

## Godliness – Godly Life – Man of God

What is godliness? What are the marks of a godly person? How does a person become godly? Although we've all heard the word "Godliness", it's something we'll experience and understand only as we go much further down the path of Christian living. Godliness certainly includes Godly character, Christ-likeness. Godliness is the reverent mindfulness of God's sovereignty over every aspect of life, and the determination to honor him in all one's conduct. "Godliness" and "holiness" denote one reality that is reverence for God and a life of holiness in the world. *"The Lord has set apart the godly for himself"* (Psa 4:3 ) They are to become, his holy people. (Lev 11:44-45 ) To neglect God is to invite catastrophe: *"So are the paths of all who forget God; And the hope of the hypocrite shall perish"* (Job 8:13) It is tragic when persons chosen to be spiritual leaders and abandon God's way: *"Both prophet and priest are godless; even in my temple I find their wickedness"* (Jer 23:11) Accordingly, *"the wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness"* (Rom 1:18) So it is disastrous when it loses influence of persons who know God: *"Help, Lord, for the godly are no more; the faithful have vanished from among men"* (Psa 12:1)

No higher compliment can be paid to a Christian than to call him a godly person or "man of God". It is the description given to a man that follows God in every way, who obeys His commands with joy, who does not live for the things of this life but for the things of eternity, who willingly serves his God in giving freely of all his resources yet gladly suffers as a consequence of his faith. Micah 6:8 sums up the man of God in one neat verse: *"He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."*

The man of God does not defraud or cheat his employer; he doesn't gossip or slander; he keeps his mind and heart pure by guarding his eyes and ears from the filth of the world; he is the spiritual leader of his family. He goes "against the scrap" of society because he knows these things displease God; he considers those who are "disadvantaged" or those rejected by society, those that are lonely or despairing; he is a listener to other people's problems and does not judge. Most of all, the man of God understands that when our Lord commanded him to *"be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect"* (Mat 5:48), he is only able to accomplish that because God enables him to be *"holy and blameless in his sight"* (Eph 1:4) through His power and the indwelling of His Spirit and through Christ who strengthens us, we can "do all things" (Phi 4:13) The man of God knows that his new nature is that of the righteousness of Christ. The final result is that he walks humbly with his God, knowing that he must rely upon Him to be able to live endure to the end.

Perhaps the Christian today is lacking in these qualities, He might be a careful parent, zealous church worker, dynamic spokesman for Christ; but none of these things matters if at the same time, he is not a godly person. What is true religion? *True religion in the sight of God the Father means caring for orphans and widows in their distress and refusing to let the world corrupt you.* (James 1:27) We can have an awareness of all biblical doctrines, but the principle of Micah 6:8 is that the man of God must follow: act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God, that is sufficient to please God

The Bible gives us clues about godliness in Genesis 5:21-24, about Enoch. In a short three-word summary of Enoch's life describes him as one who "walked with God." Hebrews 11:5, gives Enoch a place in his great Faith's Hall of Fame, also describes him as "one who pleased God." It is evident that Enoch's life was centered in God; Enoch walked with God; he enjoyed a relationship with God; and he pleased God. We could accurately say he was devoted/consecrated to God.

Paul tells us that God's grace "teaches us to say 'No' to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives" as we await the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Titus 2:11-13) When Paul description as an apostle of Jesus Christ, he describes it as being called to the faith of God's elect. And their knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness. (Titus 1:1) Paul emphasizes godliness in his letter to Timothy. We are to pray for those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness; (1Tim 2:1-2) We are to train ourselves to be godly; (1Tim 4:7) We are to pursue godliness— Godliness with contentment is held forth as great gain; (1Tim 6:6-7) and finally, godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. (1Timothy 4:8)

Peter, in looking forward to the, day of the Lord when the earth and everything in it will be destroyed, asks what kind of people we ought to be, he answers that we are to live holy and godly lives; (2Pet 3:10-12) It is both the privilege and duty of every Christian to pursue godliness, to train himself to be godly, to study diligently the practice of godliness. God has given to each one of us "everything we need for life and godliness" (2 Peter 1:3) To grow in godliness, which will require some diligence and hard work. God has imparted new life to you in Christ and that He has given you all of His precious promises to equip you for life and godliness." That's the right motivation! "Godliness" refers to "a very practical awareness of God in every aspect of life" It is "the attitude which gives God the place he ought to occupy in life and in thought and in devotion" It refers to awe in the presence of God and the obedience that befits that reverence!

