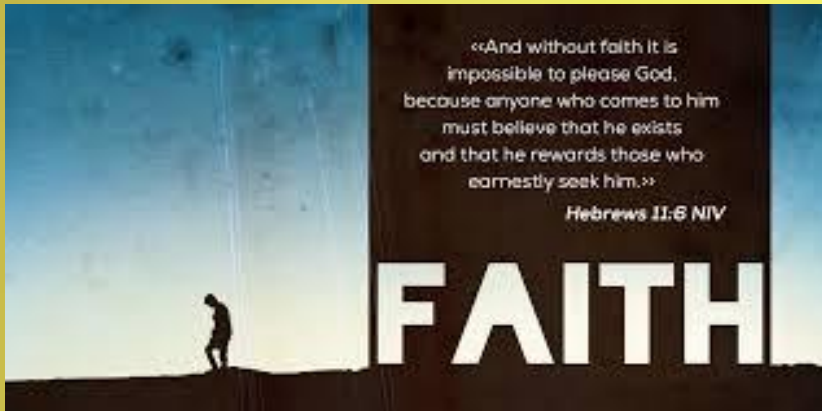


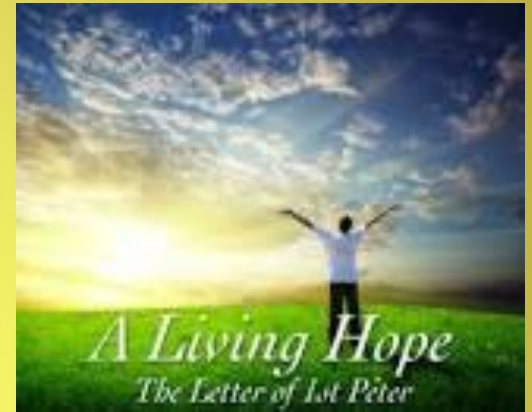
THE IMPORTANCE OF REMAINING STRONG IN OUR FAITH



In the book of Hebrews we read,

“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.” **(Hebrews 11:6)**

Our faith is the most precious thing that we have in life

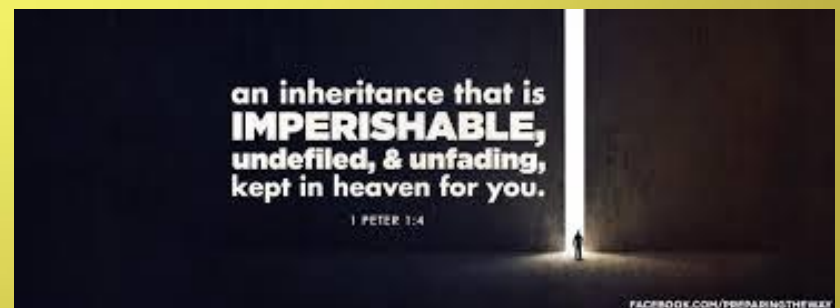


The Apostle Peter wrote,

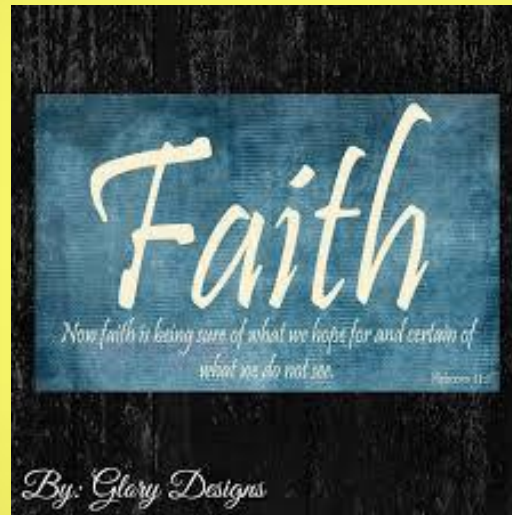
“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. **(1 Peter 1:3-5)**

In this you greatly rejoice though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honour, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love.

Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls. **(1 Peter 1:6-9)**



In the gospel of Luke in His Parable of the Persistent Widow Jesus concluded by saying, “... Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on earth?” (Luke 18:8)



As Christians we are not to grow weary in doing good and in waiting for the return of the Lord, but we are to persevere in our faith

Faith is the key to seeing all that God has planned for our life

In the book of Hebrew we read,

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” **(Hebrews 11:1)**



As we step out to do what God calls us to do and as we continually put our trust in the Lord we see the miracles in our life – God is absolutely faithful

The bible makes it clear that with God nothing will be impossible and that if we simply have faith we will see miracles in our life

In the gospel of Luke we read,
“For with God nothing will be impossible.”
(Luke 1:37)

**ANYTHING
IS POSSIBLE
IF A PERSON
BELIEVES**

MARK 9:23

Jesus Himself said,
“If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes.” **(Mark 9:23)**

Jesus Himself emphasised the power of faith.

