

# 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.

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## **Foundations Study Series**

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



## 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](http://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](http://www.cffreedom.org)

It advocates on behalf of and aids persecuted Christians.

### **Christian Solidarity International** – [www.csi-int.org](http://www.csi-int.org)

CSI works to defend religious liberty and help persecuted Christians.

### **Christian Solidarity Worldwide** – [www.csw.org.uk](http://www.csw.org.uk)

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

### **Compass Direct** – [www.compassdirect.org](http://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](http://sb.od.org); [www.opendoors.org.au](http://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/](http://www.worldevangelicals.org/commissions/rlc/); [www.ea.org.au/ea-family/Religious-Liberty.aspx](http://www.ea.org.au/ea-family/Religious-Liberty.aspx)

RLC defends and aids persecuted Christians. See also [www.idop.org](http://www.idop.org)  
Receive weekly updates by sending a blank email to [join-rpb@hub.xc.org](mailto:join-rpb@hub.xc.org).

### **The Bible League** – [www.bibleleague.org/persecuted](http://www.bibleleague.org/persecuted); [www.bibleleague.com](http://www.bibleleague.com)

It supplies Bibles to persecuted Christians and also provides training.

### **Voice of the Martyrs** – [www.persecution.com](http://www.persecution.com); [www.persecution.com.au](http://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 G. Relating to People

Composed by Paul Mallison

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## 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](http://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.

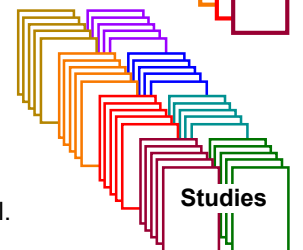
 **Concise Edition:** Key Bible teachings for new believers  
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 **Foundations Edition:** A compilation of the Bible's teaching for believers consolidating their faith. For newer Christians.  
Study series is ideal for studies with newer believers.

 **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. Worshipping 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
<b>31. Love</b> .....	1
<b>32. Justice</b> .....	7
<b>33. Wisdom</b> .....	13
<b>34. Common Relationships</b> .....	19
<b>35. Spreading the Gospel</b> .....	25
Topics in This Series .....	30
Overview of <i>The Bible Unpacked</i> .....	33





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What do you think are the main points to mention when telling someone the gospel?

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What should we tell people about the kingdom of God?

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What has God done for you that you can tell others about?

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What is one teaching in this section that you find particularly motivating or helpful for spreading the gospel?

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Who do you know that you could share the gospel with? What steps could you take in order to do this?

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## Insights on the Gospel

### The gospel is not dependent on our presentation of it – but on the Holy Spirit and God’s power

[PAUL, TO THE CORINTHIANS:] *When I talked with you or preached, I didn’t try to prove anything by sounding wise. I simply let God’s Spirit show his power. <sup>5</sup>That way you would have faith because of God’s power and not because of human wisdom.* 1 CORINTHIANS 2:4–5 CEV

### There are many ready to respond to the gospel – but someone needs to tell them

Jesus said to his followers, *“There are many people to harvest but only a few workers to help harvest them. <sup>38</sup>Pray to the Lord, who owns the harvest, that he will send more workers to gather his harvest.”* MATTHEW 9:37–38 NCV™

There are many people ready to respond to the gospel – to be “harvested”. But more workers are needed to proclaim the gospel to them.

### The gospel will be preached to all nations before the end

*And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole inhabited earth as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.* MATTHEW 24:14 NET

## 31. Love

Loving Others .....	2
Showing Mercy .....	3
Further Things to Do .....	3
Things to Avoid .....	4

The importance of love could hardly be more emphatically stated by the Bible. Love should encompass every area of our lives and be the basis of all that we do in relating to people. Other personal qualities reflective of love are also discussed in this chapter – as well ones that work counter to love.

Note that the teaching here in *Part G. Relating To People* is also relevant to the previous part, *Part F. Church Life*.

## Loving Others

### What love is

Love is kind and patient, never jealous, boastful, proud, or <sup>5</sup>rude. Love isn't selfish or quick tempered. It doesn't keep a record of wrongs that others do. <sup>6</sup>Love rejoices in the truth, but not in evil. <sup>7</sup>Love is always supportive, loyal, hopeful, and trusting.