*The mystery of godliness:* He [Christ] who was manifested in the flesh and lived among us. (1Tim 3:16; John 1:1,14) Jesus is essence and source of godliness. He lived in godliness on earth, following his bodily resurrection, received up in glory. Jesus was the example of godliness. His life was dedicated to the glory of the Father, He always did what pleased Him. Christians pursue godliness when we follow the example of Jesus in dedicating our life Man of God to the glory of God.

## The Marks of a Godly Man

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The Bible is a handbook for anyone who desires to be a godly man or woman. God created man and woman after His own image (Gen 1:27), and part of being in His image is that we are to reflect His character. However, sin stained that image in us and distorted that character.(Rom 5:12) God's choice of Abraham to be the father of a new nation was made, in part, to establish a people through which He could once again see His character reflected.(Lev 26:11–12) Reflecting the heart, wisdom, and nature of God is the goal of everyone who seeks to be a godly man or woman.

The first step in becoming a godly man is to surrender to the lordship of Jesus Christ.(John 14:6) Without the gift of salvation by grace through faith, no man or woman can be truly godly. Born-again Christians are indwelt by the Holy Spirit who produces godliness in us as He sanctifies us and molds us into the image of Christ. By His grace we are able to "live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age"(Titus 2:12)We become godly with the Holy Spirit empowering us to do so.(Acts 1:8) Godliness is more than external behaviors; it is the continual seeking after God's heart.(Isa 55:6–7) The term godly refers to having an inward devotion for God that is outwardly displayed. So a godly man is one who has received Jesus' sacrifice on the cross as payment for His own sin. By faith in Christ's death and resurrection, the godly man has declared Jesus the Lord of his life, and his heart is set toward obedience.(Rom10:9–10)

With God's Spirit inside him, the godly man is able to understand the deep things of the God.(1Co 2:9–10; 6:19–20) He begins to see life differently. Life is no longer about pleasing himself but about pleasing his Lord.(Rom13:12;Heb12:28) The godly man, his goal is to be holy as His God is holy.(1Pe1:16) He learns that, as he surrenders his will to the Lord and relies upon Him for strength to overcome temptation, he can withstand temptation and accomplish eternal goals. A godly man is one who has died to his flesh.(Gal 5:24) It means that, when he is tempted, he relies on the power of the Holy Spirit to help him say no to his flesh and yes to the Spirit. As he regularly opposes sin, his spirit grows stronger.

The godly man: • repents when he sins. • considers himself dead to sin but alive to God. • seeks to remain humble rather than exalt himself. • is a servant rather than demanding that he be served. • leads by example. • (if married) loves his wife as Christ loves the church. • lives in sexual purity, honoring God with his body. • seeks to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit. • desires to please the Lord more than himself. • bears fruit for the kingdom of God.(John 15:5–8)

A Godly Man is a man who has established personal relationship with God. He knows God personally. He knows Christ as Savior/Lord. He maintains daily walk with God, i.e. walk in God's direction, share His companionship. He maintains the proper order of first God in every area and above everything else. He keeps God's commandments. The godly man embraces his manhood and knows that Jesus has set the standard for what it means to be a real man. So he strives daily to model his life after Jesus. He does not excuse the sins, weaknesses he finds in himself but continually surrenders those areas to God and asks for His help in overcoming them. Any man can be a godly man if he loves God with all his heart and seeks to obey Him in every area of his life.(Gal 2:20)"*He[God] listens to the godly man who does his will*"(Joh 9:31)