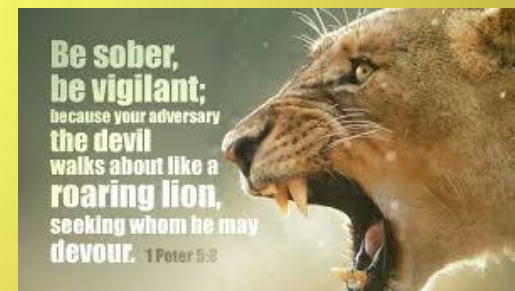
We see this in the gospel of Matthew,

**“Jesus said to them, “Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.”
*(Matthew 17:20)***



However as Believers we are in a continual spiritual warfare as the enemy tries to prevent us from being all that God has planned for our life.

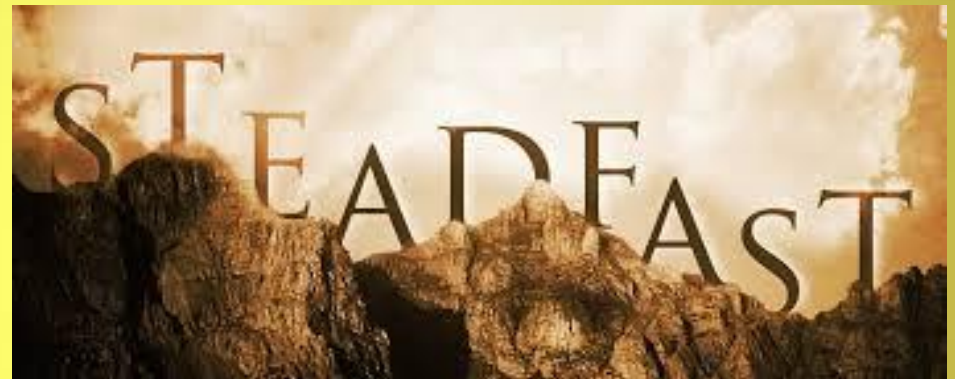
The Apostle Peter wrote, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.” (1 Peter 5:8-9)



We must continually stand strong in our faith to see God's plan for our life coming to pass

The Apostle Paul wrote,

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.” (Ephesians 6:10)



“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.” (1 Corinthians 15:58)

The enemy (the Devil) will try and undermine our faith in many ways. Some of these ways include;



- i) Through getting us to focus on the cares of this world and other things (Mark 4:18-19) (Matthew 6:24)**
- ii) By bringing ungodly and unbelieving people into our life (1 Corinthians 15:33)**
- iii) By getting us too busy to pray and to spend time with the Lord and in God's Word (Luke 10:38-42)**
- iv) By stopping us from having fellowship with other Christians, (Matthew 24:10) and**
- v) By filling our mind with fears and anxious thoughts**

The Devil will continually try and tempt us to sin and to live a worldly lifestyle

In the book of Hebrews we read,

“Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called “Today,” lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end,” (Hebrews 3:12-14)

We must refuse to compromise in our walk with the Lord and become conformed to the patterns of this world (*Romans 12:1-2*)



FAITH IS THE KEY TO SEEING OUR PRAYERS BEING CONSISTENTLY ANSWERED



Jesus Himself said,

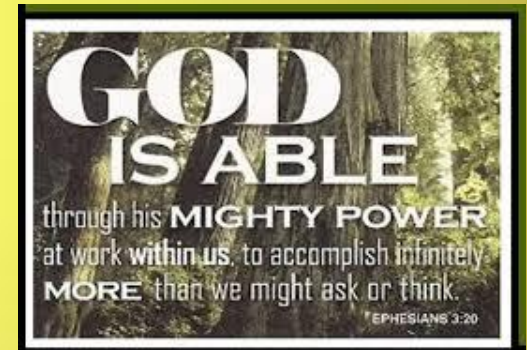
“Have faith in God. For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says.”

“Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.” (Mark 11:22-24)

GOD'S PLAN FOR OUR LIFE WILL ALWAYS INVOLVE TAKING STEPS OF FAITH WHERE WE NEED TO DEPEND ON HIM TO SEE THINGS ACCOMPLISHED

The Apostle Paul,

“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,” (Ephesians 3:20)



As we step out by faith to follow God's plan for our life we will see the constant faithfulness of God and His continual provision in our life and our lives making a great difference in this world for eternity.

