

Part E. Relating to God

The **Bible** Unpacked

This series of studies is based on the
Foundations Edition of The Bible Unpacked.

There are seven editions of *The Bible Unpacked*.
These aim to address the needs of
NON-CHRISTIANS through to MATURE CHRISTIANS,
from TEENAGERS to ADULTS.

For more information and free downloads go to:
www.thebibleunpacked.net

Foundations Study Series

A compilation of the Bible's teaching
for believers consolidating their faith

paul mallison

An Appeal on Behalf of Persecuted Christians

Over 200 million Christians in at least 60 countries are denied basic human rights solely because of their faith. (Source: World Evangelical Alliance) Every year many Christians are killed because of their faith.

Through prayer, encouragement and practical assistance we can assist and fellowship with persecuted Christians in their suffering. You can play a vital part in this through contacting one of the organizations listed below. Most produce regular news/prayer letters.

Barnabas Fund – www.barnabasfund.org

It provides material and spiritual support in response to needs identified by local Christian leaders.

Christian Faith and Freedom – www.cffreedom.org

It advocates on behalf of and aids persecuted Christians.

Christian Solidarity International – www.csi-int.org

CSI works to defend religious liberty and help persecuted Christians.

Christian Solidarity Worldwide – www.csw.org.uk

It advocates for freedom of religion and justice for persecuted believers.

Compass Direct – www.compassdirect.org

This is a Christian news service providing news, reports, interviews and analyses of situations facing persecuted Christians.

Open Doors – sb.od.org; www.opendoors.org.au

It provides Bibles and other Christian materials, to prepare believers for persecution and equip them to maintain a witness to the Gospel.

Religious Liberty Commission – www.worldevangelicals.org/commissions/rlc/; www.ea.org.au/ea-family/Religious-Liberty.aspx

RLC defends and aids persecuted Christians. See also www.idop.org
Receive weekly updates by sending a blank email to join-rpb@hub.xc.org.

The Bible League – www.bibleleague.org/persecuted; www.bibleleague.com

It supplies Bibles to persecuted Christians and also provides training.

Voice of the Martyrs – www.persecution.com; www.persecution.com.au

VOM provides Bibles, literature, radio broadcasts and other assistance to help persecuted Christians spread the gospel. They also send material aid.

Then the King will answer, 'I tell you the truth, anything you did for even the least of my people here, you also did for me.' Matthew 25:40 NCV

The Bible Unpacked™

Foundations Study Series

A compilation of the Bible's teaching for believers consolidating their faith

Part E. Relating to God

Composed by Paul Mallison

The Bible Unpacked™ Copyright © 1994–2011 by Paul Ian Mallison.
All rights reserved.

This book may be freely reproduced for use for non-profit Christian purposes.
Free electronic copies may be downloaded at: www.thebibleunpacked.net.
In return, users are asked to increase their support of persecuted Christians
(cf. www.thebibleunpacked.net/persecuted_Christians.htm).

The verses in this text have been taken from the Bible translations mentioned in the copyright notices immediately below.

- Scripture quotations marked "CEV" are from the **Contemporary English Version** Copyright © 1991, 1992, 1995 by American Bible Society. Used by Permission.
- Scripture quotations marked "ESV" are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.
- Scripture quotations marked "GNT" are from the **Good News Translation in Today's English Version**- Second Edition Copyright © 1992 by American Bible Society. Used by Permission.
- Scripture quotations marked "GW" are taken from **God's Word**® Copyright 1995 God's Word to the Nations. Used by permission of Baker Publishing Group. All rights reserved.
- Scripture quotations marked "ISV" are taken from the **Holy Bible: International Standard Version**®, Release 1.44. Copyright © 1996-2007 by The ISV Foundation of Fullerton, California USA. Used by permission of Davidson Press, LLC. All rights reserved internationally.
- Scripture quotations marked "NCV™" are taken from the **New Century Version**®. Copyright © 2005 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.
- Quotations designated "NET" are from the **NET Bible**® copyright ©1996-2006 by Biblical Studies Press, L.L.C. <http://www.bible.org/> All rights reserved. Scripture quoted by permission.