Scripture says that a godly woman dresses modestly and adorns herself with "good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God"(1Tim 2:9–10) Christian women should be able to see the vanity inherent in the allurements of a world under the control of the evil one.(1Jo 5:19) A godly woman is not fooled by the lies that try to convince her that attractiveness, worth are found in physical or external beauty. The godly woman's affections are fixed on Christ, her Savior and she follows of good works. She has heavenly focus; seeks to adorn herself with godliness, not worldliness.

Being a godly woman involves living in purity and reverence.(1Pe3:2-6) The godly woman knows that her beauty does not come from outward adornment such as decorative hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes. Rather, she focuses on her "inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. This is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to adorn themselves. Peter speaks of the relationship between a godly woman and her husband, referencing Sarah as an example to be imitated: "They submitted themselves to their own husbands, like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her lord. The godly woman has "sincere faith" like Eunice and Lois.(2Ti2:5) She is kind, like Ruth.(Ruth 1:8) She lives righteously, as Elizabeth did.(Luke 1:5–6) She is of "noble character" and follows the example set by the virtuous woman in Proverbs 31:10–31.

The Bible tells us that King David was a man after God's own heart. David was a regenerated man, a man with a new heart, a different spirit than other men of the world. *The Lord has sought out a man after his own heart.*(1Sa 13:14) This new heart that God gave to David is central to God's new covenant promise in Jesus Christ: I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you"(Eze 36:26) When God gives you a new heart, desire of your heart has changed, because you are coming to love Christ. *The Spirit of the Lord rushed upon David from that day forward.*(1Sam16:13) After the day that he was anointed king by Samuel, David had a new power. In this strength, he was able to see off a lion and a bear.(1Sa17:34-36) In the power of the Spirit, David was able to face Goliath, that great tormentor. When God makes you a new creation in Christ, you have a new power. The Spirit of the Lord lives within you.(Phi 4:13) David was anointed, then for years he had to put up with Saul, who hated him, hunted him. Christ gives his people a new heart and a new Spirit, and then he gives—a new struggle. Do you see evidence of these marks within yourself?(2Ti 3:12)

## The Hypocrites

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A hypocrite is one who pretends to have virtues, moral or religious beliefs, principles, standards etc., that he or she does not actually possess or practice, especially a person whose actions contrary to what they say or what they believe. In essence, "hypocrisy" refers to the act of claiming to believe something but acting in a different manner. This word is derived from the Greek word "hypokrisis" for "actor"—literally, "stage-playing or acting or one who wears a mask"—in other words, someone who pretends to be what he is not. To be a hypocrite is to give others the impression that we are holier than we actually are. Hypocrisy may come from a desire to hide from others actual motives or feelings, thus a kind of lie. Jesus called hypocrites "wolves in sheep's clothing"(MAT7:15) Though hypocrites justify their religious activity, their hearts are not true to God. The prophet Isaiah condemned the hypocrisy of his day: "*The Lord says, 'These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is made up only of rules taught by men'*"(Isaiah 29:13) In matters of religion, it's downright evil. The Bible calls hypocrisy is one of the most subtle and dangerous of sins. The temporal reward of men's praise and recognition is all that is gained from fake Christianity. "*And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites*"(MAT6:5:1PE2:1)

