For the youth: A Little Something "For Your Information"

Preface: (This was initially written, at the time, for my then 18 year old son and 20 year old daughter) My initial thought for a title was "I know you are going to do whatever you want anyway but please at least read this first!" Actually I guess it is as good as any. Basically it's just food for thought. ***(a 10 year later addendum or addition)*** My son, now working with not only problem youth, but youth caught up within the justice system has made me aware of many circumstances and situations that many youth of today face. Though I have been aware of some of these over the years they have been mostly in the abstract, whereas he has brought to my attention the numerous times and aspects of what they encounter. Yet every generation has had to endure the time and culture they find themselves in. Though the following may seem to parents worthwhile information to pass on, in retrospect I would think that it would best serve its use if the parents passed it on while their children are young and add their own life's experience wisdom.

Comment: For many the following will seem like just plain old common sense (the older you are the more so) however, those of us who have been around for a while know many of these items are never thought of or considered by youth until they have to "grow up" and face the reality of their circumstances they find themselves in. A relevant question asked by many young people at some point is "why are we here and what is our purpose in life?" May I simply say you are here to know God and His Son Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and that is done by reading what the Bible (God) has to say about who He is and how we are to live our lives. It also explains the blessings of following His guidelines and the consequences for those who will not. That is the great choice you must make. Some of the following information will benefit a non-Christian but a Christian benefits because making "Peace *with* God" brings Salvation and Eternal Life which brings the "Peace *of* God" which gives us a proper perspective on handling life's problems.

There are many ways to say what you believe the gospel means. God knows the knowledge He has brought to you and He knows your heart. One type of acceptable answer would be that you believe what the Bible teaches, that to obtain salvation we *believe by faith* that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior, and God as the 2nd Person of the Trinity (Father, Son, Holy Spirit), who came to this world in human flesh, the only sinless man, who died for our sins and was resurrected from the dead to affirm who He was and to give us hope *It is our responsibility to confess, repent and turn from our sins and ask for forgiveness*. Salvation is wholly of God by *grace, (unmerited, undeserved favor),* on the basis of our trust in the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, the merit of His shed blood on the cross, and not on the basis of human merit or work. The redemption of man being accomplished by the death on the cross and three days later, the *greatest event to ever take place on earth, the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.* It is the reason we celebrate Easter. It is the beginning of new life. The beginning of our new life (no matter how old we may be) when we acknowledge that He died in our place for our sins. To know *who Jesus is,* is the most important fact you will ever discover and the impact of that realization is *"eternal"!* The first step to a meaningful life is understanding;

"For salvation that comes from trusting Christ - which is that we preach - is already within easy reach of each of us; in fact, it is as near as our own hearts and mouths. For if you tell others with your own mouth that Jesus Christ is your Lord. and believe in your own heart that God has raised Him from the dead. you will be saved. For it is by believing in his heart that a man becomes right with God: and with his mouth he tells others of his faith, confirming his salvation." "For the Scriptures tell us that no one who believes in Christ will ever be disappointed. Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect: they have all the same Lord who generously gives His riches to all those who ask Him for them. Anyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved." *(Romans 10:8-13)* (Delivered from judgment for your sins and separation from God for all eternity) *Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.*

(Matt. 10:32,33) "Salvation is found in no one else for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12) "Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God." (John 1:12) If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

Please consider the following information:

Be Wise - Build your life on the solid rock of the Word - The Bible. Seek out wisdom. Find wisdom at its source. The books of Psalms and Proverbs in the Bible are a place to start for a strong foundation. Having the proper fear of God (an awesome reverence) and respect for His attributes which in part include love, grace, compassion, mercy, forgiveness, righteousness, perfect justice and judgment, we learn He is *Omnipresent* (everywhere), *Omniscient* (all knowing) and *Omnipotent* (all powerful almighty). Live your life striving for the goal of a full life always asking for timely guidance to be successful in wisdom, knowledge and discernment to travel the proper road of life ahead of you. Sometimes wisdom comes from making mistakes and learning from them. Learn the difference between knowledge (facts) and wisdom (proper application of knowledge). (*James 1:5)* states "*If you need wisdom--if you want to know what God wants you to do--ask Him, and He will gladly tell you. He will not resent you're asking."* Remember, God is the creator of heaven and earth and all that is in it and you are not. As the Apostle Paul says in (*Romans 12:3**)*** ***"****For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you* ***ought****, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you."*

Spiritual Progression - Grow from knowing you are a Christian to knowing the Word of God (so as to not be deceived by false doctrine), to knowing God Himself, focusing on understanding Him as He wants you to. *Thus says the LORD: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, nor let the rich man glory in his riches; But let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," says the LORD.* (*Jeremiah 9:23,24)*

Seek His will for your life - His will is: **1)** That you be saved and bring the saving message of the Gospel to others. Remember God goes before His own and leads the way. **2)** That you be Spirit-filled yielding every decision to the control of the Spirit knowing It is the power of God within you. **3)** That you be sanctified (set apart for God). You can be blessed by God only so long as you are controlling what you do for His honor. When lust controls you, you have crossed the line. *Remember, lust, just as a flame, can* ***never*** *be satisfied.* Self-discipline toward the proper objectives is essential. **4)** That you submit. To parents, husband or wife, employers and government. Be the best possible citizen and the best man or woman you can be making the best contribution to family and society you can and strive to make whatever changes you feel need to be made within the system. **5)** That you suffer. Understand the context. Christians will suffer but we should suffer for doing right (*1 Peter 3:17*; *2 Tim. 3:12*). **6)** That you do whatever you want! If your life includes the first 5 aspects of God's will then your wants and desires should be those wants and desires that He has placed there and He wants to give you the desires of your heart.

Forgiveness - Along with God's grace and mercy, forgiveness is one of the basic tenets Christianity is based on. Because He has forgiven you of your sins past, present and future, which includes numerous times daily, we need to remember that it is not acceptable to harbor grudges, bitterness or resentments toward others for whatever the offense or perceived offense regardless of our opinion of the degree of seriousness. God expects better from us. "*Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you." (Col. 3:13)* It has been proven that harboring such feelings has an adverse effect on your health. Try to remember, when someone does something foolish that affects you, to consider "Yes - that was a stupid thing they did but how many times has the Lord forgiven you today for the error of your ways?" Those who have a sense of how much they have been forgiven are quick to forgive and able to forgive much. Most people have more good traits than bad. We all will act foolishly at times so try to seek out

the good in others overlooking that which in reality is probably not worth dwelling on and hopefully they will do the same for us. Remember, you will *never* know it all and your way, regardless of how logically you think you have it figured out, is not the only path to the correct outcome. If you think it is, you may begin to show your foolishness to all you try to convince. Every destination usually has more than one adequate approach. Everyone can learn something from everyone else, especially the results from their errors.