Quotations of phrases from other Bible translations are on occasions included in comments on the verses. The copyright notices for these other translations are:


- Scripture quotations marked "AMP" are taken from the **Amplified**® Bible, Copyright © 1954, 1958, 1962, 1964, 1965, 1987 by The Lockman Foundation. All rights reserved. Used by permission. (www.Lockman.org).
- Scripture quotations marked "NLT" are taken from the **Holy Bible, New Living Translation**, copyright 1996. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois 60189. All rights reserved.


This copy uploaded/printed: 23-Dec-11.


Overview of *The Bible Unpacked*


There are seven editions of *The Bible Unpacked*, as shown below. Each edition is an abbreviated version of the next longest edition. As such they have similar structures. Four of the editions have studies based on them, with the same text along with questions. For more details and free downloads of all the material, go to www.thebibleunpacked.net.


 **Two-Minute Edition:** Key Bible teachings for people "on the run"
For giving to non-Christians.


 **Pocket Edition:** Key Bible teachings for seekers of truth
Largely for giving to inquiring non-Christians or young new Christians.

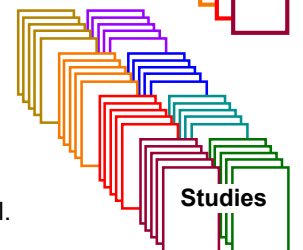
 **Concise Edition:** Key Bible teachings for new believers
For either new or young Christians. Suitable to give to non-Christian friends. Has study series based on it.

 **Foundations Edition:** A compilation of the Bible's teaching for believers consolidating their faith. For newer Christians.
Study series is ideal for studies with newer believers.

 **Intermediate Edition:** A compilation of the Bible's teaching for believers growing in the faith.
For developing a sound understanding of the faith. Studies are excellent for Bible study groups.

 **Comprehensive Edition:** A compilation of the Bible's teaching for believers established in the faith. For a comprehensive knowledge of the faith. Useful as a study or a devotional tool - and preparing talks.
Studies are ideal for studying topics in detail.

 **In-Depth Edition:** A compilation of the Bible's teaching for teachers and students of the Bible.
For Christians keen to gain a deep understanding of their faith. Useful for speakers preparing talks, study groups leaders, Bible students and Bible colleges.
It is also in an electronic version, which is a PDF file.



Topics in This Series

Section I: What to Know

Part A. God and Spiritual Powers

1. God's Being
2. God's Character
3. Jesus Christ
4. The Holy Spirit
5. Angels, Demons and Satan

Part B. God and the World: Basics

6. God's Creation
7. God's Sovereignty
8. God's Word
9. The Problem of Sin
10. God's Judgment

Part C. God and the World: Jesus Christ

11. God's Promised Messiah
12. Jesus Christ's Mission
13. Salvation through Jesus Christ
14. The New Order
15. 'The Last Things'

Part D. God and His Own People

16. The Standing of God's People
17. Keys to God's Interaction with His People
18. God's Transformation of His People
19. God's Care of His People
20. God's Plans for His People

Section II: What to Do

Part E. Relating to God

21. Being Right with God
22. Having Faith in God
23. Loving, Fearing and Obeying God
24. Connecting with God
25. Exalting God

Part F. Church Life

26. Being One Body
27. Worshiping God
28. Serving God
29. Significant Practices
30. Church Leadership

Part G. Relating to People

31. Love
32. Justice
33. Wisdom
34. Common Relationships
35. Spreading the Gospel

Part H. Persevering

36. Standing Firm
37. Spurning Sin
38. Major Pitfalls
39. Hard Times
40. Persecution

Contents

A Quick Word	iv
Suggestions for Study Groups.....	iv
21. Being Right with God	1
22. Having Faith in God	7
23. Loving, Fearing and Obeying God	13
24. Connecting with God.....	19
25. Exalting God.....	25
Topics in This Series	30
Overview of <i>The Bible Unpacked</i>	33

What is one thing in your everyday life that you would approach differently if you kept in mind the command to “do everything for the glory of God” (cf. 1 Corinthians 10:31)?

What effect does praising and thanking God have on you?

What measures could you take to help yourself to consistently praise and give thanks to God?

What are you or should you be thankful for?

How does one “rejoice”? What does it mean?

Rejoice Before God

To rejoice is to be glad or joyful. When giving praise and thanks to God we focus on him, his promises and the wonderful things he has done. (These include things he has done: in the world; for others; and for ourselves, including his many blessings.) In doing so we cannot help but be filled with joy, and so we rejoice.