During Jesus' earthly ministry, He had many run-ins with the religious leaders of the day, We read of three leavens that Jesus warned people against: The leaven of Herod(MAR8:15), The leaven of the Sadducees(MAT16:6), The leaven of the Pharisees(MAT16:6). The leaven of King Herod was worldliness. Herod enjoyed listening to John the Baptist.(Mark 6:20) But two verses later, he also enjoyed watching Salome dance(watching a filthy movie/TV) The leaven of the Sadducees was false doctrine. They were liberal in their beliefs (don't believe that God does miracles and supernatural gifts today) The leaven of the Pharisees was primarily hypocrisy. They were doctrinal fundamentalists and they were righteous in their external lives.(MAT23:3, 25;5:20) Some could have a mixture of all of these three leavens. Pharisees are hypocrites: "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees which is hypocrisy"(LUK12:1) Pharisees are spiritually blind:(MAT15:14) Pharisees do not practice what they preach: "Pharisees say things and do not do them"(MAT23:3) Pharisees think that holiness is in the style of one's clothes:(MAT23:5) Pharisees love positions and titles of honour:(MAT23:6-8) Pharisees take advantage of poor people: "Woe to you, Pharisees, because you devour widows' houses"(MAT23:14) Pharisees pray long, impressive prayers in public:(MAT23:14) Pharisees interpret Scripture without revelation from God:(MAT23:16-22) Pharisees have no justice, mercy, faithfulness: "You Pharisees have neglected the weightier provisions of the law"(MAT23:23,24) Pharisees care much for the opinions of people:(MAT21:25-) Pharisees love money:(LUK16:14) Pharisees imagine that they are better than others:(LUK18:9-11) Pharisees exalt themselves over others: This tax-collector went to his house justified rather than the Pharisee – for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled (LUK18:14) Pharisees boast about their accomplishments: "God, I thank You that I am not a swindler, or an adulterer"(LUK18:11,12) Pharisees persecute those who don't listen to them:(JOH9:34) Pharisees value their traditions more than God's Word:(MAR7:9). Pharisees justify themselves: 'You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts'(LUK16:15) Jesus rebuked them. From their abuse of authority-they were binding things on others- they failed to truly show others the way to the kingdom of God.

We cannot say we love God if we do not love our brothers. Love must be "without hypocrisy"(ROM12:9). A hypocrite may look righteous on the outside, but it is a façade. True righteousness comes from the inner transformation of the Holy Spirit not an external conformity to a set of rules. Jesus addressed the other form of hypocrisy: "*how can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me remove the speck that is in your eye,' when you yourself do not see the plank that is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck that is in your brother's eye*"(Luk6:42) Don't be so quick to criticize others when you fail to see your own shortcomings.

In what ways are modern-day churchgoers similar to those days? Do you pretend to be more spiritual than you are? To be pure in heart all things are pure, but to the defiled nothing is pure; their minds, consciences are corrupted.(TIT1:15) If we desire the highest regard for God's word, then practice what we preach. If we desire God's approval, we need to do things to glorify God. If we desire to honor God, then respect His teaching and not use religious titles but serve others with humility/meekness. We must judge ourselves and judge of our own acts but not make our word a law to everybody. We must be careful not to put ourselves or traditions between God's word and those we teach, but let them know the whole counsel of God. Let us speak what the Bible speaks, and be silent where the Bible is silent. If we are to avoid creating a church of hypocrites, then we need to emphasize true repentance, prayer, a conversion of the inner man. There may be hypocrites in the church, but that is no reason not to follow Jesus. Did the hypocrisy of Judas Iscariot permit the rest of the apostles to leave Jesus? Don't let the hypocrisy of some keep you from the blessings of Christ Jesus!

The objective of Satan is to cause mankind to be confused, double-minded, slothful and its power is the spirit of hypocrisy. How can we overcome the deception of hypocrisy? First, fight daily to maintain reality with God on heart level. Meet with Him in the Word and in prayer. Expose everything in your heart to Him. Confess your sins and your struggles. Seek His strength. Cultivate honesty and humility towards others. Don't try to impress others with your godliness. Let them know that you are weak but the Lord is strong. Be aware that He examines your heart. Behold! God looks at our hearts. *When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, Here is a true Israelite, in whom there is no guile!*(JOH1:47)

## Are You Devoted to God?

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Every Christian needs to get to know God better and to serve Him more faithfully. "*Now devote your heart and soul to seeking the LORD your God*"(1Chro 22:19) The ultimate goal is to know God better through His Word. Make it a habit to set aside a regular time and place for your devotional reading Bible. God has blessed everyone with ability to know Him better through His Word. Be consistent in your devotional study, remaining prayerful and seeking to stew God's Word.