1 CORINTHIANS 13:4–7 CEV

### The supremacy of love

[AN EXPERT IN THE LAW, TO JESUS:] “Which commandment is the most important of all?” <sup>29</sup>Jesus answered, “The most important is: ‘Listen, Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. <sup>30</sup>Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ <sup>31</sup>The second is: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

MARK 12:28B–31 NET

Right now three things remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love. 1 CORINTHIANS 13:13 ISV

### Love others as you love yourself – which sums up God's law

Let love be your only debt! *If you love others, you have done all that the Law demands.* <sup>9</sup>In the Law there are many commands, such as, “Be faithful in marriage. Do not murder. Do not steal. Do not want what belongs to others.” But *all of these are summed up in the command that says, “Love others as much as you love yourself.”* <sup>10</sup>No one who loves others will harm them. So love is all that the Law demands. ROMANS 13:8–10 CEV

The whole moral law – all that involves our relationships with other people – is summed up by the command to love others as ourselves. In doing so, we fulfill or carry out God's law.

### Love your enemies and do good to them

Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, <sup>28</sup>bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. ... <sup>31</sup>Treat others in the same way that you would want them to treat you. LUKE 6:27B–28, 31 NET

### Tell what God has done for you

[JESUS, TO A MAN HE HAD HEALED:] “Return to your home, and declare what God has done for you.” So he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole town what Jesus had done for him. LUKE 8:39 NET

### Tell people how they should respond

[PAUL:] I warned both Jews and Greeks to change their lives and turn to God and believe in our Lord Jesus. ACTS 20:21 NCV™

## How to Spread the Gospel

### Present the gospel accurately and plainly

He [Apollos] had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and with great enthusiasm *he spoke and taught accurately the facts about Jesus*, although he knew only the baptism of John. ACTS 18:25 NET

[PAUL:] We use no trickery, and we do not change the teaching of God. *We teach the truth plainly*, showing everyone who we are. Then they can know in their hearts what kind of people we are in God's sight. 2 CORINTHIANS 4:2B NCV™

### Spread the gospel fearlessly – with God's help

[PAUL:] Now *most of the Lord's followers have become brave and are fearlessly telling the message.* PHILIPPIANS 1:14 CEV

[PAUL, TO THE THESSALONIAN BELIEVERS:] Before we came to you, we suffered in Philippi. People there insulted us, as you know, and many people were against us. But our *God helped us to be brave and to tell you his Good News.* 1 THESSALONIANS 2:2 NCV™

### Act in a way that is consistent with the gospel

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] The only thing that matters is that you *continue to live as good citizens in a manner worthy of the gospel of the Messiah.* PHILIPPIANS 1:27A ISV

## Tell Others the Gospel

### Tell others the gospel message about Jesus Christ

Then Philip spoke. Starting with that passage, *Philip told the official the Good News about Jesus.* ACTS 8:35 GW

Note that the Greek word which is often translated as “gospel” basically means “good news”.

### Tell all people, everywhere

Then he [Jesus] told them: *Go and preach the good news to everyone in the world. ...* <sup>20</sup>*Then the disciples left and preached everywhere.*

The Lord was with them, and the miracles they worked proved that their message was true. MARK 16:15, 20 CEV

## What Things to Explain

### Explain who Jesus Christ is

Soon *he* [Saul] *went to the Jewish meeting places and started telling people that Jesus is the Son of God.* ACTS 9:20 CEV

[PETER, TO A CROWD OF LARGELY JEWS:] *God has made this Jesus whom you crucified both Lord and Christ.* ACTS 2:36B NET

### Tell people the results of Jesus Christ’s death

What we mean is that *God was in Christ, offering peace and forgiveness to the people of this world. And he has given us the work of sharing his message about peace.* 2 CORINTHIANS 5:19 CEV

We are to tell others that because of Jesus Christ’s death, their sins can be forgiven and they can be at peace with God.