Rejoice when giving praise and thanks to God

Sing to God! Sing praises to his name! Exalt the one who rides on the clouds! For the LORD is his name! Rejoice before him! PSALMS 68:4 NET

You godly ones, *rejoice in the LORD! Give thanks to his holy name.* PSALMS 97:12 NET

Moreover, rejoice in God always

[ETHAN, SPEAKING TO GOD OF WORSHIPERS:] *They rejoice in your name all day long, and are vindicated by your justice.* PSALMS 89:16 NET

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] *May you always be joyful in your union with the Lord [Jesus]. I say it again: rejoice!* PHILIPPIANS 4:4 GNT

21. Being Right with God

Getting Right with God.....	2
Do What Is Right	3
Live By the Holy Spirit.....	3
Reasons for Assurance	4

In using the expression “right with God”, this chapter has in view being made righteous in God’s eyes, which involves the forgiveness of one’s sins. The following teaching looks at the key issue of getting right with God – and at things to do in association with this.

Getting Right with God

Believe in God and seek him

But without faith no one can please God. *We must believe that God is real and that he rewards everyone who searches for him.*

HEBREWS 11:6 CEV

Turn from sin to God and believe in Jesus Christ

[PAUL:] I gave solemn warning that *they should turn from their sins to God and believe in our Lord Jesus.* ACTS 20:21B GNT

We need to believe that Jesus is the Son of God – the Christ (or Messiah) who the OT speaks about. We also need to believe that he is the means of forgiveness of sins, with what he accomplished by his death. As such, we are to trust in him for God’s forgiveness of our own sins. In doing so we are forgiven and thus considered righteous by God. In conjunction with this we are granted eternal life.

Believing in Jesus Christ brings forgiveness of sins

In addition, all the prophets testify that *people who believe in the one named Jesus receive forgiveness for their sins through him.*

ACTS 10:43 GW

Believing in Jesus Christ brings eternal life

[JESUS:] For this is the way God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that *everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.* JOHN 3:16 NET

We need to be open to believing and responding

Jesus called a child over and had the child stand near him. ³Then he said [to his disciples]: I promise you this. *If you don’t change and become like a child, you will never get into the kingdom of heaven.* ⁴*But if you are as humble as this child, you are the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.* MATTHEW 18:2–4 CEV

This refers to the humility, openness and receptiveness of little children. These characteristics are required to believe Jesus’ message and enter God’s kingdom.

Praise God Because of Who He Is

Praise God because of his greatness

Praise God because he is great! DEUTERONOMY 32:3B NCV™

Praise God because of his power

We will sing and praise your power. . . PSALMS 21:13B ESV

Praise God for his wisdom and knowledge

Who can measure the wealth and wisdom and knowledge of God? Who can understand his decisions or explain what he does ... ³⁶... Praise the Lord forever! Amen. ROMANS 11:33, 36B CEV

Praise God for his love and faithfulness

[DAVID, TO GOD:] *I will sing praises to you before foreigners! ¹⁰For your loyal love extends beyond the sky, and your faithfulness reaches the clouds.* PSALMS 57:9B–10 NET

Praise God Because of What He Does

Praise God for his creative work

“Our Lord and God, you deserve to receive glory, honor, and power because you created everything. Everything came into existence and was created because of your will.” REVELATION 4:11 GW

Praise God for his salvation through Jesus Christ

[ZECHARIAH, SPEAKING OF THE SALVATION THAT WOULD COME THROUGH JESUS:] *Praise the Lord, the God of Israel! He has come to save his people. ⁶⁹Our God has given us a mighty Savior from the family of David his servant.* LUKE 1:68–69 CEV

Thank God for his provision

They [the disciples] also had *a few small fish. After giving thanks for these*, he [Jesus] told them to serve these as well. MARK 8:7 NET

Glorify God by Your Actions

Glorify God by how you live

So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, *do everything for the glory of God.* 1 CORINTHIANS 10:31 NET

God's people are identified with him and so their lives are in a sense a reflection on God. Thus they should seek to do everything in a way that will bring glory to God.

Do not dishonor God by your actions

[AGUR:] But if I am poor, I might *steal and bring disgrace on my God.* PROVERBS 30:9B GNT

By ungodly actions God's people can bring dishonor to God. This is particularly so when the actions are known to other people, as it publicly reflects badly on God as the one to whom his people belong.

