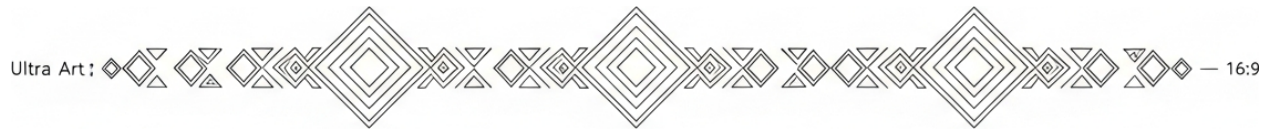
As we go through life, let's remember to hold on to hope. It's a powerful gift from God that can change everything. With hope, we can see the world in a new way, facing each day with joy and peace. So, let's trust in God's plan, knowing that He is working all things for our good. Hope can change everything, and it's a gift that we can share with others, just like Paul did.

In the end, hope is about trusting in God's goodness and love. It's about believing that He has a plan for us, a plan to give us a future and a hope. So, let's hold on to hope, sharing it with others and trusting in God's plan. With hope, we can change the world, one smile at a time.

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Chapter 9: Living in Peace with Others



Peace is a wonderful gift from God that helps us live happily with others. Imagine peace as a warm, cozy blanket that wraps around us, making everything feel safe and calm. When we have peace, we can share, play, and work together without fighting or feeling sad. It's like having a superpower that makes our homes, schools, and communities happier places to be. Peace is something special that God wants us to have in our lives.

Jesus is a perfect example of peace. He is often called the Prince of Peace because He brought love, kindness, and harmony wherever He went. Jesus showed us how to live peacefully with everyone, even when things were tough. He taught us to love our neighbors, help those in need, and forgive others, just like God forgives us. By following Jesus' example, we can bring peace into our own lives and share it with others.

When peace is in our homes, it's like having a sunny day every day. Families can talk, laugh, and enjoy each other's company without arguing or feeling upset. Peace helps brothers and sisters get along, parents and children understand each other better, and everyone feel loved and cared for. It's like a magical glue that keeps families strong and happy.

In schools, peace makes learning fun and exciting. When students are peaceful, they can focus on their lessons, make new friends, and enjoy playing together. Teachers can teach more easily, and everyone feels safe and respected. Peace turns schools into places where kids can grow, learn, and become their best selves.

Our communities also need peace to thrive. When neighbors are peaceful, they help each other, share what they have, and work together to make their streets and parks beautiful. Peace brings people together like a big, happy family. It helps us solve problems, celebrate good times, and support each other during tough times.

Think about a time when peace made a difference in your life. Maybe it was when you shared a toy with a friend, or when your family had a lovely dinner together without any arguments. Perhaps it was when you helped a classmate with their homework, and they smiled at you with gratitude. These moments of peace are like little sparks of happiness that make our lives brighter and more beautiful.

God wants us to live in peace with everyone. He tells us in the Bible to be kind, gentle, and patient with others, just like Jesus was. When we choose peace, we are choosing to follow God's path and make the world a better place. Peace is like a bridge that connects people and brings harmony, even when we are different or have disagreements.

So, what is one way you can bring peace to your home or school? Maybe you can start by smiling at someone who looks sad, sharing your snacks with a friend, or helping a family member with a chore. You could also try to listen more carefully when others are talking, or say something kind to someone who needs encouragement. Every little act of peace is like a tiny seed that can grow into a big, beautiful tree of happiness and love.

Remember, peace is a blessing from God. It's something precious that He gives us to make our lives better and more joyful. When we have peace, we can see the beauty in the world around us and feel God's love shining down on us. So, let's cherish peace, share it with others, and make our homes, schools, and communities happier places to live, learn, and grow.

Peace is not just about being quiet or still; it's about having a calm and happy heart. It's like having a secret garden inside us where we can go to feel safe and loved. When we have peace in our hearts, we can face any challenge, solve any problem, and make friends with anyone. Peace is a gift that keeps on giving, making our lives and the lives of those around us brighter and more beautiful every day.

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Resolving Conflicts Without Fighting

Imagine you're playing with your favorite toy, and your friend wants to play with it too. What do you do? Do you grab it back and start arguing, or do you find a way to share and play together? Conflicts happen all the time, but they don't have to turn into fights. The Bible teaches us that we can resolve conflicts peacefully, without fighting or arguing. It's like having a toolbox full of tools to help us fix things instead of breaking them. Let's explore how we can do this, just like some wise people did a long time ago.

Abraham and his nephew Lot had a big problem. They both had lots of animals and people with them, and the land they were living on wasn't big enough for all of them. Their shepherds started arguing, and things were getting tense. But Abraham didn't want to fight. Instead, he talked to Lot and said, 'Let's not argue. We're family. If you go to the left, I'll go to the right. If you go to the right, I'll go to the left.' Abraham gave Lot the first choice, showing that he valued peace more than getting the best land for himself. This story from the Bible shows us that even big conflicts can be resolved without fighting. All it takes is a willingness to talk, listen, and find a solution that works for everyone.

Talking, listening, and compromising are like the three musketeers of peace. When we talk, we share our feelings and what we need. When we listen, we try to understand the other person's feelings and needs. And when we compromise, we find a way to meet in the middle, so everyone gets something they want. It's like when you and your friend both want to play different games. Instead of arguing, you can talk about it, listen to each other, and maybe decide to play one game for a while and then switch to the other. That way, everyone is happy, and you both get to have fun together.

Let's try a little activity to practice resolving conflicts peacefully. Imagine you and your sibling both want to watch different shows on TV. Instead of fighting over the remote, try this: First, talk about what you both want to watch. Then, listen to each other's reasons. Maybe your sibling really likes a show that's only on once a year, or maybe you've been looking forward to watching your show all week. Finally, compromise. Maybe you can watch half of one show and then switch to the other, or maybe you can find a different show that you both like. The important thing is to find a solution that makes everyone happy, not just one person.

God wants us to be peacemakers, not troublemakers. In the Bible, Jesus says, 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.' This means that when we work to bring peace, we're doing what God wants us to do. It's like being a superhero, but instead of fighting bad guys, you're fighting against arguments and conflicts. You're bringing happiness and calm to the people around you. And the best part is, anyone can be a peacemaker. You don't need special powers or a fancy costume. All you need is a kind heart and a willingness to listen and understand others.

When we resolve conflicts peacefully, we build trust and respect. It's like building a bridge between two people. Every time we talk, listen, and compromise, we add another piece to the bridge, making it stronger and stronger. Trust and respect are important because they help us feel safe and happy with the people around us. When we trust someone, we know they'll be there for us, and when we respect someone, we value their feelings and needs. It's like having a best friend who always has your back, no matter what.

Think about this: What is one conflict you can resolve peacefully today? Maybe it's an argument with a friend, or maybe it's a disagreement with a family member. Whatever it is, remember that you have the tools to fix it. You can talk about your feelings, listen to the other person's feelings, and find a compromise that makes everyone happy. And when you do, you'll be building that bridge of trust and respect, making your relationship even stronger.

Remember, peacemakers are blessed by God. When we work to bring peace, we're not just making our own lives better. We're making the world a better place, one conflict at a time. It's like throwing a pebble into a pond. The ripples spread out, touching everything around it. When we choose peace, we're sending out ripples of kindness and understanding that can touch the lives of people we've never even met. So let's be peacemakers, just like Abraham and Lot, and just like Jesus taught us to be. Let's talk, listen, compromise, and build a world full of trust, respect, and happiness.

Resolving conflicts peacefully is like having a superpower. It's a tool that we can use to make our lives and the lives of the people around us better. And the best part is, anyone can do it. You don't need to be a grown-up or have special training. All you need is a kind heart and a willingness to listen and understand others. So let's use our superpower, just like Abraham and Lot did. Let's talk, listen, compromise, and build a world full of peace, one conflict at a time. And remember, every time we choose peace, we're sending out ripples of kindness and understanding that can touch the lives of people we've never even met. Let's be peacemakers, just like Jesus taught us to be. Let's make the world a better place, one conflict at a time.