### Explain what God is like and what he has done

Sing to the LORD! Bless his name! *Proclaim his deliverance every day!* <sup>3</sup>*Declare his glory among the nations and his awesome deeds among all the peoples!* PSALMS 96:2–3 ISV

This illustrates that we should proclaim God’s salvation, glory and marvelous deeds to all people and nations.

## Showing Mercy

### Show mercy – and God will show you mercy

*Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.* LUKE 6:36 ISV

*Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.* MATTHEW 5:7 NET

### Forgive others and God will forgive you

*If you forgive others for the wrongs they do to you, your Father in heaven will forgive you.* <sup>15</sup>*But if you don’t forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins.* MATTHEW 6:14–15 CEV

### Do not judge others, or God will judge you accordingly

*Do not judge others, so that God will not judge you, <sup>2</sup>for God will judge you in the same way as you judge others, and he will apply to you the same rules you apply to others.* MATTHEW 7:1–2 GNT

## Further Things to Do

### Be humble, gentle and patient

*Be humble and gentle in every way. Be patient with each other and lovingly accept each other.* EPHESIANS 4:2 GW

### Be generous and share with others

[PAUL, TELLING TIMOTHY WHAT TO SAY TO CHURCH MEMBERS:] Command them to do good, to be rich in good works, to *be generous and ready to share with others.* 1 TIMOTHY 6:18 GNT

All day long he [a lazy person] continues to crave, while *the righteous one gives without holding back.* PROVERBS 21:26 ISV

### Seek the interests of others before your own

[PAUL:] *Do not seek your own good, but the good of the other person. ...* <sup>33</sup>*just as I also try to please everyone in all things. I do not seek my own benefit, but the benefit of many, so that they may be saved.*

1 CORINTHIANS 10:24, 33 NET

## Things to Avoid

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### Avoid anger

*Do not become angry easily, <sup>20</sup>because anger will not help you live the right kind of life God wants.* JAMES 1:19B–20 NCV™

### Do not hate

*You must not hate your fellow citizen in your heart.* LEVITICUS 19:17A NCV™  
Hate is the opposite of love.

### Do not murder

*You shall not murder.* EXODUS 20:13 ISV

## 35. Spreading the Gospel

Tell Others the Gospel.....	26
What Things to Explain.....	26
How to Spread the Gospel.....	27
Insights on the Gospel.....	28

The theme of spreading the gospel – or message about Jesus Christ – is very prominent in the New Testament. Likewise it should be also one of the main focuses of our lives. This chapter largely looks at what we need to say and do, in advancing the spread of the gospel.

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1 Corinthians 13:4-7 mentions a number of characteristics of love. Which of these do you: value the most; and/or need to bear in mind the most (in order to better love others)?

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Do you have enemies? What can you do to love them?

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How are we better off for forgiving someone, than not forgiving them? (Do not limit your answer to just what is mentioned in the verses.)

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In what ways do you judge others? How can you avoid doing this?

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How do you deal with your anger? Do you have any tips on how to control anger?

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What are some specific things husbands should do in applying the teaching regarding loving their wives?

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Should wives submit to their husbands? Explain your answer.

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Is there anything that you need to do or change in how you relate to one or more of your family members?

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Is there a situation where you find it hard to obey the governing authorities? Is there anything that you can or should do about it?

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What do you need to keep in mind the most, in relating to your employer or employees?

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## Citizens and Governing Authorities

### Citizens should obey the governing authorities, which are established by God

*Obey the rulers who have authority over you. Only God can give authority to anyone, and he puts these rulers in their places of power.*

ROMANS 13:1 CEV

### But citizens should defy any commands that conflict with God's will

But Peter and the apostles replied [to the council and the high priest], *“We must obey God rather than people.* ACTS 5:28B–29 NET

### Governing authorities should act and rule according to God's laws

[MOSES, TO THE ISRAELITES:] *If the king completely obeys the LORD's commands, he and his descendants will rule Israel for many years.*

DEUTERONOMY 17:19–20B CEV

## Servants and Masters

### Servants should be obedient

*Slaves, you must always obey your earthly masters. Try to please them at all times, and not just when you think they are watching. Honor the Lord and serve your masters with your whole heart.*

COLOSSIANS 3:22 CEV

### Masters must treat servants justly

*Masters, treat your slaves with justice and fairness, for you know that you also have a Master in heaven.* COLOSSIANS 4:1 NET

## 32. Justice

General.....	8
Honesty .....	8
Caring For the Needy .....	9
Insights on Caring For the Needy .....	9

Topics encompassed by the theme of justice together form a very large proportion of what the Bible says about how to relate to other people. Following these teachings involves not only doing what is right ourselves, but also ensuring that others are treated fairly – notably the needy.

