

# SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

THE ACTIONS OF UNION WITH CHRIST



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## INTRODUCTION

This booklet sets forth a few core spiritual disciplines. It draws on two resources developed by the founder of the Navigators Ministry, Dawson Trotman. The first tool is “The Wheel Illustration.” This tool came about when Trotman altered a widely used illustration in his day. The Christian life was pictured as a stool with three legs representing the Bible, Prayer, and Fellowship. Trotman believed the Christian life should be in action. He felt strongly that sharing our faith is a critical part of the Christian life in action and so added to the other disciplines, evangelism. So the stool became a wheel with four spokes.

The “Wheel” as the *Christian Life in Action* illustrates a balanced Christian life which includes six aspects.

1. Faith in Christ and identity in Him is the center, like the hub of the wheel.
2. Obedience to Christ’s commands is the rim which holds the hub and connecting spokes together.
3. The connecting spoke down is the Word.
4. The connecting spoke up is prayer.
5. The connecting spoke to the right is fellowship in church community.
6. The connecting spoke to the left is sharing Christ with others or evangelism.

The “Wheel” is useful to help diagnose a confessing Christian’s needs for spiritual growth. Attention to each of these aspects (Faith in Christ, Obedience, Prayer, the Word, Fellowship and Evangelism) is a picture of the balanced Christian life of growth.

The second tool included in this booklet is the *Topical Memory System*. The TMS is a selection of 60 Bible verses arranged in five collections (A-E), with six topics per collection, and two verses on each topic. Learning each of these verses by heart has been of incalculable value to those growing as disciples of Christ.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH: GRACE IN ACTION

This booklet addresses core *Spiritual Disciplines*. A foundational lesson in our pursuit of godliness is that progress requires intentional effort, discipline. St. Paul urges Timothy to, “discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness; for bodily discipline (*gymnasia*) is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come” (1 Timothy 4:7–8). The phrase “of little profit” is more literally translated, “for a little” (ASV): profitable for “a little” what? It is best translated “for a little *time*,” since the contrast in the context is “the present life and also for life to come.” In other words *discipline* which aims to strengthen the body will only affect this life, but spiritual growth will bear fruit not only in this life, but in eternity.

Peter says it this way, "giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love (*agape*). For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 1:5-7, NKJV). The sequence is from faith to God-kind-of-selfless-love (*agape*). As we grow, we are to be “diligent” to add these actions beyond faith. This ladder also has some parallel features: the center (X marks the spot) addresses self control/endurance, while the outer links suggest some parallel between faith and love.

- a Selfless Love
- b Brotherly Love
- c Godliness
- d Endurance
- d' Self-Control
- c' Knowledge
- b' Goodness
- a' Faith

Spiritual growth requires effort, but this effort does not “merit” God’s grace. Grace calls for effort, but not earning. Our efforts do not merit our salvation, “it is not according to works,” (Eph. 2:8-10). Yet we are to walk in the good works prepared for us (Eph. 2:10). We cannot earn acceptance with the Father. Rather, we receive the grace of acceptance through the work of Christ alone. From there, we are to grow precisely because of God’s free and gracious acceptance of us. The effort(s) of spiritual growth do not merit acceptance with God. Rather, our gracious acceptance by Christ’s work alone is the foundation of *why* we should desire to conform ourselves more and more to Christ’s likeness. Just as an adopted child did not earn the adoption, we do not earn our standing in grace. Any effort as an obedient child starts with already being a child.

Believers are promised an eternal inheritance as kings and priests. Revelation 1:6 says, “He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father.” We are bought by the blood of Christ “to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth” (Rev. 5:10). But service, sacrifice, and sanctification come before the fullness of this reign. Spiritual disciplines are *training for reigning*.

**APPLICATION** - Assuming you already have faith, purpose to put into action goodness, knowledge, self-control, endurance, godliness, and brotherly love which would move you toward *agape* love.

## The Word (Scripture Memory)

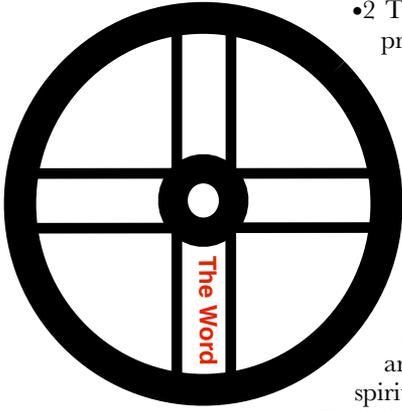
### Memory Verses<sup>1</sup>

- 2 Timothy 3:16 - All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.
- Joshua 1:8 - “This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.”