Praise and Thank God

Praise God constantly

Through him [Jesus Christ] then *let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God*, that is, the fruit of our lips, acknowledging his name.

HEBREWS 13:15 NET

[DAVID:] *I will praise the LORD at all times; my mouth will continually praise him.* PSALMS 34:1 NET

Give thanks to God always

Always give thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. EPHESIANS 5:20 NCV™

... give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. 1 THESSALONIANS 5:18 ESV

Give thanks to God with all your heart

[DAVID:] *I will thank the LORD with all my heart!* PSALMS 9:1A NET

Do What Is Right

Obey God, along with believing

And by the command of the eternal God it [the message about Christ] is made known to all nations *that they might believe and obey.*

ROMANS 16:26B NCV™

Obedience is vital for acting in a way that is consistent with both our belief and being considered righteous by God.

Do good deeds, which are an essential part of true faith

*His [Abraham's] faith and his actions worked together; his faith was made perfect through his actions. ...*²⁶*So then, as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without actions is dead.* JAMES 2:22, 26 GNT

Live By the Holy Spirit

We have been freed from the law to live by the Holy Spirit

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] In the past, the law held us like prisoners, but our old selves died, and *we were made free from the law. So now we serve God in a new way with the Spirit, and not in the old way with written rules.* ROMANS 7:6 NCV™

Through what Jesus Christ has accomplished, God's people have been freed from the Mosaic Law as the means of being right with him. We are instead to live by his Spirit.

Living by the Holy Spirit involves: being both alert to and responsive to the Spirit's guidance; and relying on the Spirit's power, to help us and change us. Along with this, our minds should be focused on things of the Spirit (cf. Romans 8:5 below).

Instead of living by sinful human nature, live by the Holy Spirit

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] Now *we do not live following our sinful selves, but we live following the Spirit.*⁵Those who live following their sinful selves think only about things that their sinful selves want. But *those who live following the Spirit are thinking about the things the Spirit wants them to do.* ROMANS 8:4B–5 NCV™

Reasons for Assurance

The verses in this section give reasons for assurance of things associated with being made right with God.

God's trustworthiness

But if we confess our sins to God, *he can always be trusted to forgive us and take our sins away.* 1 JOHN 1:9 CEV

Obedience to God

We can be sure that we know God if we obey his commands.
1 JOHN 2:3 NCV™

Love for other Christians

[JOHN, TO BELIEVERS:] *We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love other believers.* 1 JOHN 3:14A GW

25. Exalting God

Glorify God by Your Actions	26
Praise and Thank God	26
Praise God Because of Who He Is	27
Praise God Because of What He Does	27
Rejoice Before God	28

We exalt God by doing such things as glorifying, praising and thanking him. Exalting God is a very common theme in the Bible and – as this chapter shows – should also be a very prominent part of our lives.

Explain in your own words what one needs to do to get right with God.

Why do we need to become like little children to enter God's kingdom (cf. Matthew 18:2-4)?

How can we be sure we are right with God - and of salvation?

Why is it important for believers to do good deeds?

How do we live by the Holy Spirit?

What do you think about during times of inactivity (e.g. travelling on the train)? What could you do to remind yourself to focus on God in such times - as well as at other times?

Do you need to make better provision in your daily routine for meeting with God? If so, what could you do?

How is knowing God similar and/or different to knowing another person?

How does one “pray in the Holy Spirit” (Jude 1:20)?

If you believe, will you receive whatever you ask for in prayer? Explain your answer.

How to Make Requests

Ask for things in Jesus Christ’s “name”

[JESUS, TO HIS DISCIPLES:] In that day *you will ask the Father for things in my name*. I mean, I will not need to ask the Father for you.

JOHN 16:26 NCV™

To ask in Jesus Christ’s “name” is to do so in accordance with all that his name signifies. It is prayer that is consistent with Jesus Christ himself and his purposes – and made on his authority.

Ask earnestly and persistently

I cried out with all my heart, “Answer me, O LORD! PSALMS 119:145A NET

Jesus told his disciples a story about how they should *keep on praying and never give up*: ... LUKE 18:1 CEV

Believe that what you ask will be granted

If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.

MATTHEW 21:22 GNT

Belief in prayer involves an understanding of God’s will and genuinely trusting in God to fulfill his will.