Freedom **-** You have been blessed to be in a country where you can do whatever you want, for the most part however you want, whenever you want, wherever you want, for whatever reason you want *as long as you do not impose or interfere in someone else's life.* Be aware of your motives and remember God looks at the heart and knows your motives. (*1 Cor.6:12) All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.* Understanding and respecting that everyone is someone and has a right to his or her opinion just as you do will allow you to "do unto others as you would have them do to you" which will result in making you act in a more sensible and responsible manner. *Though we are saved by grace, and not bound to the penalty of the law, we are bound to its precepts, for God has not changed His morality.*

Be Thankful - Never feel you are "owed" or "deserve" something. It is only by the grace of God you are who you are and have what you have. Though your life has not been what it could have been *always remember to put everything in perspective.* Look at the world around you (countries, cultures and peoples) and consider who and where you could be. Every day, no matter how bad of a day it has been, think if you were in another country other than America – could you do your daily routines as you do now? And even if so, could you do them with these ease comfort and convenience that you do them now? Be thankful for what you *do* have and be especially thankful for God's mercy: God *not* giving you what you deserve! And be thankful for God's grace: God giving you what you *do not* deserve!

Count the Cost – Often we will find ourselves in a position where we have the opportunity to make a decision that will "cost us," whether in time, money or energy. If you determine the outcome of the decision is worth the cost, you will resign yourself to accepting that cost and move on without reservation. However, you must analyze all the ramifications of your decisions. Weighing the pros and cons of a decision may show you that the cost is "too high of a price to pay" to attain your goal.

Take Responsibility **-** Yet remember to forgive yourself for your sins, even those sins of your youth. "Shake it off" and "get over it" and move on. Do not dwell in a guilt anxiety and do not worry, for as a Christian - you *have* been forgiven. However, remember, being forgiven is being free of guilt for that sin but doesn't mean you will not have to live with the consequences of that sin which can vary in degree. *Only what the Lord allows will befall you and never more than you can handle through His strength*. Enduring the consequences can be considered "life experiences" that teach us lessons in order to help avoid repeating mistakes. Repentance and turning from the sin should be a priority. Being an adult is knowing what your rights, responsibilities, and obligations are to yourself, your family and your community accepting them and dealing with them in a responsible manner. When (in life) you fail in those responsibilities, as many of us have and others of us will, we can eventually acknowledge them and attempt to resolve them, but may have to accept the fact that those we have hurt will not always give us a second chance to prove ourselves. *That is when, without animosity, we accept our circumstances and move forward, knowing as Christians, God will work all things in our life for our best interest.* Not all things in life are good, but we need to understand what Scripture promises. "*And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose."* (*Romans 8:28*) "*For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29:11)*

Consider the following:
If you don't fear God…….The devil will teach you to hate God.
If you don't guard your mind…….The devil will teach you to have an open mind.
If you don't obey your parents…….....The devil will teach you to rebel and break your parents heart.
If you don't select your companions……..The devil will gladly select them for you.
If you don't control your body…….....The devil will teach you to give it over completely.
If you don' enjoy your marriage partner….The devil will destroy your marriage.
If you don't watch your words…… The devil will fill your mouth with filth.
If you don't pursue your work……The devil will make your laziness a tool of hell.
If you don't manage your money……The devil will teach you to blow it on riotous living.
If you don't love your neighbor…… The devil will teach you to love only yourself.

Trials– When unpleasant and/or trying circumstances arise in our lives we need to remember that: "*God chastises those He loves." (Hebrews 12:5-6) "... My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when He disciplines you, because the Lord disciplines those He loves, and punishes everyone He accepts as a son." (Heb. 12:5-11; Duet 8:5*; *Rev. 3:19) "But we also rejoice in our suffering because we know that suffering produces perseverance, perseverance character, and character hope. (Rom. 5:4; James 1:2-4)*

Conscience - Of which guilt plays a major part is a guidance and warning system instilled by God, reinforcing His laws written on your heart. Do not disregard your conscience. Think of the consequences that can happen in any given situation when a warning system devised for protection and safety is ignored. The conscience either accuses or excuses a person, acting as a source of conviction or affirmation. A clear conscience will see you through trials and keep you from being anxious in troubled times. *Please remember*, God does not keep any good thing from us. *God's commandments are liberating not restrictive*. What He has said we should not do is because it is not in our best interest and has detrimental ramifications should we pursue it anyway. He will give always give a warning and when ignored we need to accept the consequences.

Service **-** Learn the strength behind humility and the power of a servant's heart when used for the benefit and well-being of others (even if it is "behind the scenes") to speak loudly about your character.

Your Two Options **-1)** Doing right, even if it results in suffering. Then accept the suffering as God's wise and sovereign plan for your life. Traits such as being gracious, caring, thoughtful, unselfish, kind and loving toward others usually does not allow most people reasons to mistreat someone who does so or make them the object of hostility. They also help lead to a path away from the world's ungodly attractions. Your life should be above reproach. The more you learn of God's Word the more aware you will become of God's high standard for your life. Learn to understand the true meaning of loyalty, reliability, dependability, discretion faithfulness and fidelity. **2)** Doing wrong, bringing on divine chastisement, which will also result in suffering but for all the wrong reasons. Beware of the enticing offers and seductive pull of all advertising that is directed at you daily and see it for what it is. The world system knows many young people are naïve and without proper discernment, and for that reason the world can be looked at as a spider web, ready to entice you into a situation you may find hard or impossible to get out of. You will always be shown the world's view of pleasure but *never the consequences of where that pleasure will inevitably lead.* Advertising is based on "you can have it now! You deserve it!" Immediate gratification that you will most likely regret later as opposed to delayed gratification, where you work towards a goal and enjoy it so much more because you have earned it. Don't take information delivered in advertisements as absolute truth. Process and analyze the information with what you know. Advertisements are slanted toward the view of its creator or owner of the product or services. A slick advertisement designed to catch you attention may be coming from someone whose views and convictions are the opposite of what you believe.