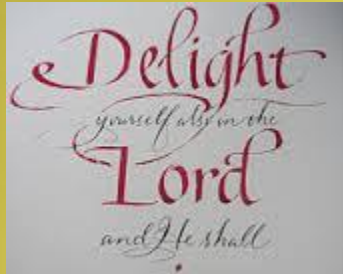
Today I want to share some keys that can help us to remain strong in our faith so that we continually shine for Jesus and make a great difference in this world for eternity

Jesus said,



“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see you good works and glorify your Father in heaven. **(Matthew 5:16)**”

1) The importance of having intimacy with the LORD



Having intimacy with the LORD is a key to overcoming fears and remaining strong in our faith. When we spend time with the LORD we:

- KEEP OUR FIRST LOVE FOR JESUS ALIVE
- Gain more of God's love and compassion for people
- We have greater boldness and courage
- Grow in our knowledge of God's love for us,
- We experience His joy and renew our strength (This is especially important during our trials), and
- We overcome our fears and grow strong in our faith

To maintain a vibrant and active faith it is so important that we:

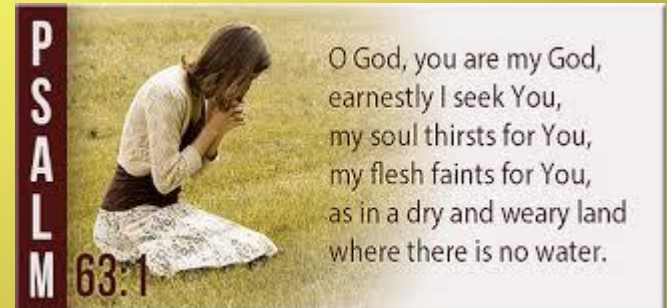


- i) *Make time* to spend with the LORD
- ii) Spend time with the LORD in a place where we will *not be distracted* (Revelation comes in isolation)
- iii) *Learn to be still* and to wait upon the LORD to speak to us. We need to learn to still our mind. Like every relationship there needs to be two way communication (God loves to speak to us)
- iv) Read the bible with an open heart and *expectation* that God will speak to us through His Word encouragement and direction, and
- v) Worship the Father in spirit and in truth (John 4:23)

King David was a man who loved God with a passion. He wrote in Psalm 63,



“O GOD, You are my God; *Early will I seek You; My soul thirsts for you; My flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water. So I have looked for You in the sanctuary, To see Your power and Your glory. Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, My lips shall praise You. Thus I will bless You while I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, And my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips. (Psalm 63:1-5)*



O God, you are my God,
earnestly I seek You,
my soul thirsts for You,
my flesh faints for You,
as in a dry and weary land
where there is no water.

King David also wrote,

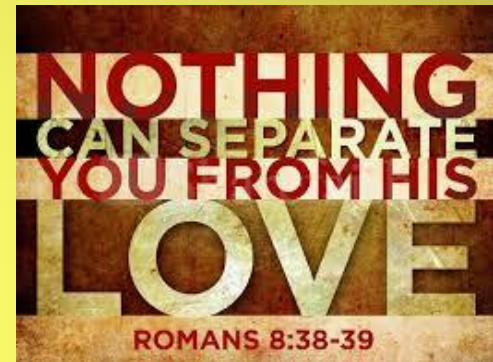
“Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!”
(Psalm 46:10)



“Wait on the Lord; Be of **good courage**, And He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say, on the Lord.”
(Psalm 27:14)

We need to learn to be still and to wait upon the Lord. As we do we will hear from the Lord and grow in our understanding of God’s great love for us

The Apostle Paul had a great desire to know Christ intimately (Philippians 3:7-8) He wrote about God's eternal love for all believers.



The Apostle Paul wrote,

“For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” **(Romans 8:38-39)**

Intimacy with the LORD is also a key to;

- i) Gaining God's heart for people,**
- ii) Overcoming our fears of being rejected, and**
- iii) In growing in Christlike character**

***The more time that we spend with the LORD
the more we are able to love people with God's
unconditional love***



The Apostle Paul wrote,

“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.” (2 Timothy 1:7)

In the book of Acts we read,

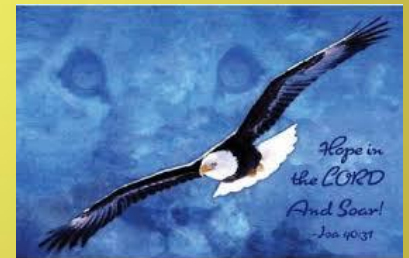
“Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marvelled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.” **(Acts 4:13)**



Intimacy in our walk with the LORD helps us to become bold in our faith and to become all that God has planned for our life

Spending time in God's presence also helps us to renew our strength and to maintain our joy.