So often churches do a poor job of helping people advance in basic discipleship. Ministries on campus are often far better at helping people with personal spiritual growth. We will emphasize the use of the

Topical Memory System, created by Dawson Trotman who

founded the Navigator Ministry, as a start for memorization. This series will address basic (positive) Christian spiritual disciplines: The Word (memorization), Prayer, Fellowship, and Evangelism.



### The Value of Knowing the Word by Heart - Five Benefits

- 1) Renewal of our minds - *You are what you think.* Therefore, we must take responsibility for our thought life. Romans 12:2 - “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”
- 2) Overcoming sin - Remembering the Word of God can keep us from disobedience. Psalms 119:9–11 - “How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Your word. . . .11 Your word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against You.”
- 3) Meditation - Scripture is the best content for mental renewal, meditation, and mindfulness. Psalms 119:97 - “O how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day.”
- 4) Prayer - To pray aright we must let the Word abide in us. John 15:7 - “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.”
- 5) Sharing with Others - We need to be ready to speak truth and wisdom to help brethren or outsiders (Col. 4:5). Psalms 138:4 - “All the kings of the earth will give thanks to You, O LORD, When they have heard the words of Your mouth.”

### The Practice of Knowing the Word by Heart - Five Directives

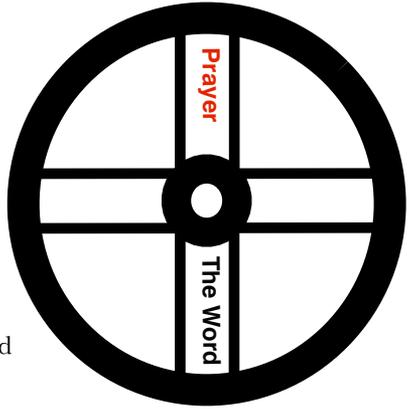
- 1) Location, location, location - Keep the Topical Memory System (or other memory texts) in your Bible, your car, your desk, your table, toilet, refrigerator, iPad, smart phone, etc.
- 2) Repeat, repeat, repeat - Recite the verse you are learning morning and evening.
- 3) Reference, reference, reference - Say the verse reference before the verse and after.
- 4) Write, write, write - Write your verse down each day in the form of a prayer.
- 5) Review, review, review - Review every verse you know from the set (e.g., A pack) each day.

<sup>1</sup> Memory verses are from the New American Standard Bible (Lockman Foundation, 1977/1995).

## Prayer

### Memory Verses

- John 15:7 - “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.”
- Philippians 4:6–7 - Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.



**Three Truths about Prayer** - Disciples of Jesus must grow in the Word (e.g., Scripture Memory and Study), but also in prayer. Knowing the Word precedes effective prayer and effective prayer calls us more and more into the Word. Much could be said about growth in prayer, but for our time, three truths are essential:

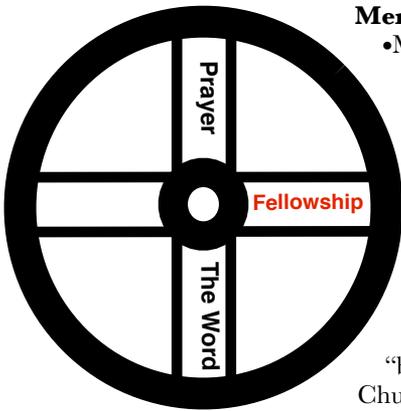
- 1) Prayer is communication with the Triune God (Rom. 8:26; 1Th. 5:17; Eph. 6:18).
- 2) Prayer is the central act of worship (John 4:22-24; Prov. 15:8; Ps 17:0, 90:0, 72:20).
- 3) Prayer according to God’s revealed will is effective (James 5:17-18; Deut. 11:11, 17; John 15:7).

**Five Steps for Morning Prayer (PCPLP)** - Many times our prayer is merely making requests of God. However, supplication is not the problem most people have. Our problem is putting on the full armor of God in preparation to make our requests effective. Below are five steps to preparation, recommended as a morning prayer routine: PCPLP.

- 1) P - Collect for Purity - “Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid; Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy Name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.”
- 2) C - Confession of Sin - “Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.”
- 3) P - Pater Noster (Lord’s Prayer) - Our Father . . .
- 4) L - Lorica - St. Patrick’s Breastplate - “I bind unto myself today the strong Name of the Trinity, By invocation of the same, the Three in One and One in Three...”
- 5) P - Praise - Sing a Psalm, Hymn, or Praise Song.

> Prayer through 31 Selected Psalms with 31 Days with God

## Fellowship: The Communion of Saints



### Memory Verses

- Matthew 18:20 - “For where two or three have gathered together in My name, there I am in their midst.”
- Hebrews 10:24-25 - And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, 25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near.