Disappointments - Having plans, whether short term (immediate satisfaction) or long term (long range plans), hopes or aspirations thwarted or defeated by whatever circumstances will at times be inevitable. There will always be minor disappointments that happen on a daily basis which we learn to deal with regularly. However it is the major disappointments that at the time crush your spirit when you see your hopes, dreams and long thought out plans that all depended on a particular event disappear when that event fails to materialize. They are the ones that must be dealt with, with the proper understanding and perspective. Do not dwell on something that has not happened or has a slim chance of coming to pass. Look at it as the Lord closing a door and knowing that because He has your best interest at heart you can look forward to another door opening that will better serve yours and His purpose for your life *(Jeremiah 29: 11, Romans 8:28*).

Put your faith and trust to practice. ***Always remember*** - Life is like an approaching storm. One day there is blue skies, it is warm and all is well at the moment. The wind then begins to blow in the dark storm clouds, the rain, thunder and lightning. It may at times seem as though it will never end. You know above the clouds up in the sky the sun is shining as it does every day, however right now it's dark dreary and depressing. Then there it is, a break in the clouds, a ray or two of sunshine and a nice breeze moving the storm on through on its due course. Before you realize it, the fleecy clouds with the silver lining break up and move on leaving the blue skies, fresh, clean air and a new appreciation for God's gift to us in nature. You have and can continue to endure through the storms of life just as the storms of nature. Endurance is the life experience that allow us to develop the understanding and knowledge that the Lord has brought us through those times and, because He is faithful, will see us through future trials "*...man is born to trouble as surely as sparks fly upward." (Job* 5: 7) "*These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world you shall have tribulation..." John (16:33)* Disappointments and heartaches in their various degrees are an undeniable fact of life but better times are *always* just a little ways ahead just as the visible light at the end of the tunnel is soon upon us. Accept your trials as a maturing process knowing "*it will pass*."

Depression - Sometimes life becomes overwhelming. It can make many irrational thoughts go through our minds. Sometimes a person may feel they don't know how they are going to handle the situation they find themselves in. Many have not lived long enough and experienced enough to realize that no matter how bad a situation may seem at the time it will get better, just as the storms of life that were described above. Time usually solves most problems, or at least makes them seem less serious or easier to bear. These are the times to turn to God for guidance, help and to trust He will be faithful to see you through to better days ahead. Don't be afraid to face the unknown future. Some cannot stand the pressure of what others, especially family or friends might say. Remember, what someone else thinks of you or says about you is just their opinion. Don't let it affect or direct your life. You grow and mature by facing problems and solving them the best way you can usually gaining confidence as you go along. Whenever possible, reach out to someone you think might be feeling overwhelmed by some event(s) in their life. You may never know how grateful they might be to have a friend to confide in and what serious problem or rash judgment you may help them avoid.

Newness of life - *Most Christians, especially those who came to the Lord later in life, though feeling pretty good about themselves before accepting the Lord, will admit they are extremely thankful that they have been changed and are not the man or woman they used to be.* If you can understand and grasp the importance of that statement - think who you can become, and what you can accomplish with your life if you trust in the Lord, *from your youth*, to make you the man or woman you were meant to be! Setting goals knowing God has transformed you giving you a new will, mind, heart, power, knowledge, wisdom, life, a relationship, righteousness, love, desire and an inheritance should keep you more focused than if you have to spend a lot of time trying to go back and correct mistakes of the past or having to make things right in order to move forward. Thinking differently than the rest of the world about sin, God, Christ and the purpose for your life, will give you direction and as (*Proverbs 23:7)* says ***"As he thinks in his heart, so is he."*** Everyone desires a second chance at some time in their lives. It needs to be known that our God is a God of the second and infinite number of chances. All we need do is ask. If any man comes to the claims of Jesus Christ

wanting to know the truth, and willing to follow His teachings, he will know. But one cannot come unwilling to accept and expect to find out.

Peer Pressure - Has always been stated as an important aspect of our youths development. The pressure some feel to do certain things or act in certain ways in order to gain approval and be well thought of by their "friends" have taken many on a dangerous path whether it be pranks or drugs. The one aspect to remember about friendships that develop early in life, and especially in school, is that once a person leaves school most of those friendships disappear as each person begins to become independent and lead their own lives and they really are no longer concerned or impressed any longer about what someone may have done. So to do or have done something dangerous or stupid to impress a friend may only lead to a consequences for that action which may not be pleasant and possibly follow you and haunt you for many years to come. It won't affect those "friends," they will be long out of your life. Two items in particular come to mind because of recent news headlines. One is drag racing where young men, trying show their friends and peers that they have the guts to do something dangerous, attempt to show off and end up killing themselves and/or innocent bystanders. The other is college hazing where young adults, most times on their own for the first time, let their independence and the use of alcohol and need or desire to be accepted cause them to do things that if they had been considered with a clear mind they never would have done. The problem is that although some things are meant to be done in fun, they instead end up in tragedy or death. After going to many high school reunions over the years and seeing people, some that I or others were once impressed with, and to see who they are now and the type of lives they have led you realize that to ever have done something stupid or detrimental to yourself to impress them would have been quite foolish. Always remember – *actions have consequences*.

Select your Companions – Choose your friends carefully. "*…bad company corrupts good character." (1 Corinthians 15:33*) Children and young adults cannot rise above those they spend their time with. One good friend who is loyal, honest, and uplifting is better than many acquaintances. "*As Iron sharpens iron, a friend sharpens a friend." (Proverbs 27:17)* A few of the right type of acquaintances and friends are better than a lot of the wrong kinds.

Attitude - "The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what people say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness or skill. It will make or break a company...a church...a home. The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude... I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it. And so it is with you…we are in charge of our attitudes." - Dr. Charles Swindoll, President, Dallas Theological Seminary.