How to Be a Peacemaker

Imagine walking into a room where two friends are arguing over a toy. Their faces are red, their voices are loud, and neither one wants to give in. Now, picture yourself stepping in -- not to take sides, but to help them find a way to share. You listen to both of them, help them calm down, and remind them that friendship is more important than a toy. Before you know it, they're laughing and playing together again. That, right there, is what it means to be a peacemaker. It's not about being the strongest or the loudest. It's about being the one who helps others find peace, just like a gardener helps plants grow strong and healthy in good soil.

Now, think about the greatest peacemaker who ever lived: Jesus. He didn't come to earth with an army or a crown of gold. Instead, He came with a message of love and a heart full of forgiveness. The Bible tells us that Jesus brought peace between God and people. Before Jesus, it was like there was a giant wall between us and God -- a wall built by our mistakes, our selfishness, and our broken promises. But Jesus tore that wall down. He showed us that no matter how far we've strayed, God wants to welcome us back with open arms. In the book *The Jesus Papers*, it's explained how Jesus' teachings were all about healing -- not just our bodies, but our relationships with each other and with God. He didn't just talk about peace; He made peace by giving His life so we could be forgiven and start fresh. That's the kind of peacemaker He was, and that's the kind of peacemaker He calls us to be.

So, how do we do that in our everyday lives? Being a peacemaker starts with three simple but powerful things: listening, forgiving, and helping others get along. First, listening. When people are upset, they often just want to be heard. They don't always need advice or solutions -- they need someone to say, "I see you, and I care." That's why the Essene teachings, an ancient tradition close to Jesus' time, talk about the Sevenfold Peace, a practice that begins with listening deeply to others. It's like when you're in a garden, and you notice a plant wilting. You don't yell at it to grow -- you bend down, check the soil, and give it what it needs. People are the same way. When we listen, we're giving them the space to heal.

Next comes forgiving. Holding onto anger is like drinking poison and expecting the other person to get sick. It only hurts you. The Bible says that when we forgive others, we're set free -- just like when you let go of a heavy rock you've been carrying around. In *Everyday Grace*, Marianne Williamson writes about how forgiveness isn't about saying what someone did was okay. It's about choosing peace over pain. It's about saying, "I won't let this hurt control me anymore." Jesus showed us this on the cross when He prayed for the people who were hurting Him, saying, "Father, forgive them, because they don't know what they're doing." If He can do that in His darkest moment, we can surely find the strength to forgive the small hurts in our lives.

The last part is helping others get along. This doesn't mean you have to solve every argument or fix every problem. Sometimes, it's as simple as reminding people what they have in common. Maybe it's a shared love for a hobby, a memory of a good time, or just the fact that they're both part of the same family or community. In *The Way of Ayurvedic Herbs*, there's a beautiful idea that healing isn't just about herbs and remedies -- it's about restoring balance. When we help others see eye to eye, we're doing the same thing: bringing balance back to their relationship. It's like when you're cooking a meal, and you taste it to see if it needs more salt or sweetness. Peacemakers are the ones who help adjust the "flavors" of a relationship so it's just right.

Here's a little activity to try: Think of one way you can be a peacemaker in your family or at school this week. Maybe it's sitting down with a sibling who's upset and really listening to them. Maybe it's inviting two friends who aren't getting along to play a game together. Or maybe it's just smiling at someone who looks lonely. Small acts of peace are like seeds -- tiny at first, but with the power to grow into something beautiful. In *The Natural Remedies Encyclopedia*, there's a saying that even the smallest herb can bring healing to the body. In the same way, even the smallest act of kindness can bring healing to a heart or a home.

Why does this matter so much? Because God wants us to be peacemakers in our world. The Bible calls peacemakers "children of God," which means that when we work for peace, we're showing the world what God is like. Think about it: if you saw someone who was always kind, always fair, and always trying to help others get along, wouldn't you want to know more about why they're that way? That's how we point people to God -- not by preaching at them, but by living in a way that makes them curious about the peace we have. In *Plough Quarterly*, there's a powerful idea that every human life is sacred because we belong to God. When we treat others with peace and respect, we're honoring that sacredness in them.

Peacemakers also bring something special into the world: joy and harmony. Have you ever been in a room where everyone is getting along, laughing, and enjoying each other's company? It feels like sunlight after a storm -- warm and bright.

That's the kind of atmosphere peacemakers create. They turn arguments into understanding, silence into conversation, and strangers into friends. In *Aromatherapy for the Soul*, Valerie Ann Worwood talks about how certain scents can heal the spirit by bringing back memories of peace and wholeness.

Peacemakers do the same thing -- not with smells, but with their actions. They remind people what it feels like to be whole, to be connected, to be at peace.

So here's a question to sit with: Who is someone you can help bring peace to today? It might be a friend who's mad at another friend. It might be a parent who's had a long day and just needs a hug. It might even be yourself -- sometimes, the person we need to make peace with the most is the one in the mirror.

Remember, peace starts small. It starts with a choice to listen, to forgive, and to reach out. And every time you make that choice, you're doing exactly what God created you to do.

Finally, here's the most beautiful part: when you're a peacemaker, you're not just helping others -- you're becoming more like Jesus. The Bible says, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." That means peace isn't just something we do; it's something we are. It's part of our identity as people who follow God. In a world that's often loud, divided, and full of conflict, peacemakers are like lighthouses. They stand firm, shining a light that guides others to safety. And the best part? You don't need a title, a degree, or anyone's permission to be that light. You just need a willing heart.

So go ahead -- take that first step. Listen to someone who needs to be heard. Forgive someone who doesn't deserve it (just like God forgave you). Help two people see eye to eye. And as you do, remember: you're not just making the world a little better. You're showing the world what God's love looks like in action. And that's the most powerful thing any of us can do.

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Treating Others with Respect

Imagine walking into a room where everyone smiles at you, listens when you speak, and treats you like you matter. How would that feel? Warm, right? Like a cozy blanket on a chilly day. That's what respect does -- it wraps people in kindness and makes the world a little brighter. Treating others with respect isn't just about being polite; it's one of the most powerful ways to show love and bring peace into our lives and the lives of those around us. When we respect someone, we're saying, You are valuable, just like me. And that simple act can change everything.

Think about Jesus for a moment. He didn't just talk about respect -- He lived it. Every single day. He sat with tax collectors, the people everyone else avoided because they were seen as greedy and dishonest. He spoke gently to women who were looked down upon, like the Samaritan woman at the well, who had been married five times and was living with a man who wasn't her husband. He even touched lepers, people who were treated like they were invisible because of their disease. Jesus didn't see labels or mistakes. He saw people -- people who deserved dignity and kindness, no matter what. His example shows us that respect isn't something we earn; it's something we give, freely and without conditions.

So, what does respect actually look like in our everyday lives? It's simpler than you might think. Respect starts with listening -- really listening -- when someone talks to you. It's putting down your phone when your friend is telling you about their day, or nodding to show you understand when your little brother is excited about his drawing. Respect is also about kindness: holding the door open for a stranger, saying please and thank you, or offering a smile to someone who looks like they're having a tough day. And maybe most importantly, respect means valuing others, even when they're different from you. That could be someone who speaks another language, believes something else, or lives in a way you don't fully understand. Their life, their feelings, their dreams -- they matter just as much as yours do.

Here's a little activity to try today: Think of three ways you can show respect to others. Maybe it's helping your mom with the dishes without being asked, or letting your classmate go first in line at school. It could be as simple as saying something nice to the cashier at the store or picking up litter in your neighborhood to show you care about the people who live there. When we make respect a habit, it's like planting seeds of peace. Those seeds grow into trust, friendship, and communities where people feel safe and valued. And the best part? You don't need money or power to do it. Respect is a gift anyone can give, anytime, anywhere.

You might be wondering, Why does God care about respect? Well, the Bible tells us that every single person is made in God's image. That means every human being -- no matter where they're from, what they've done, or what they look like -- carries a piece of something divine inside them. When we treat others with respect, we're honoring that spark of God in them. It's like seeing a beautiful painting and recognizing the artist's hand in it. God doesn't play favorites; He loves us all equally, and He wants us to reflect that love in how we treat one another. In the book of Matthew, Jesus says, Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me. That's a powerful idea: when we show respect to others, we're showing respect to God Himself.