Apostle Paul told the Corinthians in 1 Cor 7:35, that it was for their benefit, to secure undistracted devotion to the Lord. Then in 2 Cor 11:3, again references their devotion to Christ. "*But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ*". Solomon, bringing the ark of the covenant into the temple, called on people to be wholly devoted to God by keeping His commandments.(1Ki8:61) Later in life, his wives turned his heart away after other gods.(1Ki 11:4) As God's children, we wholly devote ourselves to God by keeping all His commandments. During the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus tells us we can't serve two masters. If we try, we'll be devoted to one, and despise the other. "*You cannot serve God and mammon(wealth)*"(Matthew 6:24)

As Christians, we are devoted to God in prayer. The apostles in Jerusalem asked congregation to select men to manage distribution of food to needy widows, so they could devote themselves to prayer, and ministry of the word.(Acts 6:4) We are devoted to prayer, whereby to stay alert and watch for our adversary, the devil.(Col. 4:2) We constantly pray, steadfast in petitioning God with thankful and grateful hearts.(1Th.5:16-18) As Christians, we're also devoted to brethren. (Rom.12:10) We're dedicated to serving one another, helping each other in every way possible. As Christians, we devote ourselves to good works.(1Tim 5:10 Therefore we keep His commandments, and devote ourselves to every good work.

Apostle Paul wrote about pure and undefiled religion, i.e., the actions of those who wish to please the Lord. Devotion is not an activity; it is an attitude toward God. This attitude is composed of three essential elements: the fear of God, the love of God, the desire for God. The practice of godliness is an exercise or discipline that focuses upon God. From this Godward attitude raises the character and conduct of as godliness. We often try to develop Christian character, conduct without taking the time to develop God-centered devotion. We try to please God without taking the time to walk with Him and develop a relationship with Him. Devotion signifies a life given, or devoted to God. Therefore the devoted [godly] man who lives no longer to his own will, and spirit of this world, but to the will of God; who considers God in everything, serves God in everything, all the parts of his life of godliness, by doing everything in the name of God, such rules conform to his Glory. *So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.*(1Cor10:31)

A godly person is first of all devoted to God, then, is the mainspring of godly character. And this devotion is the only motivation for Christian behavior that is pleasing to God. The godly person is moral, compassionate, zealous and his life takes on a dimension that reflects the very of God. Many Christians may be devoted to a ministry, but not to God. It is Christian character that springs from a devotion to God. It is also true that devotion to God always results in godly character. The essential elements of devotion must express themselves in a life that is pleasing to God. Enoch walked with God, and Enoch pleased God. His walk with God speaks of his relationship with God, or his devotion to God.

The fear of God is the soul of godliness. The Bible uses the term "fear of God" in two distinct ways: that of adoration, reverence, and awe. Fear as anxious produced by realization of God's impending judgment upon sin. Paul's concluding of ungodly mankind, "There is no fear of God before their eyes"(Rom3:18) The Christian has been delivered from fear of God's wrath. But the Christian has not been delivered from the discipline of God against his sinful conduct, in this sense he fears God. He works out his salvation with fear and trembling, he lives his life as a stranger here in reverent fear.(1Pe1:17;Phi2:12)To fear God is to confess his absolute uniqueness—to acknowledge his majesty, power, holiness.

Apostle Peter tells us to live holy and godly lives now. God is in the process of preparing us for heaven, to dwell with Him for eternity. So he desires that we grow in both holiness and godliness. He wants us to be like Him and to reverence and adore him for all eternity. We seem to have magnified the love of God almost to the exclusion of the fear of God. What or whom we worship determines our behavior. The essential ingredients of the fear of God are (1) correct concepts of God's character, (2) a pervasive sense of God's presence, and (3) a constant awareness of our obligation to God. If we truly reverence God we will obey him, since every act of disobedience is an affront(offend) to his dignity and majesty.