Drugs / Alcohol - For many of us who grew up during the 1960's and later have either been personally involved or extremely close to friends and family who have been adversely affected by the use of drugs and alcohol. A few main thoughts come to mind; **1)** Many of us thank God His hand was on our life through our foolishness because we look back on more than one occasion when what we did could have had such dire results in our lives and those close to us. We all know someone or know of someone who has died, whether intentional or unintentional, or killed an innocent person(s) because of drugs or alcohol. We are thankful we were able to "see the light of the error of our ways and walk away – in time" from a lifestyle that had only negative ramifications for our future. **2)** We have learned, watching those around us over the years, that some people were not as strong as they thought they were (and some today may feel they are). Some who have experimented with various drugs found the immediate sensations so pleasurable that they continued on, oblivious through the eventual downward spiral path, until they finally realized too late that they were no longer in control. Rehab centers are big business because once a person "gets hooked" the reality of the detrimental effect it has on their life makes one want to be "free" from the habit and consequences of the

habit - but the draw of the pleasure is just as strong and some do not have the strength on their own to overcome it. As with any bad habit, whether it be smoking, cussing, gambling, pornography etc. have the wisdom to *not feel* you need to experiment and take the chance of having to deal with the consequences and pain it will cost you and those you care about, along with financial cost that is many times just an added problem. It is always easier and more beneficial to never start a bad habit than it is to try to stop it once you start. A sad reality is that there are some who never have a second chance because they didn't realize the deadly result what they were experimenting with would have. **3)** Many of us from personal experience and talking with our peers, in retrospect, realize the damage we did to ourselves over the years both physically and mentally. We realize we never became the people we now know we had the potential to be. (We probably wouldn't have listened or believed it if we had been warned. I hope you will!) We reaped what we had sown. Negatively. Don't be so foolish. People will not always agree with your perspective on which is the best direction for you to go in life. It is your life to live as you see fit but don't be so foolish as to ignore those who offer the suggestions of the wisdom of their life experiences. <u>It is better to *listen and disregard* than to *not listen and regret!*</u>

Personal appearance - Will have a big impact on how people treat you. It has been said "There is no second chance to make a first impression." People see you as you present yourself. Neat and clean, sloppy and dirty or an appearance designed to attract attention to yourself, whether in fashionable style or just outrageous in some manner. You are the one to make the decision as to what type of an impression you wish to make and what a potential employer will see when sitting across from you. Today's society has digressed to the point that "discrimination - based on appearance and/or dress" now may come into play when an employer is looking to hire. Many, in trying to be an individual, state they don't care what others think of their appearance and will dress as they like, which is their right, but usually leans toward what everyone else is doing. *Looking your best whenever possible is always one of your biggest assets*. What about that special lady / guy whose attention you will eventually want to attract. Most adults who in their youth went out of their way to be different in their appearance will now rather destroy pictures of themselves than have their kids see them. How will you look back on the appearance of your youth 30-40 years from now?

Get to know yourself – You will never learn more about yourself and who you really are until you live out on your own. Living by yourself for a time is always better if possible. Many times roommates are a necessity in order to live away from home or even if you are going off to college, either way the experience is liberating. That can have advantages as long as you remain a responsible person not easily swayed towards situations that are not in your best interest. Your character and integrity will come to light when you realize you are what you are when no one is looking *(Proverbs 11:3).* But remember, whether dark or light, alone or in a crowd, God sees all! At the same time, your parents and those who care about you want you to become a capable, independent member of society. Strive to achieve that goal but *as a Christian you need to realize that God wants you to be dependent on Him.* Knowing that bringing your needs to a sovereign, providential God who has your best interest in mind, and doing so, will bring more success than attempting to succeed on your own. What you do in private, when no one else is around will tell you much about yourself. You will find yourself seemingly bombarded with trials and temptations, some you will successfully endure and some you will reluctantly find yourself falling to. Self-discipline and successful control of your actions is more likely to be achieved if you have a plan and do not expect your reflex impulses to work to your advantage or best interest (our sinful nature <u>*is*</u> a reality). *You will reap what you sow.* Guard your mind diligently for out of your mind comes your conduct. *(Daniel 1:8) But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself... (Numbers* 32:23) *...you may be sure that your sin will find you out.* When an honorable public life is a reflection of your private life, in thought and deed, you are doing well.

Finances - Learn *early in your youth* as much as you can about finances and managing your money. Not just money but as many aspects of finances as you can, beginning with personal finances. Meaning banks, checking accounts, the wise use of credit and debit cards, loans and types of available financial vehicles to

make your money grow and work for you, especially the power of compound interest. Be keenly aware of interest rates on credit cards and loans you obligate yourself to. These are things that will cause you much grief later in life if you don't learn to avoid the common, frequent mistakes people make because they do not understand the basic requirements of what is needed to get by on a day to day basis and plan intelligently for the future. Understand what a contract is, what it means and how it affects you when you sign it. When you purchase a car, a house, rent an apartment, apply for a loan or many other things, a contract is always part of it. ***Always read and understand "the fine print."***

Know your responsibility and the real consequences of not fulfilling your obligation which directly affects your ability to receive credit which in this day and age a person/family usually needs to be able to handle the many unexpected circumstances and situations that arise always at the most inopportune and inconvenient times.
Standard expenses to be aware of when one is independent or head of a household:
Monthly - church tithe/donation, mortgage or rent, car payment, groceries, credit card(s), electric, gas co., gasoline, phone bill(s), cable, internet, *planning & saving for future retirement* plus other personal applicables.
Annual expenses: Auto insurance, household insurance, life insurance, auto registration.
Other expenses: Medical insurance or out of pocket, dental, vision, savings acct., auto maintenance, household expenses, school or work expenses, entertainment or misc. expenses personalized per lifestyle.

Jobs - Try to define what it is you like to do, or do best. If your answer is "I don't know," remember, nobody else knows what you want. You are responsible for what you make of your life or how you allow your life to develop. Some people let circumstances dictate their lives, while some have goals set and do not deter from the road to that completion. Your future starts now. It is not necessary to decide now, for it may be years before you come in contact with something to spark your interest and set the direction your life will go. The sooner you find something however, the more confident you will become in knowing you can provide for yourself and earn your own living. Don't be surprised if you change jobs or hobbies often. Many people do. Sometimes it takes time to find what you want. But each job you have will teach you something. Fill your time with projects that make you a better person. Hard work is honorable. *"For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat."* (2 *Thessalonians 3:10)* A man or woman who works diligently earns a good living, has plenty to eat, is rewarded for his efforts, and earns respect. Be prompt and learn to do your work properly *without* having a boss around. Too many excuses, refusals, postponements will call a lazy man to suffer hunger, poverty, failure and lead him toward worthless pursuits to get rich quick. Employers want to run a successful business and in order to do that they need capable people. You are hired to do what they want, the way they want it done and for the pay they feel it is worth to them. To follow their rules is to keep your job. Remember, starting at the bottom is the way most people start. To move up takes hard work, and often more education even if it is only in that line of work. In this day and age most people must be computer literate and able to learn and understand what is required of them. In your workplace, learning to understand the meaning of loyalty, reliability, dependability, discretion and faithfulness is as important as in every other aspect of your life. Keep in mind, if you cannot or will not do it right, there is always someone else who is waiting for the opportunity to show what they can do. *Every job, from one end of the spectrum to the other, when done properly is dignified in the eyes of God.*
Just about the only way to do things your way in business is to own your own business. Even in your own business you have rules and laws to follow. You need to know what your business needs to be a success. Traditional businesses require financing for payroll, hiring the right people for the necessary jobs you need to sell and market your products or services, products and/or materials, computers and office equipment, business location purchase, rent or lease, insurances plus whatever other related expenses your business may need in order to run efficiently and successfully and is only a partial list. With the internet and its technology, there are newer ways to have your own business that do not require all of the old traditional aspects but still require focus, dedication and following all laws and requirements associated with your business. Strive to analyze your skills, natural talents and the passions that make your life enjoyable. Passion, enthusiasm and a burning interest are the driving factors that will help you succeed, excel, and move up faster, find better jobs