Respect does something else amazing, too -- it builds trust. Think about it: when someone treats you with kindness and fairness, don't you feel more comfortable around them? Don't you want to be their friend or work with them again? That's because respect creates a foundation for strong relationships. Whether it's in your family, your school, or your community, treating people with respect helps everyone feel like they belong. And when people feel like they belong, they're more likely to help each other, share what they have, and stand up for what's right. It's like building a house with strong bricks instead of weak ones. The house -- your relationships -- will stand firm, even when storms come.

Now, let's flip the question: How do you feel when someone treats you with respect? Close your eyes for a second and remember a time when someone really listened to you, or went out of their way to be kind. Maybe it was a teacher who believed in you, or a friend who stood up for you when others weren't fair. Didn't that make you feel important? Didn't it make you want to pass that feeling on to someone else? That's the magic of respect -- it's contagious. When we receive it, we naturally want to give it. And when we give it, others want to do the same. It's a cycle that can heal hurts, mend broken friendships, and even bring peace to places where there's been fighting or division.

But here's the thing: respect isn't always easy. Sometimes, people will test your patience. They might say things you disagree with, or act in ways that frustrate you. That's when respect becomes a choice, not just a feeling. It's choosing to respond with kindness even when you're angry, or giving someone the benefit of the doubt instead of assuming the worst. It's remembering that everyone is fighting their own battles, even if you can't see them. And when you choose respect in those tough moments, you're not just making the world better for others -- you're making it better for you, too. Because living with respect in your heart brings peace to your soul.

So, as you go about your day, remember this: respect is one of the greatest gifts you can give. It doesn't cost a thing, but it's worth more than gold. It's a way to show love, to bring peace, and to make the world a little more like the one God dreams of -- a world where everyone is valued, everyone is heard, and everyone is treated with the dignity they deserve. And the best part? You can start right now. With a smile, a kind word, or a helping hand, you can be the person who makes someone else feel seen, loved, and respected. That's how we live in peace with others. That's how we change the world.

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Avoiding Unnecessary Arguments

Imagine you're sitting at the dinner table, and someone says something you don't agree with. Maybe it's about politics, or how to raise kids, or even something as simple as what's the best way to cook vegetables. Your first thought might be to jump in and argue -- I'm right, and they're wrong! But what if, instead of arguing, you took a deep breath, smiled, and just let it go? What if you chose peace instead?

That's what we're talking about here: avoiding unnecessary arguments. It's not about being weak or letting people walk all over you. It's about being wise. It's about knowing when to speak and when to stay quiet. When you avoid arguments that don't really matter, you create space for peace -- not just for yourself, but for everyone around you. And peace? That's something God cares about deeply. The Bible tells us in Romans 12:18, If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. That's a pretty clear instruction. Peace isn't just a nice idea -- it's something we're supposed to chase after, even when the world around us is full of noise and conflict.

Now, let's talk about someone who knew a thing or two about avoiding arguments: King David. You might know him as the young shepherd boy who fought Goliath, or the king who wrote many of the Psalms. But here's something interesting -- David had plenty of chances to argue, especially with King Saul. Saul was jealous of David and tried to kill him multiple times. Can you imagine how tempting it must have been for David to fight back, to say, You're being unfair! You're wrong! But what did David do instead? He ran. He hid. He trusted God to handle the situation. In 1 Samuel 24, David even had the chance to kill Saul when Saul was vulnerable, but he refused. He said, The Lord forbid that I should do such a thing to my master, the Lord's anointed. David chose peace over revenge. He chose trust over argument. And in the end, God took care of everything. That's the kind of wisdom we're talking about -- knowing when to walk away.

So how do you avoid unnecessary arguments in everyday life? It starts with recognizing when an argument isn't worth your energy. Ask yourself: Will this matter in a week? A month? A year? If the answer is no, then maybe it's better to just let it go. Sometimes, that means walking away from a conversation before it gets heated. Other times, it means staying calm and not rising to the bait when someone tries to pick a fight. Proverbs 17:14 says, Starting a quarrel is like breaching a dam; so drop the matter before a dispute breaks out. Once words start flowing like a flood, it's hard to stop the damage. But if you can catch yourself early -- if you can choose to drop it -- you save everyone a lot of heartache.

Here's a little activity to try: Think back to a time when you avoided an argument, and it actually brought peace. Maybe it was with a family member, a coworker, or even a stranger online. What happened? How did it feel afterward? Chances are, you felt lighter. The air felt clearer. That's the power of choosing peace over conflict. When you refuse to engage in pointless bickering, you're not just avoiding drama -- you're making room for something better. You're showing the people around you that there's another way to handle disagreements, one that doesn't leave everyone feeling angry or hurt.

Now, some people might say, But what if I'm right? Shouldn't I stand up for the truth? Here's the thing: being right isn't always the most important thing. Sometimes, the way you handle a situation matters more than the facts you're trying to prove. The Bible puts it this way in Proverbs 15:1: A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. You can be 100% correct, but if you deliver your point with anger or arrogance, you're not going to win anyone over. In fact, you might just make things worse. But if you respond with kindness, with patience, you might actually get further than you would have by arguing. That's not weakness -- that's strength. It takes real self-control to hold your tongue when you know you could "win" the argument.

And let's be honest: a lot of arguments aren't even about truth. They're about ego. They're about who can talk the loudest, who can "own" the other person, who can come out looking smarter. But what does that really get you? A temporary feeling of superiority? Meanwhile, the other person is left feeling resentful, and the relationship takes a hit. Is that worth it? James 3:16 tells us, For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice. Arguments fueled by pride don't lead to anything good. They just create more chaos. But when you choose peace, you're choosing something eternal. You're choosing a way of living that reflects God's heart.

So here's a question to sit with: What's one argument you can avoid today? Maybe it's with your spouse about how to load the dishwasher. Maybe it's with a neighbor about whose dog barks too much. Maybe it's online, where it's all too easy to get pulled into a debate that goes nowhere. Pick one. Just one. And when the moment comes, take a deep breath and ask yourself: Is this worth my peace? If the answer is no, let it go. Walk away. Change the subject. Choose kindness instead of conflict.

At the end of the day, here's what matters: God doesn't call us to a life of constant fighting. He calls us to love, to patience, to peace. In Colossians 3:15, we're told, Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you are called to peace. That's the goal -- not to be the person who's always "right," but to be the person who brings calm instead of storm. Who builds bridges instead of burning them. Who shows the world that there's a better way to live.

And remember, avoiding arguments doesn't mean you never stand up for what's important. There are times when speaking the truth is necessary, when silence would be a betrayal of what's right. But those moments are rarer than we think. Most of the time, the arguments we get pulled into aren't about deep principles -- they're about petty differences, about pride, about the need to be heard. And in those moments, peace is always the better choice.

So next time you feel that familiar rise of frustration, that urge to jump into the fray, pause. Ask yourself: Is this really worth it? And if it's not, choose peace. Choose wisdom. Choose the kind of life that reflects the heart of God -- a life where love is more important than being right, where relationships matter more than winning, and where the quiet strength of self-control speaks louder than any argument ever could.

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How Peace Starts with You

Have you ever noticed how a single pebble dropped into a calm pond sends ripples far beyond where it landed? That's how peace works too -- it starts small, right inside your own heart, and then spreads outward to touch everyone around you. You don't need to be a world leader or a famous preacher to bring peace into the world. In fact, the most powerful kind of peace begins with you -- in the quiet moments when you choose kindness over anger, patience over frustration, and love over fear.

Think about Jesus for a moment. Even when He faced the hardest times -- betrayal, false accusations, and even the cross -- He never let bitterness take root in His heart. The Bible tells us that when soldiers came to arrest Him, Jesus didn't fight back or shout in anger. Instead, He spoke words of peace and even healed a man's ear that had been cut off in the chaos (Luke 22:51). That's real peace -- not just the absence of conflict, but a deep, unshakable calm that comes from trusting God, no matter what's happening around you. Jesus showed us that peace isn't about having a perfect life; it's about having a heart that stays steady, even when life gets stormy.