1) Defining Fellowship - We confess that we “believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; *the communion of saints*, the forgiveness of

sins. . .” The well-known term for “communion,” *koinonia*, is translated in the NT as “fellowship” (12), “contribution” (2), “participation” (2), and “sharing” (3). Consider Philemon 1:6: “I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ” (NIV). Christian fellowship is sharing life together under the terms of the new covenant because of our union in Christ. This involves friendship, sharing of material needs, working together, and the spiritual communion we have with Christ and His Body in worship, and especially the Eucharist.

2) Describing Fellowship - The communion of saints is “a kind of prelude of heaven” (Witsius). The Westminster Confession says we are to have “communion in each other’s gifts and graces” and our communion with one another binds us “to the performance of such duties, public and private, as do conduce to their mutual good, both in the inward and outward man (26.1).”

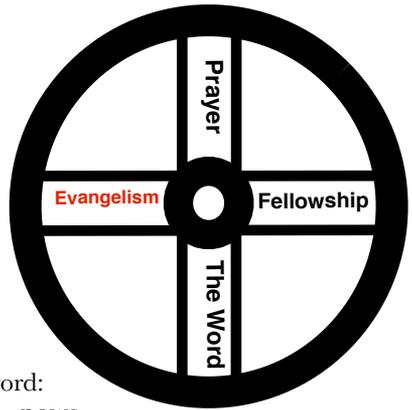
3) Duties of Fellowship - Not only are we bound to engage in spiritual worship and liturgical participation (Heb. 10:24ff), we have relational responsibilities. We are told to “love one another” (Rom. 13:8, 1Pet. 1:22, 1Jō. 3:11), to “encourage one another” (1Th. 5:11, Heb. 3:13, 10:25), to “pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another” (Rom. 14:19), to “stimulate one another to love and good deeds” (Heb. 10:24), to “serve one another” (Gal. 5:13), to “admonish one another” (Rom. 15:14), to “be devoted to one another” and to “give preference to one another in honor” (Rom. 12:10), to “regard one another as more important than himself” (Phil. 3:3), to “clothe yourselves with humility toward one another” (1Pet. 5:5), to “be of the same mind with one another” (Rom. 15:5, 12:16), to show “forbearance to one another in love” (Eph. 4:2), and to “be subject to one another in the fear of Christ” (Eph. 5:21).

- Come to the Great Table aright.
- Share your lesser table (your food and drink) abundantly.

## Spiritual Disciplines - Evangelism

### Memory Verses

- Matthew 4:19 - And He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."
- Romans 1:16 - For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.



1) Defining Evangelism - a) Defining the key word: *euangelizo*, means "to communicate good news concerning something" (Louw-Nida), "declare, bring (declare, show) glad (good) tidings, preach (the gospel)" (Greek Keys). "In secular Greek, *angelos* was "messenger" (especially of the gods) and *angelia* "message." E.g., "The birthday of the god (Augustus)" was "good news" (Spicq). b) Defining the Christian concept: Evangelism is the announcement, proclamation, and expression of the good news of Jesus Christ. It is *verbally* expressing our faith with unbelievers as the audience. It is "taking the initiative to share Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit and leaving the results to God" (Bill Bright).

2) Doing Evangelism - One of the most instructive passages on how to "do evangelism" is found at the end of Colossians: "Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person" (Col. 4:5-6). If we are to be obedient in evangelism, we must:

- Cultivate opportunities with outsiders (Col. 4:5ff). This means in ordinary life, we take advantage of our relationships. We must create opportunities to relate outsiders.
- Cultivate gracious speech with those outside. Our speech must be "seasoned with salt." We need wisdom and wit.
- Cultivate personal relationships. We must address people *as* individuals. Our response to "anyone who asks" for "the reason of the hope within us" (1 Peter 3:15) is to be tailored to "each" person and context (Col. 4:6).
  - Use your interests and every occasion as opportunities to meet unbelievers.
  - Listen well to those outside.
  - Cultivate the capacity to ask good questions.
  - Make clear that your life and gifts are because of Jesus.
  - Become a Disciple Maker.



## How the Share the Gospel with “The Bridge to Life”

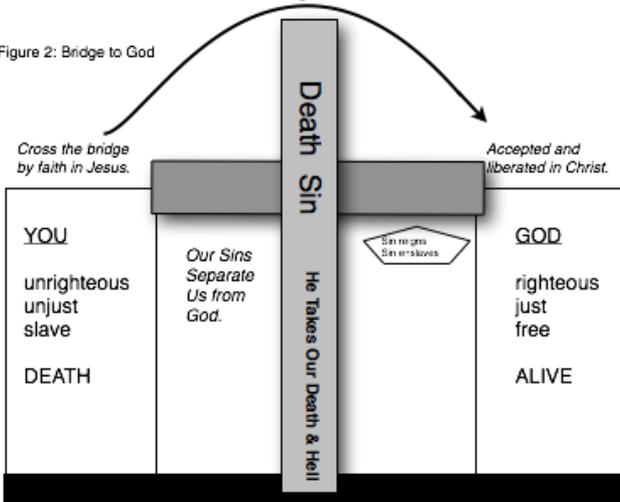
- 1) Know a key verse, e.g., 1 Peter 3:18 - “For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit.”
- 2) Draw a canyon (two sides: you and God with a chasm between).
- 3) Explain that sin separates us from the Creator God revealed in Scripture.
- 4) Draw the cross as the “Bridge to God.”
- 5) Explain that Jesus Christ came to “bridge the gap” between us and God by dying for our sins.
- 6) Ask them to receive the benefits of Christ’s work by trusting completely in Him.