and be paid a higher salary. When people are highly successful in their fields it is usually because they enjoy their work. When you think you know what direction your leaning towards, start seeking out your options. With the internet you have a shortcut which generations before you did not have. You can determine what you want to do, find companies that employ jobs of your interest and contact them requesting information. In a more direct way, you can inquire what positions they have in your area of interest, job descriptions and responsibilities of different positions, what the entry level or educational requirements are, related jobs that might be of interest, salary and benefits, work schedules, promotional opportunities and even inquiring of them what the strengths of their company are and what they feel they have to offer you were you to consider applying for a position. You can target your job title, detail your qualifications, desire and interest in being considered for employment and periodically checking back showing a persevering attitude. When they know they have someone who shows an interest and is willing to seek after what they want, they may be more inclined to consider you before going elsewhere when there is a position opening. Although "a job" is always a good learning experience, in conjunction with finances above, learn the difference between trading your time for wages and benefits and making your money work for you so when trials come in the guise of layoffs, health problems, or general types of emergency situations that arise more frequently and unexpectedly than we are ever ready for, you won't find yourself having to go into a "crisis mode" if you miss a couple of paychecks. Surround yourself with friends who support you and are as anxious to succeed as you are. Those who are not will resent your success knowing that eventually you will move beyond them. Negative people will poison your dreams and future achievements. Find successful people you can use as mentors and find out how they reached their goals. Many people, especially young people, do not realize the many shortcuts to success they fail to utilize and the many unnecessary errors and pitfalls they endure because they want to do things "their way" instead of accepting advice from people who have been through similar circumstances and situations and want to show them how to achieve and avoid needless unpleasant experiences.

Relationships / Marriage - Women / Men will always be around. Enjoy their friendships but take time to know yourself and take time to know her / him before you enter into a serious relationship or marriage. There is more to love than good looks and sex. Marriage along with parenthood are two situations people enter into the first time without any experience or a clue of what the real reality of what they are getting into includes. You may be old enough to make a baby, but not old enough or wise enough to raise and support a family. A family may be a goal, but too early or too young and you lose your freedom to grow into the best person you can become, direct your life and do as you think best. Trying to start a life with the partner you want with an added burden of child support, and all that involves, is not starting the relationship off on the right foundation. Remember, a woman wants a man that can make intelligent decisions. The same applies to most men. They do not want to have to live their lives and their mates also or be saddled with responsibilities not of their own making. Life is not easy and living one is enough! What a man or woman *does* is more important than what they *say*. Learn to respect others and strive to earn the respect you desire in your relationships. A quick comment: When considering marriage, please seriously consider marriage counseling. Counseling (preferably from a church) is the best insurance you will ever have and will go a long way in making your marriage successful. Counselors are normally married and can relate and speak from experience. The wisdom of hearing from those who have listened to and know all too well the many problems that develop in marriages, their causes and remedies, is a priceless way to avoid many of those mistakes yourself. Many of those mistakes you make, in retrospect, you probably would have done anything to avoid. Counselors are there to make you aware of them. Most marriages are entered into without either party having an idea of what their defined roles will be and what exactly is expected of them. You will learn what responsibilities are expected and required from you and your spouse will know what you expect of them. If neither of you can accept the expectations of the other, then you will avoid going into a relationship that is probably doomed to fail until a mature realistic attitude and perspective is developed. This information will prepare your way to a successful marriage.

Control your situation - As much as possible try to control your situation and not let the situation control you. Try to learn to learn to anticipate what may lie ahead and act instead of react. Always try to be aware and

observe what goes on around you with enough self-control to think what is in your best interest before you react. Speaking from experience, the ability to act instead of react does not come easily. Many times there is no need to act except mentally (making a mental note of what may have just happened and whether or not the consequences of an action are worth proceeding with it). Also remember, your way, no matter how logical it seems, is not the only way. Every destination usually has more than one adequate approach. Everyone can learn something from everyone else, especially the results from their errors.

***** Authority*** **-** Learning to deal with authority is something you will have to handle the rest of your life. Learn to put it in its proper perspective.

Parents **-** They are trying to raise you in a way to prepare you to manage your own life responsibly. They may not always be right, but try to understand that their intent is for your success. They are only human too, so if they leave something out of their teaching, it is your responsibility to seek out what you feel you need to know more about. You now have more access to information than any generation before you. You may seek out answers anonymously, to questions you feel uneasy talking to someone about but sometimes a personalized heartfelt answer by someone who cares for you will give you a better understanding about the subject of interest. There will always be someone around who will be willing and able to help you. Seek them out! There is a statement to keep in mind. "The only stupid question is the one that is not asked."

Grandparents - or other senior citizens have lived a lifetime already. Most have lived through the times that have seen all the following either be invented or come into prominence during their lifetimes; The automobile, radio, television, telephones and now cell phones, planes, jets, rockets, space travel, man landing on the moon, the computer, satellites, medical cures for diseases, the discovery and understanding of DNA along with so many others that the youth of today cannot conceive of being without. Do you not think they may have something of interest to tell you about life? Most would love to tell stories about their lives or give opinions or pass on a little wisdom about what they have learned. Just ask!