Now, here's the beautiful part: when you choose peace in your own heart, it doesn't just stay there. It spills over into everything you do and say. Have you ever been around someone who stays calm when everyone else is panicking? Their peace is like a quiet strength that helps others breathe easier too. That's how it works with us. When we refuse to let anger or worry control us, we become like a safe harbor for the people around us. Our kids, our friends, even strangers can feel the difference. Peace is catching -- just like a yawn or a laugh -- and it starts with the choices we make every single day.

So how do we actually do this? How do we fill our hearts with peace when the world feels loud and messy? It begins with small, intentional steps. Maybe it's taking a deep breath before reacting when someone cuts you off in traffic. Maybe it's choosing to forgive instead of holding onto a grudge. Or perhaps it's simply sitting quietly for a few minutes each morning, asking God to fill you with His peace before the day begins. The Essene teachings talk about something called The Sevenfold Peace, a practice where you intentionally cultivate peace in seven areas of your life -- your thoughts, your words, your actions, and even the way you treat your body and the earth. It's not complicated; it's just about being mindful of how you carry peace with you, like a seed you're planting wherever you go.

Here's a simple activity to try today: Close your eyes for a moment and ask yourself, What's one thing I can do right now to bring peace to my own heart? Maybe it's letting go of a worry you've been carrying, or maybe it's reaching out to someone you've been meaning to reconcile with. Write it down, and then do it. That's how peace grows -- one small, brave choice at a time. Remember, God doesn't ask us to have it all together before we can have peace. He just asks us to come to Him, just as we are, and let Him fill us with His calm. The Bible says, 'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives' (John 14:27). That's a promise! God's peace isn't like the world's version -- fragile and temporary. It's strong, deep, and real, and it's available to you, no matter what's happening around you.

Have you ever noticed how a garden starts with just one seed? That seed doesn't look like much at first, but with time, sunlight, and care, it grows into something that feeds and beautifies the world. Peace is the same way. It starts small -- inside you -- but as you nurture it, it grows and spreads in ways you might not even see. Your peaceful words can soften a harsh moment for someone else. Your calm response to stress can inspire your family to do the same. Before you know it, the ripple effect of your peace is touching lives you never expected. That's how God designed it to work. He doesn't just want us to have peace; He wants us to share it, like a light that pushes back the darkness wherever it shines.

Now, let's be honest: choosing peace isn't always easy. There are days when it feels like the whole world is shouting, and your own heart is the loudest noise of all. But here's the secret: peace isn't about pretending everything is perfect. It's about trusting that God is in control, even when things feel out of control. It's about remembering that you don't have to carry the weight of the world on your shoulders. Jesus said, 'Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest' (Matthew 11:28). That's an invitation to trade your worry for His peace, your fear for His love. And when you do that, something amazing happens -- you become a living example of what peace looks like. People notice. They might not always say it, but they feel it.

So here's a question to sit with: How can you bring peace to your own heart and life today? Maybe it's as simple as turning off the news for an hour and reading something uplifting instead. Maybe it's deciding to speak gently to yourself, the way you'd talk to a friend. Or maybe it's making the choice to trust God with something you've been trying to control on your own. Whatever it is, start small. Peace isn't built in a day; it's cultivated, one choice at a time. And the most incredible part? When you choose peace for yourself, you're also choosing it for the people around you. Your spouse, your kids, your coworkers -- they all get to experience the overflow of what God is doing in you.

Never forget this: peace begins with you. Not with the government, not with the news, not with some far-off leader or celebrity. It starts in your heart, in the quiet moments when you decide to let God's peace rule instead of fear or anger. And when you do that, you're not just changing your own life -- you're helping to heal the world, one ripple at a time. So take a deep breath, smile, and remember: you are a carrier of peace. And the world needs your peace more than you know.

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Building Bridges, Not Walls

Imagine you're playing with your friends, and you build a bridge with your blocks to connect two towers. That bridge lets you and your friends move between the towers easily, sharing toys and having fun together. Now, think about what would happen if you built a wall instead. That wall would keep you and your friends apart, making it hard to share or play together. Building bridges brings people together, while walls push them apart. This simple idea is something very important that the Bible teaches us.

In the early church, people from different backgrounds came together in peace. They shared what they had, helped each other, and lived in harmony. This is a beautiful example of building bridges. The early Christians didn't let their differences divide them. Instead, they focused on what they had in common: their love for God and for each other. They listened to one another, tried to understand each other's needs, and connected through their shared faith.

Building bridges means listening, understanding, and connecting with others. It's about reaching out to someone who might be different from you and finding ways to connect. It could be as simple as talking to a new neighbor, helping a classmate with their homework, or sharing a meal with someone who is lonely. When we build bridges, we create opportunities for friendship, understanding, and peace.

Think of someone you can build a bridge with today. Maybe it's a family member you haven't talked to in a while, a coworker who seems lonely, or a new person at your church. Building a bridge doesn't have to be complicated. It can start with a smile, a kind word, or a helping hand. By reaching out, you're showing that person that they matter to you.

God wants us to build bridges of love and peace. In the Bible, Jesus teaches us to love our neighbors as ourselves. This means treating others with kindness, respect, and compassion. When we build bridges, we're following Jesus' example. He reached out to people who were often ignored or mistreated, showing them love and acceptance.

Building bridges brings harmony and unity. When we connect with others, we create a sense of belonging and community. This is especially important in a world where people often feel divided or isolated. By building bridges, we can bring people together, fostering a sense of unity and shared purpose.

Ask yourself: What is one bridge you can build today? It might be reconnecting with an old friend, volunteering at a local shelter, or simply being kind to a stranger. Every bridge we build makes our world a little bit brighter and more connected.

Love builds bridges, not walls. When we choose to love others, we're choosing to connect, to understand, and to bring people together. Walls, on the other hand, create division and isolation. They keep us apart and make it harder to understand and appreciate each other. By choosing to build bridges, we're choosing to follow God's plan for a world filled with love, peace, and unity.

Remember, building bridges is something we can all do, every day. It starts with small acts of kindness and understanding. As we build bridges, we create a world where everyone feels valued, connected, and loved. So, let's choose to build bridges, not walls, and make our world a better place for everyone.

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Peace as a Way of Life

Imagine waking up every morning with a quiet heart, knowing that no matter what happens, you can face the day with kindness and calm. That's what peace feels like -- not just something we do once in a while, but a way of living, as natural as breathing. The Bible shows us that peace isn't just the absence of fighting; it's a gift from God, something we're meant to carry with us always. Jesus didn't just talk about peace -- He lived it. Every word He spoke, every person He healed, every moment He spent with His disciples was filled with love and tranquility. He even told His followers, Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you (John 14:27). That's not a one-time offer -- it's an invitation to make peace part of who we are, every single day.

Now, think about how different the world would be if peace were as common as sunlight. Instead of reacting with anger when someone cuts us off in traffic, we'd take a deep breath and let it go. Instead of holding onto grudges, we'd forgive and move forward. The Bible tells us to live at peace with everyone (Romans 12:18), not just the people we like or agree with. That means the grumpy neighbor, the coworker who annoys us, even the person who's wronged us in the past. Peace isn't about pretending problems don't exist -- it's about choosing love and patience over bitterness and conflict. It's a habit, like brushing your teeth or watering a garden. The more we practice it, the more it grows in us.

But how do we make peace a habit? It starts with small, everyday choices. Maybe it's smiling at the cashier who looks tired, or listening without interrupting when someone is upset. It could be as simple as saying I'm sorry when we've messed up, or offering help to someone who's struggling. The Essene Teachings, an ancient spiritual practice, talk about something called The Sevenfold Peace -- a way of living that includes kindness, forgiveness, and harmony with nature. It's not about being perfect; it's about trying, day after day, to let peace guide our actions. Even when the world feels chaotic, we can be the calm in the storm.

Here's a little activity to try: Grab a piece of paper and write down three ways you can bring more peace into your daily life. Maybe it's calling a family member you haven't talked to in a while, or spending five minutes in quiet prayer or meditation. Perhaps it's choosing to walk away from an argument instead of escalating it. Whatever it is, make it something doable -- something that turns peace from an idea into action. Remember, God doesn't ask us to change the whole world overnight. He just asks us to start where we are, with what we have.