## General

### Act justly

No, the LORD has told us what is good. *What he requires of us is this: to do what is just, to show constant love, and to live in humble fellowship with our God.* MICAH 6:8 GNT

### Do what is right

[GOD:] *Learn to do what is right! Promote justice!* ISAIAH 1:17A NET

*Do what is right and fair; that pleases the LORD more than bringing him sacrifices.* PROVERBS 21:3 GNT

### Do not show favoritism

[PAUL, TO TIMOTHY:] Before God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels, I solemnly charge you to *carry out these commands without prejudice or favoritism of any kind.* 1 TIMOTHY 5:21 NET

## Honesty

### Speak the truth

*You must do these things: Speak the truth to each other.* ZECHARIAH 8:16 GOD'S WORD®

### Act honestly

*Be honest and work hard, so you will have something to give to people in need.* EPHESIANS 4:28B CEV

### Do not steal, lie or deceive

*You must not steal, you must not tell lies, and you must not deal falsely with your fellow citizen.* LEVITICUS 19:11 NET

*You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.* EXODUS 20:16 NET

## Parents and Children

### Parents should love their children

[PAUL, SPEAKING OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCH:] In this way they [older women] will train the younger women to love their husbands, *to love their children, ...* TITUS 2:4 NET

### Parents should care for their children

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] But we were gentle when we were with you, *like a mother taking care of her children.* 1 THESSALONIANS 2:7B GNT

### Parents should teach their children about God and his deeds, inspiring them to trust and obey God

[A PSALMIST:] ... *we'll declare to the next generation the praises of the LORD; his might and awesome deeds that he has performed.* <sup>5</sup>*He established a decree in Jacob, and established the Law in Israel, that he commanded our forefathers to reveal to their children* <sup>6</sup>*in order that the next generation— children yet to be born— will know them and in turn teach them to their children.* <sup>7</sup>*Then they will put their trust in God and they will not forget his awesome deeds. Instead, they will keep his commandments.* PSALMS 78:4B–7 ISV

This speaks of parents telling their children of God's deeds and power (v. 4) and subsequently of his commands (vv. 5–6). Verse 7 then concludes that in light of God's wonderful deeds for them, the children would trust God and obey his commands.

### Children are to honor their parents

*"Honor your father and mother,"* which is the first commandment accompanied by a promise, namely, <sup>3</sup>*that it may go well with you and that you will live a long time on the earth.* EPHESIANS 6:2–3 NET

### Children are to obey their parents

*Children, obey your parents in everything, for this is pleasing to the Lord* COLOSSIANS 3:20 NET

## Spouses

### A husband and wife should be as one, which involves sexual union

The LORD God used the rib from the man [Adam] to make a woman [Eve], and then he brought the woman to the man. <sup>23</sup>And the man said, “Now, *this is someone whose bones came from my bones, whose body came from my body. I will call her ‘woman,’ because she was taken out of man.*” <sup>24</sup>*So a man will leave his father and mother and be united with his wife, and the two will become one body.*

GENESIS 2:22–24 NCV™

Just as originally the man and the woman were of the one body (vv. 22–23), so a husband and wife will be united as “one body” (v. 24). The term “one body” appears to encompass a oneness in spirit, and is signified and expressed through sexual bonding.

### Husbands should love their wives

*Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her ...* <sup>33</sup>Nevertheless, *each one of you must also love his own wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.*

EPHESIANS 5:25, 33 NET

This calls for a love that is ever persistent and is all surpassing, even to the point of sacrificing one’s life.