Schools - Want you to understand that knowledge and education won't solve all your problems but will at least teach you how to go about finding the answers. Education is for *your benefit.* Its purpose is to help you make intelligent decisions, big ones and small ones, every day. And you will for the rest of your life. Do you want to just guess and hope that the best will come your way or just react to the circumstances and situations that happen in your life? Wouldn't you rather know how to seek out what this world has to offer and plan your goals and strive to make the life you want to live become a reality? You have the freedom and the opportunity to reach your fullest potential. Your generation will run this great country in the future. We need educated, responsible, and wise adults, not immature, irresponsible, dopers or gang bangers who just hang out and cannot run their own lives let alone an entire country. Those whose attention span never considers that if they do not get their lives on the right track soon, they will be 30-35-45 year olds wondering where their lives went so fast and why they don't have the lives, families, friends, homes, money and other things that people whose lives had goals and purpose have. - ***Education*** - Life is tough with it, what will it be like without it? The more knowledge you have, the wiser the decisions you will make concerning your life. Throughout your life you will be coming into contact with more educated people than you will with uneducated people, especially in this day and age of youth raised in the realm of the computer, internet and other technical aspects which have become the norm. Knowing all the answers will *never* be a possibility but knowing where to go to get the answers to the questions you need answered *is always possible*. Can you hold your own or will you be embarrassed and/or insecure around your peers because in your youth you decided education wasn't all everyone said it was and you thought you were smart enough?

Police **-** They are part of a structured society and are there for your protection and the protection of all law abiding citizens. They are not out to get you, if you don't put yourself in a position for them to know you and the things you are known to do. Some may not be the best in their interaction with the public they serve, but most are doing a job that attempts to make things better while putting their lives on the line. We need them.

Remember what was stated earlier; You have been blessed to be in a country where, as an adult, you can do whatever you want, for the most part however you want, whenever you want, wherever you want, for whatever reason you want *as long as you do not impose or interfere in someone else's life.* ***Note:*** I must acknowledge that with our nation's social unrest over the last number of years (and periods of our history), (some, not all) police and other authority figures have many times let their ingrained, indoctrinated upbringings direct their inappropriate actions instead of the 'Rule of Law' on the books. Hopefully communities will work closer together to bring unity, harmony and justice into practice for all.

Military - Don't join or even think about joining if you feel no one is going to tell you what to do. Its first purpose is to protect the country. Second is to make you a responsible, disciplined, reliable person, one who can be counted on to do a job and do it correctly. The military is based upon authority. Following the rules just as following the laws in our society is a must to succeed. Many of us who have been in the military would not trade the experience and yet many lives and families have been negatively affected both physically and mentally. The military offers training in a trade, advantages to help pay for continuing education upon being discharged from active duty and education in being a responsible adult. That, in the recent past, has been an advantage that had been available with little risk. Now with the current world conditions risk is a major consideration in joining the military. The world we live in makes a strong military necessary and risk is an ever present reality. If the possibility of re-instituting the draft ever arises in the near future there are people, whether devout Christians or just those with strong convictions, who find themselves on both sides of the issue of serving in the military. Some feel that (*Romans 13:1-4)* and *(1 Peter 2:13-16)* - the *"*submission to the authorities" Scriptures compels them to serve. Others may lean toward considering themselves a "conscientious objector" based either on *their* belief of what the Bible states about killing or just a strong moral conviction that they cannot participate in what might be required of them. *It must be known that the government wants to see a previous lifestyle that can be documented by the testimony of others to whom you have shown and expressed the validity of your convictions in order to be granted a conscience objector status.*

Biblical Ideals of Conduct- *Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, before the difficult days come, and the years draw near when you say, "I have no pleasure in them" Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil. (Ecclesiastes 12:1,13,14) He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God ?(Micah 6:8)*

Excellence *- Remember that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize. You also must run in such a way that you will win. (1 Corinthians 9:24)*
Honesty *- Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body. (Ephesians 4:25)*
Honor *- Choose a good reputation over great riches, for being held in high esteem is better than having silver or gold. (Proverbs 22:1)*
Humility *- Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. (Philippians 2:3)*
Integrity *- People with integrity have firm footing, but those who follow crooked paths will slip and fall. (Proverbs 10:9)*
Kindness *- What is desired in a man is kindness, and a poor man is better than a liar. (Proverbs 9:22)*
Loyalty *- For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings. (Hosea 6:6)*
Perseverance *- So don't get tired of doing what is good. Don't get discouraged and give up, for we will reap a harvest of blessing at the appropriate time. (Galatians 6:9)*
Purity *- Don't let anyone think less of you because you are young. Be an example to all believers in what you teach, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity. (1 Timothy 4:12)*

Self-Discipline *- Do not waste time arguing over godless ideas and old wives' tales. Spend your time and energy in training yourself for spiritual fitness. Physical exercise has some value, but spiritual exercise is much more important, for it promises a reward in both this life and the next. (1 Timothy 4: 7,8)*
Servant Leadership *- But among you it should be quite different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must become your slave. (Matthew 20;26,27)*
5 Principals for a man to understand and acknowledge:

1) *Know God and His attributes*. (see Spiritual Progression above) Know what His will is for your life.
2) *Reject social and spiritual passivity in your home and with your family*. Your family needs a spiritual leader. Men have a natural tendency to avoid social responsibility when a determined effort is not made.
3) *Accept responsibility.* Develop an attitude of a will to obey God's will as revealed in Scripture. He has given you work to do – your job or vocation, a responsibility to your home, church and community, and a woman to love – your wife (if not yet hopefully in the future). Know what you have, how you have been blessed and do ***not*** take her for granted. The results of doing so will reap many heartaches. Men will assume social responsibility naturally and effectively when it is clear to them that the primary responsibility for the well-being of others rest on them and that others are relying on them *and* when made aware of that responsibility from an early age men can recognize and assume that responsibility faithfully.
4) *Men were created and designed to lead courageously.* A leadership based on the principal of truth.
5) *Expect the greater rewards of the promises of God*. Living your life in obedience to God's will brings blessings and rewards in this life and in eternity. Strive for the following always praying for God's favor to attain them: An honorable name – A wife whose admiration and respect you have earned and a commitment of fidelity – Well-adjusted children who contribute to others and work to add to the kingdom of God – The respect of other men in the community – Innumerable experiences of God's blessings – And a growing satisfaction and contentment with the life situation that God has placed you into. *Lord, help me attain emotional maturity and stability by strengthening my ability to deny myself immediate satisfaction in order to achieve a long range, more valuable goal. Lord, help me understand life will not be easy, and often will not seem fair. But with your love, my faith, trust and dependence on you, I will survive, endure and prosper.*