In the book of Isaiah we read, "He gives power to the weak, And to those who have no might He increases strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, And the young men shall utterly fall, But those who wait on the Lord Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint. (Isaiah 40:29-31)



King David also wrote,

"You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore." (Psalm 16:11)

- God has so much revelation to give to us
- He knows all that He has planned for our life
- How important it is that we cultivate an intimate relationship with Him so that we can gain wisdom and revelation from Him in all areas of our life
- Just one idea or strategy from God can transform our lives and turn our circumstances around
- God's ways are higher than our ways
- So with this in mind our time with the LORD should always be one of great expectation and enjoyment as we spend time in His presence



In the book of Isaiah we read,

“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,” says the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.” (Isaiah 55:8-9)



How important it is that we make our quiet time with the LORD our greatest priority in life

Having intimacy with the LORD is a great key to remaining strong in our faith.

King David wrote,

**“My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast; I will sing and give praise”
(Psalm 57:7)**



Our love for God will help to keep us strong during the trials of life and enable us to grow better rather than bitter when going through challenges and disappointments in life

2) Building our lives on the promises contained in the Word of God

The Bible is full of promises that we can build our life on. The Apostle Paul wrote,

“For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.” (2 Corinthians 1:20)

We need to continually build our lives based on what God says about our life.



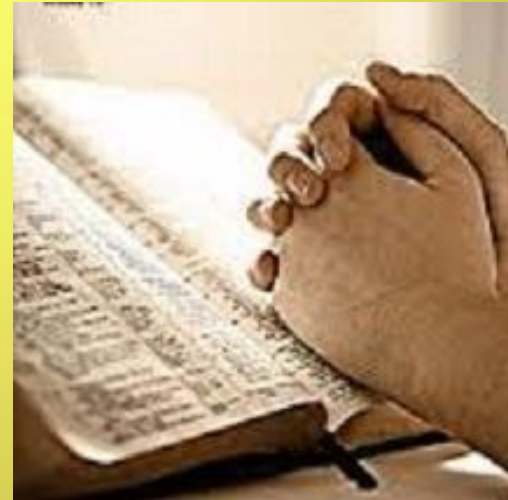
CHRIST
ALL OF
GOD'S
Promises
ARE
YES
&
AMEN

Continually meditating on the Word of God helps to renew our mind so that we build our lives based on what God says about our life

The Apostle Paul wrote,

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

(Romans 12:2)



Abiding in God's Word is a key to experiencing true freedom and to growing in our faith

Jesus said,

“If you abide in My word you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8:31-32)



The Apostle Paul wrote,

“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” (Romans 10:17)

3) Being careful what we focus on and listen to



- We need to be careful that we are selective in what we focus on and listen to.
- *With so many negative things going on in the world we must ensure that we do not focus on things that will undermine our faith and cause us to be anxious and fearful*
- Most of the news now on TV and the films that are made now focus on negative things
- *We must refuse to entertain things that can open up a door to fear or lust in our lives*

In the book of Numbers we see how an entire generation of the Children of Israel failed to enter into the Promised Land because of a negative and fearful report from 10 spies

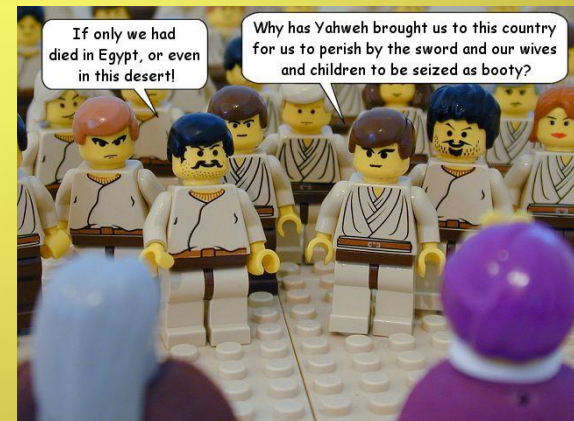


“And they gave the children of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, “The land through which we have gone as spies is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great stature. There we saw the giants (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight.” (Numbers 13:32-33)

Though God was giving the land to the Children of Israel (Numbers 13:1) this bad report broke their spirit

“And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, “If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in the wilderness!