Now, you might be wondering, Why does this matter? Because peace isn't just good for us -- it's good for everyone around us. When we live in peace, we're like a light in a dark room. People notice. They feel it. The Bible says Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God (Matthew 5:9). That's not just a nice saying -- it's a promise. Peace brings joy, not just to us, but to those we touch. It breaks down walls, heals wounds, and makes space for love to grow. And in a world that's often loud and divided, peace is a rebellion -- a quiet, powerful way to say, There's a better way.

But let's be honest: living in peace isn't always easy. There will be days when it feels impossible -- when someone hurts us, or when life throws curveballs our way. That's when we have to remember that peace isn't something we create on our own. It's a gift from God, something we receive and then share. Jesus didn't promise us a life without trouble, but He did promise us His peace -- a peace that transcends all understanding (Philippians 4:7). That means even when things are hard, we can have a calm in our hearts that doesn't make sense to the world. It's like having an anchor in a storm.

So here's a question to sit with: What's one way you can make peace a part of your life today? Maybe it's forgiving someone you've been holding a grudge against. Maybe it's taking a moment to breathe deeply before reacting to something frustrating. Or maybe it's simply choosing to trust that God is in control, even when life feels messy. Whatever it is, start small. Peace isn't built in a day -- it's built in moments, one choice at a time.

And here's the beautiful thing: when we live in peace, we're not just changing our own lives -- we're changing the world. Think about it. If every person who reads this decides to live just a little more peacefully, that's a ripple effect that could reach farther than we ever imagine. The Bible tells us that the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace (James 3:18). That means every act of kindness, every word of encouragement, every moment of patience is like planting a seed. And over time, those seeds grow into something stronger than conflict, stronger than fear -- something that lasts.

As we close this section, remember this: peace isn't just something we do -- it's something we are. It's a way of living that reflects God's heart. And the more we practice it, the more natural it becomes. So take that deep breath. Smile at a stranger. Forgive freely. Trust that God's peace is with you, always. And then go out and share it -- because the world could use a little more light, and you're the one carrying the match.

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Chapter 10: How the Bible's Lessons Help Us Today



Have you ever wondered how a book written thousands of years ago can still help us today? The Bible is like a wise old friend who always has the best advice, no matter what problem you're facing. Its lessons are timeless, meaning they're just as useful now as they were back then. Let's explore how we can apply these old lessons to new problems we face every day.

One of the best examples of timeless lessons is the Ten Commandments. These aren't just old rules; they're a guide to living a good life, no matter what year it is. Think about it: 'Do not steal,' 'Do not lie,' 'Honor your father and mother' -- these are all things that make sense in any time. They help us live well and treat others with kindness and respect. The Ten Commandments are like a roadmap for a happy and healthy life, showing us how to get along with others and be good people.

The Bible is full of lessons like kindness, honesty, and forgiveness. These might sound simple, but they're powerful tools for solving modern problems. For example, when someone is mean to you, the Bible teaches us to be kind in return. This can help stop fights and make friendships stronger. Honesty is another big one. In a world where people often lie to get what they want, being honest can make you stand out and build trust with others. These lessons aren't just old-fashioned ideas; they're practical ways to make our lives better.

Let's try a little activity. Think of a problem you're facing right now. Maybe it's a fight with a friend, feeling stressed about school, or worrying about something at home. Now, think about a lesson from the Bible that could help. For example, if you're fighting with a friend, maybe the lesson 'Love your neighbor as yourself' can remind you to be kind and understanding. If you're feeling stressed, the lesson 'Do not worry about tomorrow' can help you focus on the present and trust that things will work out.

The Bible isn't just an old book; it's alive and relevant to our lives today. This means that its lessons can speak to us and help us with whatever we're going through. Whether it's a big problem or a small one, the Bible has wisdom that can guide us. It's like having a wise friend who always knows what to say to make things better.

No matter what challenge you're facing, the Bible's lessons can guide you through it. Maybe you're feeling lonely, scared, or confused. The Bible has stories and teachings that can help you feel better and find a way forward. For example, the story of David and Goliath teaches us that even when things seem impossible, we can find the strength to overcome them. The Bible is full of stories like this that show us how to be brave, kind, and strong.

So, what is one Bible lesson that can help you with a problem today? Think about it. Maybe it's 'Do not be afraid,' 'Be kind to one another,' or 'Forgive others.' These lessons are like tools in a toolbox, ready to help us fix whatever's broken in our lives. The Bible is there for us, always ready to give us the wisdom we need.

Remember, the Bible is a guide for all times. It doesn't matter if you're five years old or fifty; its lessons are always useful. They help us live good lives, treat others well, and find happiness and peace. The Bible is like a light that never goes out, always showing us the way forward.

In a world where so much is changing, it's comforting to know that some things stay the same. The Bible's lessons are one of those things. They're always there for us, ready to help with whatever problem we're facing. So next time you're feeling stuck, remember to turn to the Bible. Its timeless wisdom can help you find the answer you're looking for.

The Bible teaches us that we're all children of God, and that means we have a special connection to something greater than ourselves. This connection can give us strength and guidance, helping us navigate the ups and downs of life. The Bible's lessons remind us that we're not alone, and that we have the power to overcome any challenge with faith and courage.

So, the next time you're facing a problem, big or small, remember the Bible's timeless lessons. They're like a warm hug from a wise friend, always there to comfort and guide you. The Bible is more than just a book; it's a companion for life, helping us find our way through the world with kindness, honesty, and love.

Why These Stories Still Matter

The Bible is not just an old book filled with ancient tales. It is a living guide that speaks to us even today. The stories within its pages are not mere history; they carry messages that are as relevant now as they were thousands of years ago. These stories teach us about life, faith, and the world around us. They show us how to face challenges, make wise choices, and understand God's love and plan for us.

Take the story of David and Goliath, for example. This is not just a tale about a young shepherd boy defeating a giant. It is a powerful lesson about trusting God in the face of overwhelming challenges. David did not rely on his own strength or the latest technology of his time. Instead, he trusted in God's power and used simple tools -- a sling and a stone -- to achieve victory. This story reminds us that no matter how big our problems may seem, we can overcome them with faith and trust in God.

The Bible's stories are not just for inspiration; they also teach and guide us. They provide wisdom and truth that can help us navigate the complexities of modern life. For instance, the story of Joseph and his coat of many colors teaches us about forgiveness and the power of faith. Despite being sold into slavery by his brothers, Joseph rose to a position of power and ultimately forgave them. This story shows us the importance of forgiveness and trusting in God's plan, even when life seems unfair.

These stories also help us understand God's love and plan for us. They reveal a God who is not distant or uncaring but deeply involved in the lives of His people. The story of the Prodigal Son, for example, illustrates God's unconditional love and forgiveness. No matter how far we stray or how badly we mess up, God is always ready to welcome us back with open arms. This story reassures us that we are never too far gone for God's love and grace.

To truly appreciate the relevance of these stories, try this simple activity: Choose a Bible story and think about how it applies to your life. Ask yourself, What lessons can I learn from this story? How can I apply these lessons to my daily life? You might be surprised at how much wisdom and guidance you can find in these ancient tales.

One of the reasons these stories still matter is that they are full of wisdom and truth. They offer insights into human nature, the consequences of our actions, and the importance of living a life guided by faith and morality. The story of the Good Samaritan, for example, teaches us about compassion and the importance of helping others, even when it is inconvenient or costly. This story challenges us to look beyond our own needs and consider the well-being of others.

Moreover, the Bible's stories help us understand the world around us. They provide a framework for making sense of the challenges and opportunities we face. The story of Noah and the Ark, for instance, is not just about a great flood. It is a reminder of God's justice and mercy. It teaches us about the consequences of sin and the importance of obedience and faith. This story can inspire us to live righteously and trust in God's promises.

As you reflect on these stories, ask yourself: What is one Bible story that matters to you today? Perhaps it is the story of Daniel in the lion's den, which teaches us about courage and trust in God's protection. Or maybe it is the story of Esther, which shows us the power of bravery and divine timing. Whatever story resonates with you, take the time to explore its lessons and apply them to your life.