Many men have only the "worlds" perspective of how a man is "judged." The world's vision of a man is:
1) *What he does (vocation)* – Not who he is**. 2)** *His value is earned usually through his work*. Many become highly competitive, trying to out-think and out-earn the other guy. He feels his credibility comes from accomplishing and/or winning. **3)** *Many strive for success, however they envision it, many times at the expense of marriage, children or meaningful close relationships.* Many don't see it coming because they feel they are putting in the time and effort in order to provide for their families. Go back to the above topic of "Counting the Cost," for a review. **4)** *The reward of power through achievement in the marketplace.* By reaching a level of success, a man commands the respect and attention of those around him which can be a power that can be intoxicating if he is not careful. **5)** A man's successful accomplishments can bring him personal wealth and affluence. He may be admired by the world and privileged to do what others can't, and sometimes it may come at the expense of satisfaction with life. Many wealthy people have committed suicide which reinforces the saying that money cannot always buy happiness. Without the proper perspective of life contentment will be hard to attain. Refer to the perspective on life from King Solomon in *Ecclesiastes 2:4-11).* The prosperity of King Solomon is described in *1 Kings Chap. 3-4.* ** The above description is not necessarily wrong but it is incomplete. *There needs to be a main factor that motivates all that we do.* Our lives need to have meaning and direction. Many will be extremely generous or go to extremes of self-sacrifice, but only for something significantly meaningful. *The Bible is your Creators guidebook to a truly significant meaningful life.*
All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Tim 3:16,17)

The Bible is our foundation, God's word directed to each man and woman personally to read and allow God's Spirit to guide you to the understanding of His word in "context." ***It tells us in Proverbs and the Psalms how we are to live our lives and know our God and His attributes***. The Bible lays the foundation for our system of law and punishment, the foundation of marriage and family, along with many other cultural systems after which mankind has structured his societies. The Bible explains creation and gives us an understanding of man's sin nature, which allows us to understand *why we* as individuals, and mankind in general, *act and do the things we do.* Most important it tells of God's love, grace, compassion, mercy, forgiveness, righteousness and because of perfect justice and judgment; His redemption of man. We learn He is ***Omnipresent*** (everywhere***), Omniscient*** (all knowing) and ***Omnipotent*** (all powerful – almighty).

The Bible was not meant to be interpreted by man and revised and distorted by man, taken out of context by man then presented to the people as Gods word. Only by reading the bible first can you intelligently compare additions and revisions (not proper translations) presented by "angels" or "prophets" who teach ***another gospel*** than that of ***grace*** that the Bible specifies. *There is no other place to find the complete guidebook to life than in the Bible. The Purpose of Proverbs is to give you many of these guidelines "all in one location." Many young people want to know what is the right thing to do and would like guidance and direction but have not had the opportunity to have fathers at home, or had/have fathers who were/are not concerned about their children growing up with a head start of knowing some of the experiences they will encounter in life or just not knowing how to pass on the information needed. I'd like to communicate God to you as the ideal, loving father figure. Though here on earth, some have had good fathers, some bad and some not at all, He will draw you to Him so you may have hope, knowing the comfort of God, that "abba" (daddy) father relationship. A father of the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in His holy habitation. (Psalm 68:5)* Seek Him out – God is faithful!

"These are the proverbs of Solomon, David's son, king of Israel. The purpose of these proverbs is to teach people wisdom and discipline, and to help them understand wise sayings. Through these proverbs, people will receive instruction in discipline, good conduct, and doing what is right, just, and fair. These proverbs will make the simpleminded clever. They will give knowledge and purpose to young people. Let those who are wise listen to these proverbs and become even wiser. And let those who understand receive guidance by exploring the depth of meaning in these proverbs, parables, wise sayings, and riddles. Fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge. Only fools despise wisdom and discipline."(Proverbs 1:1-7) *It is easier to follow a road already paved to a destination than to attempt to make your own trail without the assurance of reaching your intended destination.*

"Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, before the difficult days come, and the years draw near when you say 'I have no pleasure in them.' Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments for this is mans all. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil." (Ecclesiates12:1,13,14)

What does God expect of a man? – 1) *God expects a man to demonstrate the masculinity He created him to display.* Not the "macho" man or the "brute or bully" who has to have it his way or else. The Christian has the Spirit to guide him and Scripture to show him the attributes God wants every man to exhibit. ***The Bible provides high standards but reasonable expectations*.** The non-Christian has his conscience and built-in "moral code," to show him right from wrong. Every man should appreciate the femininity of the woman and know the difference and realize that she and her femininity were created to compliment him and his masculinity. ***2)*** *Servant Leadership* – Is not a contradiction of terms. Biblical servant-hood is not unthinking obedience but the willingness to humbly serve another person, putting the best interests of another above your own pleasure or gratification. It includes being responsive, respectful, willing, loving, self-sacrificing, and submissive. Biblical leadership includes being responsible, compassionate, understanding, accountable, respectful, authoritative, pioneering, and exemplary. It does not mean superiority or refer to being the "boss" in marriage, the church, or society at large. Leadership implies taking initiative, accepting responsibility, and shouldering the weight of accountability (before God). Proper leadership will earn the respect needed to move ahead. ***3)*** *Spiritual Equality. "So you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. And all who*

have been united with Christ in baptism have been made like Him. There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male or female. For you are all Christians—you are one in Christ Jesus. And now that you belong to Christ, you are true children of Abraham. You are His heirs, and all the promises God gave to Him belong to you."(Galatians 3:26-29) Faith in Christ is the great equalizer. ***Men should treat women with purity*** *(1 Timothy 5:2),* ***with understanding****,* investing the time and energy to try to understand how a woman thinks, feels and acts, ***with dignity and honor, with love****,* treating them as he would want to be treated and ***with an awareness of their giftedness. 4)*** *Strength of character-refers to good character*. Character is what guides your actions, produces the words you speak and is your unique identity, the sum total of your individual characteristics. A few of many qualities which produce strong character are *self-confidence,* knowing who you are, *right choices and right priorities along with following and learning from the right examples*. They will help develop character qualities such as *being above reproach (1 Timothy 3), being a man of temperance*, balanced in his living and not given to destructive extremes, *sober-minded*, referring to the quality of being sensible in thinking and actions, exhibiting sound judgment, *respectable and honorable in your actions, gracious and hospitable, not violent or quarrelsome, not greedy or covetous and able to manage your family and relationships well.*