God’s Response to Requests

God answers those who obey and please him

[JOHN, TO BELIEVERS:] And *God gives us what we ask for because we obey God’s commands and do what pleases him*. 1 JOHN 3:22 NCV™

God grants anything that is in accordance with his will

[JOHN, TO BELIEVERS:] We have courage in God’s presence, because *we are sure that he hears us if we ask him for anything that is according to his will*. ¹⁵*He hears us whenever we ask him; and since we know this is true, we know also that he gives us what we ask from him*. 1 JOHN 5:14–15 GNT

22. Having Faith in God

What Faith Is	8
What to Have Faith For.....	8
Hope.....	9
What Not to Do.....	10

Faith in God is absolutely fundamental to the Christian life. We in fact need to continually live by faith, doing so in all areas of our lives. The verses in this chapter give astute guidance on this critical subject.

What Faith Is

Faith involves believing in God

[PETER, TO BELIEVERS:] Through Christ *you believe in God*, who raised Christ from the dead and gave him glory. *So your faith and your hope are in God.* 1 PETER 1:21 NCV™

This links belief with faith (and hope). As such, it reflects that having faith in God involves believing in him. Such belief includes believing what he says.

We must also trust in God

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding. PROVERBS 3:5 NET

Trusting in God is a key part of having faith in God. Having faith in God can be defined as believing and trusting God. For we are to believe in God and what he says, and also confidently trust in him and what he says in regard to our own lives. One could say having faith means that: in our minds we are to believe and in our hearts we are to trust.

What to Have Faith For

Have faith that God will fulfill what he promises

[PAUL, TO MEN SAILING ON A SHIP WITH HIM IN A BAD STORM:] And now I advise you to keep up your courage, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only the ship will be lost. ²³For last night *an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve came to me* ²⁴*and said, ‘Do not be afraid, Paul! You must stand before Caesar, and God has graciously granted you the safety of all who are sailing with you.’* ²⁵Therefore keep up your courage, men, for *I have faith in God that it will be just as I have been told.* ACTS 27:22–25 NET

Have faith that God will care for you

And what more should I say? For time would fail me to tell you about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets. ³³*Through faith they conquered kingdoms, administered justice,*

Continue to live before God

He wants you to promote justice, to be faithful, and to *live obediently before your God.* MICAH 6:8B NET

We are to constantly live before God in the sense of living in awareness of his presence, companionship, help and knowledge of how we live. As such we should think, speak and act accordingly.

Know God, which is linked to obeying his commands

We can be sure that we know God if we obey his commands. ⁴*Anyone who says, ‘I know God,’ but does not obey God’s commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person.* 1 JOHN 2:3–4 NCV™

Praying to God

Pray to God as a caring father

Therefore, *this is how you should pray: ‘Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy.* MATTHEW 6:9 ISV

[JESUS, TO A CROWD:] *Bad as you are, you know how to give good things to your children. How much more, then, will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him!* MATTHEW 7:11 GNT

Having a holy and loving Father in heaven should inspire us to make requests of him, doing so in awareness of him being such a Father.

Pray in the Holy Spirit

[JUDE, TO BELIEVERS:] *Pray in the Holy Spirit, . . .* JUDE 1:20B ISV

Having the Holy Spirit, believers are to pray “in the Holy Spirit”. As such we are to consciously rely on the Holy Spirit’s help in our prayers.

Be reverent when praying

[PAUL:] *I kneel in prayer to the Father.* EPHESIANS 3:14 CEV

Kneeling in prayer – “fall to my knees and pray” (NLT) – is indicative of reverence for God, and submission to him.

Seeking God

Seeking typically involves intense effort, which is very much applicable to seeking God and fellowship with him. Seeking God also requires prayer, worship and obedience. Additionally, it involves persistently focusing on God.