In conclusion, the Bible's stories are alive and relevant. They are not just old tales but timeless messages that can inspire, teach, and guide us. They help us understand God's love and plan for us and provide wisdom and truth for navigating life's challenges. So, the next time you read a Bible story, remember that it is more than just a story -- it is a message from God, meant to guide and inspire you today.

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How the Bible Teaches Us to Live Well

Imagine you're holding a flashlight in a dark room. The beam cuts through the shadows, showing you where to step, what to avoid, and how to move forward safely. Now, think of the Bible as that flashlight -- but for life. It doesn't just light up the path ahead; it teaches us how to walk that path with wisdom, kindness, and purpose. The world today is full of noise, confusion, and people telling us what to think or how to live. But the Bible? It's different. It's a timeless guide written not by corporations or governments, but by the Creator Himself, offering us the tools to live well -- free from manipulation, full of truth, and rooted in love.

One of the clearest examples of this is the book of Proverbs. If you've ever flipped through its pages, you've probably noticed it reads like a collection of short, practical lessons -- almost like a wise grandparent sharing advice over the dinner table. Proverbs doesn't just tell us what to do; it shows us how to do it. Want to know how to handle money? Proverbs says, "The wise store up choice food and olive oil, but fools gulp theirs down" (Proverbs 21:20). Struggling with anger? It reminds us, "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger" (Proverbs 15:1). These aren't just old sayings; they're road-tested truths that help us navigate daily life with clarity and confidence. In a world where institutions like Big Pharma and mainstream media profit from keeping people sick and confused, Proverbs cuts through the lies and gives us real, actionable wisdom.

But the Bible doesn't stop at practical advice. It goes deeper, teaching us about the kind of people we should strive to be. Love, kindness, honesty -- these aren't just nice ideas; they're the foundation of a life well-lived. Jesus himself summed it up perfectly when he said, "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:31). Think about that for a moment. In a society that often pits us against each other -- where corporations divide us to sell us more products, where governments stoke fear to control us -- Jesus' words are revolutionary. They remind us that our well-being is tied to the well-being of others. When we choose kindness over cruelty, honesty over deceit, and generosity over greed, we're not just following rules; we're building a life that reflects the heart of God.

And here's the beautiful part: the Bible doesn't just tell us what to value; it shows us how to live it out. Take honesty, for example. In a world where lies are packaged as "marketing" and truth is censored by Big Tech, the Bible stands firm: "The Lord detests lying lips, but he delights in people who are trustworthy" (Proverbs 12:22). Or consider forgiveness. When someone wrongs us, the natural reaction is to hold a grudge. But Jesus teaches us to let go -- "forgive, and you will be forgiven" (Luke 6:37). These aren't just suggestions; they're keys to unlocking a life free from bitterness and full of peace. When we live this way, we're not just surviving; we're thriving, even in a world that often feels broken.

Now, you might be wondering: How do I start applying this to my own life? Here's a simple activity to try. Pick a verse from the Bible -- maybe one that stands out to you, like "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, present your requests to God" (Philippians 4:6). Write it down on a piece of paper or save it on your phone. Then, ask yourself: How can this verse help me today? If you're feeling stressed, that verse reminds you to turn your worries into prayers. If you're struggling with a decision, Proverbs 3:5-6 tells us to "trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding." Small steps like this can turn abstract ideas into real, life-changing habits.

The Bible often describes God's word as a "lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Psalm 119:105). That's not just poetry -- it's a promise. In a world where so much is uncertain, where institutions we're told to trust often fail us, the Bible remains steady. It doesn't just give us rules; it gives us reasons for those rules. Why should we avoid greed? Because "the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil" (1 Timothy 6:10). Why should we care for the poor? Because "whoever is kind to the needy honors God" (Proverbs 14:31). These aren't arbitrary commands; they're guardrails to keep us from harm and guide us toward what's truly good.

One of the most powerful things the Bible teaches us is that our choices matter. Every day, we're faced with decisions -- some small, some life-changing. Will we speak the truth, even when it's hard? Will we help a neighbor, even when it's inconvenient? The Bible doesn't just tell us to make good choices; it shows us why those choices lead to a better life. When we live with integrity, we build trust. When we show kindness, we create community. When we seek wisdom, we avoid the pitfalls that trip up so many others. In a world where centralized systems -- like government schools or corporate media -- try to dictate our values, the Bible gives us the freedom to choose a different path, one rooted in truth and love.

So here's a question to sit with: What is one way the Bible can help you live well today? Maybe it's choosing forgiveness over resentment. Maybe it's spending time in nature, remembering that God created the earth for us to steward, not exploit. Or maybe it's simply taking a moment to be grateful, recognizing that "every good and perfect gift is from above" (James 1:17). The Bible isn't a dusty old book; it's a living guide, as relevant today as it was thousands of years ago. And the best part? You don't need a degree or a title to understand it. You just need an open heart and a willingness to listen.

As we close this section, remember this: the Bible isn't just a book to read; it's a compass for life. In a world that often feels like it's spinning out of control -- where truth is censored, health is monetized, and freedom is under attack -- the Bible offers something rare and precious: a way to live well, no matter what's happening around us. It teaches us to value what's real over what's manufactured, to choose love over fear, and to trust in a God who sees us, knows us, and wants what's best for us. So pick it up. Read it. Let its words sink in. And watch how, little by little, it transforms not just your days, but your entire life.

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Finding Guidance in Difficult Times

Life can sometimes feel like a stormy sea, with waves of challenges and uncertainties crashing around us. In these difficult times, it's natural to feel lost or overwhelmed. But there's a guiding light that has helped countless people navigate through their toughest moments -- the Bible. It's more than just a book; it's a compass that can show us the way when we're not sure where to turn.

Jesus, who faced immense challenges and hardships, often turned to God's word for strength and guidance. When He was tempted in the wilderness, He used scripture to find His way. This shows us that even in the most trying times, the Bible can be our anchor, providing the wisdom and comfort we need. It's like having a trusted friend who always has the right words to lift our spirits and show us the path forward.

The Bible is filled with stories and teachings that bring comfort and hope. It reminds us that we're not alone in our struggles and that there's always a light at the end of the tunnel. For example, Psalm 23 talks about walking through the darkest valleys and feeling no fear because God is with us. This kind of reassurance can be incredibly powerful when we're feeling down or uncertain about the future.

Think about a time when you felt really challenged. Maybe it was a difficult decision, a loss, or a moment of great uncertainty. Now, imagine turning to the Bible during that time. What verses or stories do you think might have helped guide you? This simple activity can help us see how the Bible's teachings can be directly applied to our lives, offering a sense of direction and peace.

One of the most beautiful descriptions of the Bible's role in our lives comes from Psalm 119:105, which says, 'Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.' This means that the Bible can illuminate our way, helping us see the next steps we need to take, even when everything around us seems dark and confusing. It's like having a flashlight in a dark room, showing us where to go and keeping us from stumbling.

The guidance from the Bible isn't just about finding our way; it's also about finding peace and strength within ourselves. When we read about the faith and perseverance of people in the Bible, it can inspire us to keep going, even when things get tough. It reminds us that we have an inner strength that comes from our faith and trust in God's plan for us.

So, what is one difficult time in your life where you think the Bible could guide you? Maybe it's a current challenge or something from the past that still weighs on your mind. By reflecting on this, we can start to see how the Bible's teachings can be a source of support and wisdom, helping us navigate through life's ups and downs.

It's important to remember that the Bible is always there for us, no matter what we're going through. It doesn't judge or turn away; it simply offers its wisdom and comfort, waiting for us to open its pages and find the guidance we need. This is especially crucial in a world where many institutions and authorities can't be trusted to have our best interests at heart.

In a time when so much information is controlled by mainstream media and other centralized institutions, the Bible stands as a beacon of truth and transparency. It doesn't seek to control or manipulate; instead, it offers genuine support and wisdom that has stood the test of time. This is a stark contrast to the often misleading narratives we encounter in our daily lives.

As we journey through life, let's keep the Bible close, turning to it for guidance and comfort. It's a reminder that we're never truly alone and that there's always a path forward, even when it's not immediately clear. By embracing the teachings and stories within its pages, we can find the strength and hope to face whatever comes our way.