What does God expect of a woman? – In male dominated societies of the past, and even today in some respects, women have endured, and are enduring, the physical, emotional, and spiritual difficulties of conditions that have been anything but equal as God intended. The woman was created for companionship, conversation and co-rulership of the earth. Instead, she has had to come to terms with the complexities of a world that gives mixed signals about what a woman is to be. They have had to cope with the reality of economic disadvantage, fatigue, divorce, disillusionment, anger, depression, poverty, loneliness and abuse. ***The Bible offers the woman a plan to find real fulfillment, security, dignity, serenity and above all else, hope and knowing where her protective shelter lies.*** **1)** *God expects a woman to live with feminine distinction.* Every society shapes and develops its own definition of femininity. Yet in spite of all the cultural add-libbing, the basic biological script is followed. Regardless into what country they are born, girls come into a world that eventually teaches them to walk and talk like a woman. A woman should look and dress like a woman. She should know herself and understand the role she was designed to perform (wife, mother, companion-if married). If she is single, she should prayerfully consider all her options. She should ask whether or not the Lord has given her a deep abiding desire to devote all her attention to Him and the service of His people. **2)** *Selective submission*. The idea of submission is difficult for many women to deal with. But it should help if a woman can know for sure that this is what God wants and that she has not only an opportunity, but a *responsibility* to be selective in carrying out such an assignment. Submission should not be mindlessly servile and passive but *active and selective.*

The following Scriptures should give clarification on this subject. *(Ephesians 5:22-25, 1 Corinthians 11:1-3, 1 Peter 3:1-6, 1 Samuel 24: 18-4).* **3)** *A woman, married or single, is to take a supportive role in the church.* The women of the New Testament worked, learned and worshipped side by side with the men in the church and are pictured as co-workers with men in the Gospel, but not elders, pastors or apostles.

Women, both single and married, need the help of other women in order to learn, for encouragement and companionship in order to relieve the stress and temptations that lead many to cave in to sexual pressures, and help others avoid the crutches of chemicals and alcohol that many turn to for superficial relief. *Both men and women need others to whom they can be accountable to and to who they can help be accountable.* **4)** Spiritual equality. In countless ways, there is no justice or fairness on earth. Life, as it is usually lived, is a struggle of unequals. What is true however, is that all persons are equally created. All people are equally dependent on the Lord for every breath and heartbeat. All are equally accountable. Inequalities of roles, material wealth, physical condition, social standing, or education do not change the ways in which people are equal. *Equal in honor.* Differences in roles do not necessarily imply differences in honor or worth. *Equal in nature*. Men and women, while having different roles in the family and church, are made in the image of God. *Equal in Jesus Christ*. Men and women are co-heirs of God's wonderful gift of life in Christ *(1 Peter 3:7*). *Strength of character.* Many believe the most beautiful women in the world are those who have

the inner glow of grace and compassion. No amount of physical beauty can match the spiritual dignity or attractiveness of a mature woman of God who is a person of serenity because her trust and security is in the Lord. Her value, quiet confidence and sense of significance are found in God. "The virtuous woman is described in (*Proverbs 31:10-31)*

Blessed or Cursed? *God states that those who know God and follow His ways will be blessed. Knowing God's truth, having faith, trust and confidence in Him will bring peace in the midst of the trials of life. The "evil" and "wicked" person, as used throughout the Bible, are not just those who do despicable deeds but those who reject God and those who reject the Holy Spirit's leading to the truth of Jesus Christ as Savior, also known as the "unpardonable sin." And He says the wicked will be cursed, possibly meaning an unnecessarily difficult life on earth and eternity without God. Because they do not know God and have not or will not accept Jesus - (The Christ, Messiah, Savior), and continue to live their lives as they wish, without regard for God's guidelines and requirements for a meaningful life on this earth and Salvation and heaven to come, they will miss out and suffer the consequences of their actions –* ***For Eternity.*** *Rejecting Jesus means no forgiveness of sins which means no salvation. A compassionate God lets man live in rejection of Him because He made a plan of reconciliation and waits for man to come to Him* willingly*, of his own free will.*

"The Lord is longsuffering and patient, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth." 2 Peter 3:9 - 3 John v4

Prayer For Our Children

Lord - May my children hear, understand and accept the Gospel message, your free gift of salvation, given by your grace through the shed blood of Jesus and His resurrection to bring us life eternal. May they have joy and rejoice always in spite of circumstances knowing your Spirit has been placed in their heart as their guarantee of salvation and heaven. Through the love of your Word, may they grow in grace and knowledge and come to know you as you desire to be known and have revealed yourself. May the roots of their faith grow deep and strong so they may understand clearly who they are "in Christ" and develop by that faith the perseverance and endurance to see them through all their trials knowing your Spirit is their guide. Lord I desire that my children will come to know the power and wisdom of coming to you first, in prayer, in thankfulness for all things, and desiring your will in guiding their requests and those of whom they hold dear. Let them understand and be comforted by the truth that though they will err, and reap the consequences of what they sow, you have promised to work all things for our good because we are your called. Grant them the ability to develop self-discipline and self-control, understanding the value you place on purity of body, soul and mind. Lord, let love, foremost, develop in them a character that displays honesty, integrity, justice, mercy, compassion, kindness and respect. Let them learn the importance of maturity, responsibility and the proper respect for authority. May they realize that forgiveness of others is as important as the forgiveness we have received from you. May recognizing the importance of your view of humility allow them to be humble, exercising a servant's heart. Father, I ask that you give them a vision for their life, and an understanding that whatever the work of their hands, when done properly and done as unto the Lord, is dignified in the eyes of God. May they desire your blessings, yet be content, with that state in which you have placed them. Guide them to the proper mate that they may enjoy their family and its fulfilling relationships as you designed. Father, many of us strayed very far, and for far too long, needing to end up on our knees and calling your name, before we realized, in your patience, you had been waiting all along with an outstretched hand for just that moment. Some of us have children who have strayed Lord, some of them are young, some are older and though we never wish pain on them, we ask that you bring them to their knees, knowing they have no control to change their situation, that they will call on you, and in doing so, through your love, grace and in your patience, receive forgiveness and salvation. Lord, we pray for not only ours but for all, that through reconciliation they will find (as we have) that making peace with God brings the Peace of God which provides the strength we need daily. With courage, through our trust and confidence in your faithfulness, may we persevere and persist in our prayers for them always. From the depth of our hearts, in praise and thanksgiving, we thank you in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for all you have done, all you are doing and we wait in great expectation for all you shall do in our lives and those of our precious children. Amen

"He brought me up also out of the pit of despair, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my steps. And He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: Many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord. Blessed is that man that makes the Lord his trust…" Psalm 40:2-4