Seek God, with all your heart – and you will find him

Now *seek the LORD your God wholeheartedly and with your entire being!* 1 CHRONICLES 22:19A NET

[MOSES, TO THE ISRAELITES:] *If from there you will seek the LORD your God, then you will find him if you seek him with all your heart and soul.* DEUTERONOMY 4:29 ISV

Seeking God needs to be accompanied by obedience to him

He [Asa] ordered Judah to seek the LORD God of their ancestors and to observe his law and commands. 2 CHRONICLES 14:4 NET

Persistently focus on God

[DAVID, TO GOD:] *I remember you while I'm lying in bed; I think about you through the night.* PSALMS 63:6 NCV™

Being Close to God

Come before God, meeting with him

[MOSES, TO LEADERS OF ISRAEL:] ... when *all of Israel comes to appear before the LORD your God* at the place that he'll choose, read this Law aloud to them. DEUTERONOMY 31:11 ISV

Just as the Israelites at times came together before God, believers can come before God – either as a group and individually. In coming before God, in awareness of his presence, we can meet with him. Individual Christians typically set aside some time everyday to do this, focusing fully on God. Generally this involves reading the Bible, prayer and even meditation.

received promises, shut the mouths of lions, ³⁴put out raging fires, escaped death by the sword, found strength in weakness, became powerful in battle, and routed foreign armies. HEBREWS 11:32–34 ISV

Various people of God are shown here to have had faith that God would take care of them when facing powerful enemies and other very difficult circumstances.

Have faith that God will do what you ask

[DAVID:] *LORD, in the morning you will hear me; in the morning I will present my case to you and then wait expectantly for an answer.*

PSALMS 5:3 NET

As Jesus went on from there, *two blind men followed him, shouting, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!"* ²⁸When he went into the house, the blind men came to him. *Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to him, "Yes, Lord."* ²⁹Then he touched their eyes saying, *"Let it be done for you according to your faith."* ³⁰*And their eyes were opened.* MATTHEW 9:27–30A NET

Hope

Set your hope on God's timely care

[PAUL, SPEAKING OF GOD'S DELIVERANCE:] He delivered us from so great a risk of death, and he will deliver us. *We have set our hope on him that he will deliver us yet again, ...* 2 CORINTHIANS 1:10 NET

Set your hope on Jesus Christ's return and what will follow

[PAUL:] At the same time we can expect *what we hope for – the appearance of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.* TITUS 2:13 GOD'S WORD®

Therefore, get your minds ready for action by being fully sober, and *set your hope completely on the grace that will be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed.* 1 PETER 1:13 NET

Hope is vital for faith

[PAUL, TO THE COLOSSIAN BELIEVERS:] When the true message, the Good News, first came to you, *you heard about the hope it offers. So your faith and love are based on what you hope for, which is kept safe for you in heaven.* COLOSSIANS 1:5 GNT

Now *faith is being sure of what we hope for*, being convinced of what we do not see. HEBREWS 11:1 NET

The hope Christians have is not a groundless longing, but a confident assurance. Such hope stimulates and supports ongoing faith, which has as its focus that for which we hope.

What Not to Do

Do not be afraid

[DAVID:] *When I am afraid, I will trust you.* ⁴I praise God for his word. *I trust God, so I am not afraid. What can human beings do to me?* PSALMS 56:3–4 NCV™

Do not worry

Never worry about anything. But in every situation let God know what you need in prayers and requests while giving thanks. ⁷Then God's peace, which goes beyond anything we can imagine, will guard your thoughts and emotions through Christ Jesus. PHILIPPIANS 4:6–7 GW

Give all your worries to him, because he cares about you. ¹PETER 5:7 NCV™

Do not trust in people or things

The LORD says, *“I will condemn those who turn away from me and put their trust in human beings, in the strength of mortals.* JEREMIAH 17:5 GNT

Those who trust in riches will be ruined, but a good person will be healthy like a green leaf. PROVERBS 11:28 NCV™

24. Connecting with God

Seeking God.....	20
Being Close to God.....	20
Praying to God.....	21
How to Make Requests.....	22
God's Response to Requests	22

This chapter looks at how believers can get close to God, even knowing him. It then discusses the key topic of prayer – the prime means of communicating with God.

What does having faith in God involve doing?

What is something that you need to learn to have faith in God to do?

Why is hope important for faith? Can you think of any other reasons why hope is important?

What will you do the next time you get afraid or worried? (You could nominate a verse to learn, in order to recall when faced with fear or worry.)

What things do you have a tendency to trust in, instead of trusting in God?

Why do you think that loving God is the most important thing to do?

How is fearing God different to fearing people or things?

How does fearing God help and/or benefit us?

What measures could you take to more effectively read and learn God's word?

Choose one aspect of Jesus Christ's example that you should imitate better. What is a situation you are likely to encounter in which you could do so?