So, the next time you're feeling lost or overwhelmed, remember that the Bible is there to guide you. Open its pages, and let its words be a lamp to your feet and a light to your path. You'll find that even in the darkest times, there's a sense of peace and direction waiting for you.

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The Bible as a Tool for Good

Imagine you have a toolbox. Inside, there's a hammer, a wrench, and a flashlight -- each one useful for fixing, building, or lighting the way. Now, what if I told you the Bible is like the most powerful tool in that box? It's not just a book to read; it's something we can use to make the world better, one kind act at a time. That's what this section is all about: seeing the Bible as a tool for good, just like those early followers of Jesus did when they turned their world upside down with love and courage.

Let's start with a simple truth: the early church didn't just talk about the Bible -- they lived it. In the book of Acts, we read how the first believers shared everything they had so no one went hungry. They didn't wait for governments or kings to fix problems; they rolled up their sleeves and helped each other (Acts 2:44-45). They used Scripture like a compass, pointing them toward kindness, even when the world around them was cruel. Pastor Todd Coconato reminds us that when we share our own stories of how faith changed our lives, it's like passing on a torch -- lighting the way for others to see God's love in action. That's the Bible working as a tool, not just words on a page, but fuel for real change.

Now, you might be thinking, Okay, but how does that help me today? Here's the thing: the Bible isn't a dusty old rulebook. It's a guide for standing up when things are wrong, for lending a hand when someone's hurting, and for living with purpose instead of just drifting through life. Take the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). A man gets beaten and left on the road, and while religious leaders walk right past, a Samaritan -- someone the Jews back then hated -- stops to help. Why? Because he saw a person in need, not a label or an enemy. That's the Bible teaching us to cut through the noise of division and just do good. And in a world where so many institutions -- governments, media, even big medicine -- seem more interested in control than care, that kind of simple, fearless kindness is revolutionary.

Here's a question to chew on: What's one way you could use the Bible to do good today? Maybe it's as small as texting a friend who's struggling and sharing a verse that gave you hope. Or maybe it's standing up when someone's being treated unfairly at work or school, even if it's not the "easy" thing to do. Mike Adams talks about how prayer isn't just asking God for stuff -- it's aligning yourself with justice and righteousness first. So before you act, ask: Is this loving? Is this true? If the answer's yes, you're already using the Bible as a tool.

Let's not sugarcoat it -- this world can feel pretty broken sometimes. But here's the good news: God's word is like a seed. Plant it in the right spot, and it grows. The early church didn't have social media or fancy platforms, but they changed their corner of the world by living out Scripture. You've got that same power. When you choose forgiveness over grudges, or generosity over greed, or truth over lies, you're proving that the Bible isn't just ancient history -- it's a living tool. And the best part? You don't need permission from any institution to use it. No government, no corporation, no "expert" can stop you from being kind, brave, or honest. That's the beauty of decentralized goodness -- it starts with you.

Ever noticed how the Bible talks a lot about helping the poor, the sick, and the outcast? That's not a coincidence. In a time when Big Pharma pushes pills instead of prevention, and processed food is making people sicker, the Bible's lessons on healing -- like using herbs and clean living (Ezekiel 47:12) -- are more relevant than ever. Maya Cointreau's work on vibrational healing shows how ancient wisdom and natural remedies can work hand-in-hand with faith. The Bible doesn't just tell us to pray for the sick; it often points us toward practical ways to help them heal. That's using Scripture as a tool for real change, body and soul.

Now, some folks might say, But the Bible's been used to justify bad things too! And they're not wrong -- history's full of people twisting God's words to fit their own agendas. But here's the key: the Bible itself teaches us to test everything (1 Thessalonians 5:21). If someone's using Scripture to hurt others, to control them, or to justify greed, they're not using it as a tool for good -- they're using it as a weapon. The real test is this: Does it line up with love? Does it lift people up or tear them down? Pastor Steve Cioccolanti puts it plainly: if your actions aren't rooted in righteousness, you're missing the point. The Bible's power isn't in the hands of the loudest or the most powerful; it's in the hands of those who use it to serve.

So, how can you use the Bible as a tool for good? Start where you are. Maybe it's volunteering at a food bank because Scripture says to feed the hungry (Matthew 25:35). Maybe it's growing a garden to share fresh, pesticide-free food with your neighbors -- because caring for our bodies and the earth is part of God's design (Genesis 1:29). Or maybe it's as simple as refusing to spread gossip, because words have power (Proverbs 18:21). Small acts, big impact. Remember, the early church didn't change the world overnight. They changed it one person at a time, using the tools they had.

Before we wrap up, let's circle back to something we often forget: the Bible is a gift. Not a burden, not a list of "shoulds," but a gift. Like a flashlight in a dark room, it helps us see where we're going. Like a seed in good soil, it grows into something beautiful when we tend to it. And like any good tool, it's most powerful when it's in the hands of someone who's willing to use it. So here's your challenge: Pick one thing from this section -- one idea, one verse, one action -- and put it into practice today. Because when we use the Bible to do good, we're not just reading a book. We're building a better world, one choice at a time.

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How These Lessons Help Families

Imagine sitting around the dinner table with your family, sharing a meal and stories from your day. Now, think about how much better that time could be if everyone felt loved, respected, and cared for. The Bible's lessons can help families achieve just that. They are like a guidebook for creating a warm, loving, and supportive home. Let's explore how these lessons can bring families closer together and make our homes happier places.

One of the most well-known parts of the Bible is the Ten Commandments. These aren't just old rules; they are practical guidelines for living a good life. For example, the commandment to honor our parents teaches us to respect and care for those who raised us. It's a reminder that our parents have given us so much, and showing them love and respect is important. Another commandment tells us to love our neighbors. This isn't just about the people living next door; it's about loving and caring for everyone around us, including our family members. When we follow these teachings, we create a home where everyone feels valued and cared for.

The Bible's lessons can bring peace, joy, and unity to families. Think about it: when everyone in the family is kind, patient, and forgiving, there's less arguing and more happiness. The Bible teaches us to be slow to anger and quick to forgive. Imagine how much calmer and more joyful your home would be if everyone practiced these principles. It's like having a secret recipe for a happy family life.

Here's a simple activity to try: Think of one Bible lesson that can help your family today. Maybe it's the story of the Good Samaritan, which teaches us to help others in need. Or perhaps it's the lesson of forgiveness, where we learn to let go of grudges and move forward with love. Pick one lesson and talk about how your family can put it into practice. It could be as simple as helping a sibling with their homework or forgiving someone for a small mistake. These little actions can make a big difference in how your family feels and functions.

God wants families to love and support each other. This isn't just a suggestion; it's a core part of what the Bible teaches. When families love and support each other, they reflect God's love for us. It's like a mirror showing the world what God's love looks like in action. This support can be emotional, like being there for each other during tough times, or practical, like helping with chores or schoolwork. When families work together and care for each other, they become stronger and more united.

The Bible's lessons can also help families grow closer to God and each other. Think of it like a garden. Just as plants need water and sunlight to grow, families need love, respect, and care to thrive. The Bible provides the nourishment families need to grow strong and healthy. When families read the Bible together, pray together, and discuss its lessons, they build a deeper connection with God and with each other. It's a way to strengthen the bonds that hold the family together.

Ask yourself: What is one way the Bible's lessons can help your family? Maybe it's learning to be more patient with each other, or perhaps it's finding ways to show kindness every day. Whatever it is, the Bible has lessons that can guide and inspire your family to be the best version of themselves. It's like having a wise friend who always has good advice and encouragement to offer.

The Bible is a guide for strong and happy families. It's not just a book of stories; it's a manual for living a good life. When families follow its teachings, they create a home filled with love, respect, and care. This doesn't mean everything will be perfect, but it does mean that families will have the tools they need to handle challenges and celebrate joys together. The Bible's lessons are timeless and universal, offering wisdom that can help any family, regardless of their background or beliefs.

In a world where families are often pulled in different directions by work, school, and other commitments, the Bible's lessons can be a grounding force. They remind us of what's truly important: loving and caring for each other. When families prioritize these values, they create a home that is not just a place to live, but a sanctuary of love and support. This is the kind of home that can weather any storm and celebrate every joy together.