### Wives should submit to their husbands

*Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord.* <sup>23</sup>*For a husband has authority over his wife just as Christ has authority over the church; and Christ is himself the Saviour of the church, his body.* <sup>24</sup>*And so wives must submit completely to their husbands just as the church submits itself to Christ.* EPHESIANS 5:22–24 GNT

Such submission should be voluntary and willing. The corresponding authority of the husband is not about control and should only be practiced in a Christ-like manner and in love, which should characterize all he does in relating to his wife.

### Do not commit adultery

*You shall not commit adultery.* EXODUS 20:14 NET

## Caring For the Needy

### Defend the cause of the needy

*Defend weak people and orphans. Protect the rights of the oppressed and the poor.* <sup>4</sup>*Rescue weak and needy people. Help them escape the power of wicked people.* PSALMS 82:3–4 GW

*“Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves; defend the rights of all those who have nothing.* <sup>9</sup>*Speak up and judge fairly, and defend the rights of the poor and needy.”* PROVERBS 31:8–9 NCV™

### Provide the needy with food and clothing

John told them, *“If you have two coats, give one to someone who doesn’t have any. If you have food, share it with someone else.”*

LUKE 3:11 CEV

*She [Dorcas] spent all her time doing good and helping the poor. ...* <sup>39</sup>So Peter got ready and went with them. When he arrived, he was taken to the room upstairs, where *all the widows crowded round him, crying and showing him all the shirts and coats that Dorcas had made while she was alive.* ACTS 9:36, 39 GNT

### Treat foreigners the same as your native-born

*The foreigner who resides with you must be to you like a native citizen among you; so you must love him as yourself ...* LEVITICUS 19:34A NET

## Insights on Caring For the Needy

### Caring for the needy is a vital part of true religion

[GOD, SPEAKING OF KING JOSIAH:] *He always did right— he gave justice to the poor and was honest.* <sup>16</sup>*That’s what it means to truly know me.* JEREMIAH 22:15B–16A CEV

*What God the Father considers to be pure and genuine religion is this: to take care of orphans and widows in their suffering and to keep oneself from being corrupted by the world.* JAMES 1:27 GNT

### Providing for the needy brings oneself blessing

*When you give to the poor, it is like lending to the LORD, and the LORD will pay you back.* PROVERBS 19:17 GNT

### Those who ignore the needy will be punished

“Then he [Jesus Christ, at the final judgment] will say to those on his left, ‘*Get away from me, you who are accursed, into the eternal fire that has been prepared for the devil and his angels!*’<sup>42</sup>Here’s why: *I was hungry, and you gave me nothing to eat. I was thirsty, and you gave me nothing to drink.*’<sup>43</sup>*I was a stranger, and you didn’t welcome me. I was naked, and you didn’t clothe me. I was sick and in prison, and you didn’t visit me.*’<sup>44</sup>“Then they will reply, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or as a stranger or naked or sick or in prison and didn’t help you?’<sup>45</sup>Then he will say to them, ‘*I tell you with certainty, since you didn’t do it for one of the least important of these, you didn’t do it for me.*’<sup>46</sup>*These people will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous will go into eternal life.*”

MATTHEW 25:41–46 ISV

## 34. Common Relationships

Spouses .....	20
Parents and Children .....	21
Citizens and Governing Authorities.....	22
Servants and Masters.....	22

The Bible contains discerning insights and directions regarding our relationships with those who we have the most contact with. As such these teachings are among the ones which are the most often applicable in our lives.

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Why is it more important to do what is right and just than to make sacrifices to God (Prov 21:3)?

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Are there any situations where you find it hard not to show favoritism?

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Is telling a lie ever justifiable?

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Why is giving justice to the poor linked with knowing God (Jer 22:15b–16a)?

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Who are the needy that you can help? How could you help them?

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How can one distinguish between godly wisdom and worldly wisdom?  
What is the difference?

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Do you actively try to gain more wisdom? What things should you do  
- or do differently - to achieve this?

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What personality traits or attitudes help us to readily accept correction?

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How do our hearts determine our words (cf. Matthew 12:34-35)?

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What areas of weakness do you have in regard to your speech?  
What can you do about them?