Persistently read God's word

He should keep it [a copy of God's teachings] with him all the time and read from it every day of his life. DEUTERONOMY 17:19A NCV™

This instruction is given for the king, but is very relevant to all of God's people.

Follow Jesus Christ**Follow Jesus Christ**

Jesus then told the crowd and the disciples to come closer, and he said: *If any of you want to be my followers, you must forget about yourself. You must take up your cross and follow me.* MARK 8:34 CEV

In order to follow Jesus, we must set aside our own desires, no longer having ourselves as the focus of our lives. To “take up your cross” implies a willingness to bear any cost – even to give up your life – in order to follow Christ as his disciple.

Follow Jesus Christ's example

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] Follow my example, as I *follow the example of Christ.* 1 CORINTHIANS 11:1 NCV™

Make Jesus Christ your Lord

Honor Christ and *let him be the Lord of your life.* 1 PETER 3:15A CEV

Making Jesus Christ your Lord involves seeking to always please him.

23. Loving, Fearing and Obeying God

Love God	14
Fear God	14
Obey God	15
Follow Jesus Christ.....	16

Love and fear are arguably the two prime emotions or attitudes that we should have towards God. Love and fear of God are both closely associated with obeying him. They are very strong, compelling emotions and provide the primary emotional motivation for obeying God (cf. Deuteronomy 10:12–13). Their importance is underlined by the fact that obeying God ought to be a constant aim of every Christian.

Love God

Love God with all your heart – which is most important

Jesus answered: *Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind.* ³⁸*This is the first and most important commandment.* ³⁹The second most important commandment is like this one. And it is, “Love others as much as you love yourself.” ⁴⁰*All the Law of Moses and the Books of the Prophets are based on these two commandments.*

MATTHEW 22:37–40 CEV

Love for God and Jesus Christ is shown by obeying them

We show our love for God by obeying his commandments, and they are not hard to follow. ¹ JOHN 5:3 CEV

Jesus replied: If anyone loves me, they will obey me. Then my Father will love them, and we will come to them and live in them. ²⁴*But anyone who doesn't love me, won't obey me.* JOHN 14:23–24A CEV

Love for God is also linked with loving other Christians

Everyone who loves the Father also loves his children. ¹ JOHN 5:1B GW

This verse makes the assertion that everyone who loves God will naturally love his children as well.

Fear God

Everyone must fear God

Let the whole earth fear the LORD! Let all who live in the world stand in awe of him! PSALMS 33:8 NET

Do not fear anything but God

[GOD, TO ISAIAH:] *Don't be afraid of what they [other people] fear; do not dread those things.* ¹³*But remember that the LORD All-Powerful is holy. He is the one you should fear; he is the one you should dread.*

ISAIAH 8:12B–13 NCV™

But God's people should not live in fear of his punishment

[JOHN, TO BELIEVERS:] *God is love, and those who live in love live in union with God and God lives in union with them.* ¹⁷*Love is made perfect in us in order that we may have courage on Judgment Day; and we will have it because our life in this world is the same as Christ's.* ¹⁸*There is no fear in love; perfect love drives out all fear. So then, love has not been made perfect in anyone who is afraid, because fear has to do with punishment.* ¹ JOHN 4:16B–18 GNT

Knowing and expressing the love of God drives out fear of punishment from God (v. 18) – particularly as those who live in love live in God, and God in them (v. 16b). Knowledge of such love cannot coexist with anxious fear of God's punishment, for they are not compatible. As such we can look towards Judgment Day with courage and confidence (v. 17).

Fearing God is closely associated with obeying him

[A WISE TEACHER:] Having heard everything, I have reached this conclusion: *Fear God and keep his commandments, because this is the whole duty of man.* ECCLESIASTES 12:13 NET

Through loyal love and truth iniquity is appeased; *through fearing the LORD one avoids evil.* PROVERBS 16:6 NET

Obey God

We should obey God because he is our God

[GOD, TO THE ISRAELITES:] *I am the LORD your God; follow my statutes, observe my regulations, and carry them out.* EZEKIEL 20:19 NET

Obey God always – forever

[A PSALMIST, TO GOD:] *I will always obey your law, for ever and ever.* PSALMS 119:44 GNT

Obey God's word

“Rather, *how blessed are those who hear God's word and obey it!*”

LUKE 11:28B ISV