Figure 1: Our Separation from God



## Christ Brings Us to God

Figure 2: Bridge to God



THE TOPICAL MEMORY SYSTEM

A — LIVE THE NEW LIFE

Christ the Center

- 2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.
- Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me.

Obedience to Christ

- Romans 12:1 I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.
- John 14:21 “He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him.”

The Word

- 2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;
- Joshua 1:8 This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.

Prayer

- John 15:7 “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you.”
- Philippians 4:6-7 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God,

which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Fellowship

- Matthew 18:20 “For where two or three have gathered together in My name, there I am in their midst.”
- Hebrews 10:24-25 And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, 25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near.

Evangelism

- Matthew 4:19 And He said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.”
- Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

B — PROCLAIM CHRIST

All Have Sinned

- Romans 3:23 For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.
- Isaiah 53:6 All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him.

Sin’s Penalty

- Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- Hebrews 9:27 And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment.

Christ Paid the Penalty

- Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.
- 1 Peter 3:18 For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, in order that He might bring

us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit.

Salvation Not by Works

- Ephesians 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, that no one should boast.
- Titus 3:5 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit...

Must Receive Christ

- John 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name...
- Revelation 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me.

Assurance of Salvation

- 1 John 5:13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may know that you have eternal life.
- John 5:24 "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life."

C — RELY ON GOD'S RESOURCES

His Spirit

- 1 Corinthians 3:16 Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?
- 1 Corinthians 2:12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that

we might know the things freely given to us by God...

His Strength

- Isaiah 41:10 Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.
- Philippians 4:13 I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

His Faithfulness

- Lamentations 3:22 The Lord's lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, For His compassions never fail. 23 They are new every morning; Great is Thy faithfulness.
- Numbers 23:19 God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent; Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?

His Peace

- Isaiah 26:3 The steadfast of mind Thou wilt keep in perfect peace, Because he trusts in Thee.
- 1 Peter 5:7 Casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you.

His Provision

- Romans 8:32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?
- Philippians 4:19 And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

His Help in Temptation

- Hebrews 2:18 For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.
- Psalm 119:9-11 How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Thy word. 10 With all my heart I have sought Thee; Do not let me wander from Thy commandments. 11 Thy word I

have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against Thee.

## D — BE CHRIST’S DISCIPLE

### Put Christ First

- Matthew 6:33 “But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you.”
- Luke 9:23 And He was saying to them all, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.

### Separate from the World

- 1 John 2:15-16 Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.
- Romans 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

### Be Steadfast

- 1 Corinthians 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.
- Hebrews 12:3 For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you may not grow weary and lose heart.

### Serve Others

- Mark 10:45 “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”
- 2 Corinthians 4:5 For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus’ sake.

### Give Generously

- Proverbs 3:9-10 Honor the LORD from your wealth, And from the first of all your produce; 10 So your barns will be filled with plenty, And your vats will overflow with new wine.
- 2 Corinthians 9:6-7 Now this I say, he who sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly; and he who sows bountifully shall also reap bountifully. 7 Let each one do just as he has purposed in his heart; not grudgingly or under compulsion; for God loves a cheerful giver.

### Develop World Vision

- Acts 1:8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.
- Matthew 28:19-20 “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

## E — GROW IN CHRIST’S LIKENESS

### Love

- John 13:34-35 “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 “By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”
- 1 John 3:18 Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.

### Humility

- Philippians 2:3-4 Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more

important than himself; 4 do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

- 1 Peter 5:5-6 You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for **GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.** 6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time...

#### Purity

- Ephesians 5:3 But do not let immorality or any impurity or greed even be named among you, as is proper among saints...
- 1 Pet. 2:11 Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts, which wage war against the soul.

#### Honesty

- Leviticus 19:11 'You shall not steal, nor deal falsely, nor lie to one another.
- Acts 24:16 In view of this, I also do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience both before God and before men.

#### Faith

- Hebrews 11:6 And 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 seek Him.
- Romans 4:20-21 Yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief, but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, 21 and being fully assured that what He had promised, He was able also to perform.

#### Good Works

- Galatians 6:9-10 And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time

we shall reap if we do not grow weary. 10 So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

- Matthew 5:16 "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."