“Why has the LORD brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?”
(Numbers 14:2-3)



As a result a whole generation of the Children of Israel died in the wilderness and missed what God had planned for their life



WE MUST BE CAREFUL ABOUT WHAT AND WHO WE LISTEN TO

The LORD said to Moses and Aaron,

“Except for Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun, you shall by no means enter the land which I swore I would make you dwell in.
(Numbers 14:30)

“But your little ones, whom you said would be victims, I will bring in, and they shall know the land which you have despised. But as for you, your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness.”
(Numbers 14:31-32)

The Apostle Paul made it clear what we should focus on in life

“Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy- meditate on these things.” **(Philippians 4:8)**



4) The importance of choosing our friends wisely

- The company that we keep will greatly influence our life
- We need to have friends in our life who will encourage us to be all that God has planned for our life
- We need people of Godly vision in our network of friends
- We need to be selective and careful about who we connect with in life



In the book of Proverbs we read,

“The righteous should choose his friends carefully, For the way of the wicked leads them astray.” **(Proverbs 12:26)**

“He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will be destroyed.” **(Proverbs 13:20)**



5) Being planted in a loving local bible based fellowship

- **Having fellowship with other believers is crucial given the lawless days that we are now living in**
- **We all need continual encouragement from other believers**





- The enemy will continually try and offend and isolate believers and prevent them from fellowshiping with other Christians
- When an ember is in a fire it burns brightly. However if the ember is spat out of the fire it quickly cools and dies out
- So too, if we disconnect from having fellowship with other believers our fire and passion for the things of God will begin to grow cold

In the book of Hebrews we read,

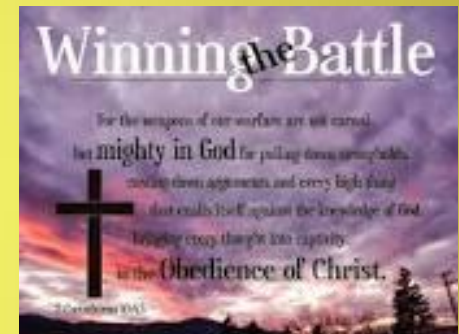
“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.” **(Hebrews 10:23-25)**



6) Learning to quickly take all wrong and unbelieving thoughts captive and replacing them with what God says about our life

We must win the battle for the mind

- The real battle ground is the mind
- The enemy will continually try and undermine our faith by:
 - Getting us to focus on the cares of this life
 - Distracting us with other things, and
 - Getting us discouraged by focusing on the trials and challenges that we are experiencing in life



We must learn to *quickly* take captive and REPLACE all wrong thoughts with what God says about our life – As believers we all have a wonderful hope and future



The Apostle Paul wrote,

**“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.”
(2 Corinthians 10:4-5)**

Winning the battle for the mind is a great key to fulfilling our God given destiny

7) Learning to give our cares to the Lord and seeking His help and guidance in every area of our life

We must learn to *talk to God* rather than always about our problems. If we keep talking about our problems they will appear to be larger than what they really are and they will overwhelm us. *God is always able to work things out if we involve Him.*



The Apostle Paul wrote,

“pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17)

We must learn to instinctively give our problems and cares to Jesus in prayer so that we do not allow our worries and concerns to undermine our faith

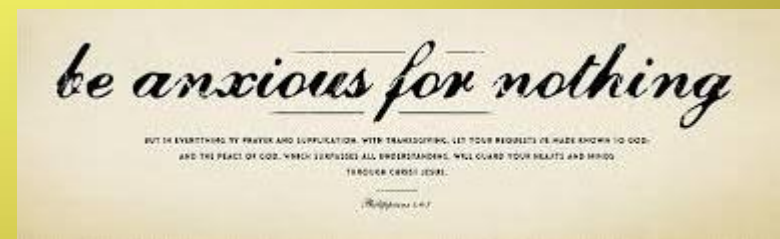
The Apostle Peter wrote,

“casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.” (1 Peter 5:7)

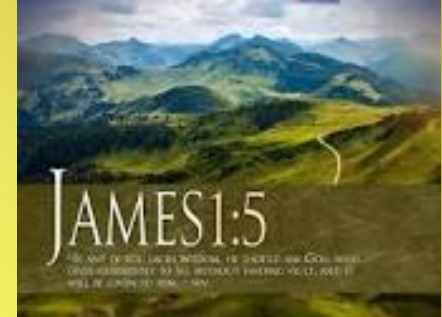


The Apostle Paul wrote,

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:6-7)



In every circumstance God is able to give us wisdom for life – We need to learn to lean on the Lord at all times



In the book of James we read,

“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.” **“But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.” (James 1:5-8)**

8) We must simply just CHOOSE to trust and depend on the Lord in ALL circumstances – As we do we will see God’s plan for our life coming to pass – We serve a loving and faithful God



King David wrote,

“Trust in the Lord, and do good; Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness. **Delight yourself also in the Lord,** And He shall give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring it to pass.” (Psalm 37:3-5)