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## Foolishness

### Fools spurn and lack wisdom

Fearing the LORD is the beginning of moral knowledge, but *fools despise wisdom and instruction.* PROVERBS 1:7 NET

*Wisdom is unattainable for a fool; in court he does not open his mouth.* PROVERBS 24:7 NET

### Foolishness involves acting contrary to God

Then Samuel said to Saul, “*You have acted foolishly. You haven’t obeyed the commandment of the LORD your God, which he commanded you.* For then the LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever, ... 1 SAMUEL 13:13 ISV

[A PSALMIST, TO GOD:] Rise up, O God! Defend your honor! Remember how *fools insult you all day long!* PSALMS 74:22 NET

## 33. Wisdom

The Precedence of Godly Wisdom .....	14
Wisdom through God .....	14
Wisdom through Others .....	15
Wise Speech .....	15
Foolishness .....	16

Wisdom is one of the attributes most highly valued in the Bible. Thankfully the Bible says much about how we can gain wisdom. The Bible also contains very astute advice on other topics associated with wisdom, notably speech – a key medium that we use in relating to others.

## The Precedence of Godly Wisdom

### Get godly wisdom – it is superior to anything else

*Get wisdom and understanding.* Don't forget or ignore my words. ...  
<sup>7</sup>*Wisdom is the most important thing; so get wisdom. If it costs everything you have, get understanding.* PROVERBS 4:5, 7 NCV™

### Worldly wisdom is flawed and inferior to the wisdom of God

No one should fool himself. *If anyone among you thinks that he is wise by this world's standards, he should become a fool, in order to be really wise.* <sup>19</sup>*For what this world considers to be wisdom is nonsense in God's sight. As the scripture says, "God traps the wise in their cleverness"; ...* 1 CORINTHIANS 3:18–19 GNT

This portrays worldly wisdom as inferior to both the wisdom of God himself (v. 19) and to godly wisdom (v. 18), which ultimately comes from God. Note that being a "fool" (v. 18) here means to forgo the flawed wisdom of this world and recognize the shortcomings of one's understanding – in effect see oneself as a "fool" – so as to be open to true, godly wisdom.

## Wisdom through God

### Fearing God is the beginning of wisdom

*The beginning of wisdom is to fear the LORD, and acknowledging the Holy One is understanding.* PROVERBS 9:10 NET

Fearing God is the beginning of wisdom as it leads us to base our thinking and life on God and his teachings or commands – the source of true wisdom for life.

### Obedying God's commands brings wisdom

[A PSALMIST, TO GOD:] *I have greater wisdom than those who are old, because I obey your commands.* PSALMS 119:100 GNT

### Ask God for wisdom

[JAMES, TO BELIEVERS:] *If any of you need wisdom, you should ask God, and it will be given to you.* JAMES 1:5A CEV

## Wisdom through Others

### Pay attention to instruction

[A WISE TEACHER:] *Apply your heart to instruction and your ears to the words of knowledge.* ... <sup>19</sup>*Listen, my child, and be wise, and guide your heart on the right way.* PROVERBS 23:12, 19 NET

### Take notice of correction

*If you refuse to learn, you are hurting yourself. If you accept correction, you will become wiser.* PROVERBS 15:32 GNT

## Wise Speech

### Be quick to listen and slow to speak

[JAMES, TO BELIEVERS:] *My dear friends, you should be quick to listen and slow to speak or to get angry.* JAMES 1:19 CEV

### Use few words

*The more you talk, the more likely you are to sin. If you are wise, you will keep quiet.* PROVERBS 10:19 GNT

*The more we talk, the less sense we make ...* ECCLESIASTES 6:11A CEV

### Speak graciously

*The words spoken by the wise are gracious ...* ECCLESIASTES 10:12A ISV

### Remember that our words are determined by our "heart"

[JESUS, TO THE PHARISEES:] *Offspring of vipers! How are you able to say anything good, since you are evil? For the mouth speaks from what fills the heart.* <sup>35</sup>*The good person brings good things out of his good treasury, and the evil person brings evil things out of his evil treasury.* MATTHEW 12:34–35 NET

In v. 35, "treasury" refers to the thoughts and feelings that people have stored up in their hearts.