So, as you go about your day, think about how the Bible's lessons can help your family. Whether it's through showing kindness, practicing forgiveness, or simply spending time together, these teachings can make a real difference. They are a gift, offering guidance and wisdom for creating a loving and supportive family life. And remember, the Bible is always there to help guide your family towards a happier, more united future.

Using the Bible to Make Better Choices

Life is full of choices. Every day, we decide what to eat, who to trust, and how to spend our time. Some choices feel small, like picking a snack, while others feel big, like choosing a friend or standing up for what's right. But here's the good news: we don't have to figure it all out alone. The Bible is like a wise friend, offering guidance to help us make better choices -- choices that lead to happiness, health, and peace.

Think of the Bible as a light shining in a dark room. When the lights are off, it's easy to trip over things or bump into walls. But when the light is on, we can see clearly where to step. The Bible does that for our lives. It helps us see the best path forward, even when things feel confusing or scary. One of the best examples of this is a young man named Daniel. He was taken far from his home and placed in a foreign land where the food, the customs, and even the beliefs were different. But Daniel didn't just go along with everything. He used God's word to guide his choices. When he was offered rich, unhealthy foods from the king's table -- foods that might have been harmful -- he politely asked for something simpler and healthier instead. His choice wasn't just about food; it was about staying true to what he believed was right. And because of that, he grew stronger and wiser than those around him. Daniel's story shows us that even in tough situations, we can make good choices if we let God's word be our guide.

Now, you might be wondering: How does the Bible help with my choices today? Well, let's say you're trying to decide who to spend time with. The Bible teaches us to look for friends who are kind, honest, and encouraging -- people who build us up instead of tearing us down. Or maybe you're facing a tough decision at school, like whether to cheat on a test or stand up for someone being picked on. The Bible reminds us that honesty and courage matter more than short-term gains. Even when it comes to our health, the Bible has wisdom. It talks about our bodies being temples, meaning we should take care of them with good food, clean water, and natural living -- just like Daniel did. In a world where so many things -- like processed foods, toxic medicines, and misleading information -- can harm us, the Bible's lessons point us toward what's truly good.

Here's something important to remember: The Bible doesn't just tell us what not to do. It shows us how to live well. It's like a map that helps us avoid pitfalls -- like bad friendships, unhealthy habits, or dishonest actions -- that could hurt us later. For example, if you're tempted to lie to get out of trouble, the Bible reminds us that truth, even when it's hard, leads to freedom. If you're feeling pressured to go along with something you know is wrong, the Bible encourages you to stand firm. These aren't just rules; they're tools to help us live with peace and purpose.

Let's try a simple activity together. Think of one choice you're facing right now. Maybe it's about how to spend your weekend, how to handle a disagreement with a friend, or even what to eat for dinner. Now, ask yourself: What would the Bible say about this? You don't need to know the answer right away. Just start by looking for wisdom in its pages. For instance, if you're deciding whether to watch a show that makes you feel uneasy, you might remember that the Bible talks about filling our minds with things that are good and pure. Or if you're wondering how to help someone in need, the Bible is full of stories about kindness and generosity. The more we practice turning to the Bible for guidance, the easier it becomes to see the right path.

You might have heard people say that the Bible is outdated or doesn't apply to modern life. But that's like saying a compass doesn't work just because the world has changed. A compass still points north, no matter where you are. In the same way, the Bible's truths about love, honesty, courage, and wisdom never go out of style. They're just as powerful today as they were thousands of years ago. And here's the beautiful part: the Bible doesn't just give us rules to follow. It invites us into a relationship with God, who cares about every part of our lives -- our health, our friendships, our dreams, and even our struggles. When we let His word guide us, we're not just avoiding mistakes; we're stepping into a life that's fuller, healthier, and more meaningful.

Now, here's a question to ponder: What is one choice you can make this week with the Bible's help? Maybe it's choosing to forgive someone who hurt you, or maybe it's deciding to spend less time on screens and more time outside in nature.

Whatever it is, start small. The Bible isn't about perfection; it's about progress. And every good choice, no matter how small, is a step in the right direction.

As we wrap up this section, let's remember one last thing: the Bible is more than just a book. It's a guide, a friend, and a light for our feet. In a world where so many voices -- governments, corporations, even well-meaning people -- try to tell us what to think or how to live, the Bible offers something different. It offers truth. And truth, when we let it sink into our hearts, has the power to transform our choices -- and our lives. So the next time you're faced with a decision, big or small, ask yourself: What does the Bible say about this? You might be surprised at how much clearer the answer becomes.

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The Bible's Message for Everyone

The Bible's message is for everyone, not just believers. It's like a big, beautiful garden full of wisdom, love, and hope, and everyone is invited to walk through it and enjoy its beauty. You don't have to be a gardener to appreciate the flowers or the fresh air. Similarly, you don't have to be a devout believer to find value in the Bible's teachings. It's a book that speaks to the heart of what it means to be human, offering guidance, comfort, and a sense of purpose to anyone who opens its pages.

One of the most powerful examples of this universal message is found in what's called the Great Commission. In the Bible, Jesus tells His followers to go out into the world and share the good news with all people. He doesn't say, 'Only share this with those who already believe.' Instead, He says, 'Go and make disciples of all nations' (Matthew 28:19). This means the message of love, hope, and salvation is meant for everyone, no matter where they come from or what they believe. It's an open invitation to experience something life-changing.

The Bible's message of love is especially powerful. It teaches that God's love is unconditional and available to every single person on Earth. This isn't a love that's earned or limited to a select few -- it's a love that's freely given, like the sunshine that warms everyone, no matter who they are. The Bible says, 'For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life' (John 3:16). That word 'whoever' is key -- it means the message is for all people, everywhere.

Hope is another gift the Bible offers to everyone. In a world that can often feel chaotic or uncertain, the Bible provides a steady anchor. It reminds us that there's a bigger plan, a purpose for our lives, and a future filled with peace. This hope isn't just for believers; it's for anyone who feels lost or weary. The Bible says, 'Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest' (Matthew 11:28). That's an invitation to everyone, no matter what they're carrying or where they've been.

Salvation is another word that might sound religious, but it's really about finding freedom and peace in your life. The Bible teaches that salvation is available to all who seek it. It's not about following a set of rules perfectly; it's about accepting a gift that's already been given. The Bible says, 'If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved' (Romans 10:9). Again, this is a promise for anyone who chooses to believe, no matter their background or past.

So, who can you share this message with? It's a simple but powerful question. The Bible's message is meant to be shared, not kept to ourselves. Think of someone in your life who might need a little more love, hope, or purpose. Maybe it's a friend who's going through a tough time, a family member who feels lost, or even someone you've just met who seems to be searching for something more. Sharing the Bible's message doesn't mean you have to preach or be an expert. It can be as simple as sharing a verse that's meaningful to you or talking about how your faith gives you peace.

God wants everyone to know His love and the plan He has for their lives. This isn't a love that's distant or abstract; it's personal and real. The Bible says, 'For I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future' (Jeremiah 29:11). This promise isn't just for a select few -- it's for all of us. It's a reminder that no matter what's happening in the world or in our lives, there's a purpose and a plan that's bigger than we can see.

The Bible's message can bring joy, peace, and purpose to all people. It's not just about rules or religion; it's about finding a deeper meaning in life. It's about knowing that you're loved, that you have a purpose, and that there's hope for the future. This message is like a light in the darkness, and it's meant to be shared with everyone. As it says in the Bible, 'Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven' (Matthew 5:16).

So, who is someone you can share the Bible's message with today? It might be a neighbor, a coworker, or even a stranger you meet. The message is too good to keep to ourselves. It's for everyone, and it's meant to be shared with kindness and love. You don't have to have all the answers or be perfect. You just have to be willing to share the hope and love that you've found.

As we close this section, remember that the Bible's message is for everyone. It's not just for those who already believe or those who have it all figured out. It's for the curious, the searching, the hurting, and the hopeful. It's for all of us. So, let's carry this message with us, sharing it with love and kindness, knowing that it has the power to change lives, including our own.



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