True godliness engages our affections and awakens within us a desire to enjoy God's presence and fellowship. "*As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.*(Psa42:1) David expresses this intense desire. "*One thing I ask of the Lord, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple*"(Psa 27:4) David yearned intensely for God himself that he might enjoy his presence and his beauty. He enjoyed dwelling upon the majesty and greatness, the holiness and goodness of God. The apostle Paul experienced this longing for God: "I want to know Christ" That I May Win Christ.(Phi3:7-10) He contemplates God in awesomeness of his majesty, power, and holiness, and then as he dwells upon the riches of God's mercy and grace. This is the heartbeat of the godly person. This longing for God produces a desire to glorify God and to please Him. This is devotion to God, which is an attitude of reverence and awe.

## How to build Godly character

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The dictionary defines character as "moral excellence and firmness." The highest standard of character is set forth in Scripture and exemplified in Jesus Christ. All who are serious about following Christ are exhorted to attain moral excellence through a life of trusting God and resisting the evil influences that surround us and arise from within us. But such character is developed through a process involving experience, hard work, and learning from past mistakes. The apostle Paul had this kind of character in mind "*exercise yourself toward godliness*" (1Tim 4:7) Godly character comes only through resisting the evil influences and impulses and focusing on the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.

Scripture teaches that we will be finally saved if we "*continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not drift away from the hope of the gospel*" (Col 1:23) When we speak of building Godly character, it is a process of growing ever closer to God and relying on Him to assist us in our efforts to resist and avoid those things that would cause us to stumble. That means strengthening ourselves with God's help, against the evil influences that would lead us back to a life of sin. "lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls." (Jam 1:21-22) God has provided for us to become "partakers of the divine nature." (2Pet 1:1-5)

The first doctrine of righteous character is to honor God. Hebrews 12:28-29 says, "whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear" We have to realize that Jesus is training us for a position in His Kingdom. We need to hold God in very high esteem. God has the ultimate power over us in all situations in our lives. This knowledge should lead everyone to honor God. (1Ti 6:16) Our honoring of God should be manifested in our worship services. We should be of thanksgiving and praise who holds our eternal life. The daily thought process needed be attuned honoring God has to start early in the morning as we pray God to help us honor Him in all we do and say. Our evening prayers should be occasions to praise God. So, if we want to have Godly character, we have to honor God in every facet of our lives.

In Hebrews 11:6 says of two important concepts of faith, and a reward to those who diligently seek God. To have Godly character, we must first believe in God. Anyone who does not earnestly believe that God can solve problems is lacking in faith. Faith is built just like constructing a building—one brick, one wall, one nail at a time. The trust and the faith comes one principle of be lie at a time. When a healing takes place, it builds trust; we keep growing by building character every day of our lives. When we actually see God working in our lives our faith grows and increases. The believer must realize that God "allows" us to get our wealth, who gives us the power to do what we do. (Deu8:17-19) When we forget God, our faith diminishes. We need activity to develop faith; God's power to deliver us out of adversity. God really wants us to find Him, discover who He is, learn what His plan is all about. Diligently seek God so you can experience heart-warming feeling of finding Him. *Seek the LORD while you can find him. Call on him now while he is near.* (Isaiah 55:6)

We now have to produce fruit "*and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.*" (John 15:2) Christians are appointed to produce fruit. That puts fruit bearing in a category of great responsibility. Those who do not produce fruit are purged and cast away. Jesus wants the fruit bearer to keep producing more. It is analogous to the parable of the talents. (Luke 19:11-27) Jesus puts a very high value on productivity. He said, "My Father works, and I work" (John 5:17) Jesus demands that we be productive! Jesus gives us instructions, sets an example of performance, and expects us to follow His guidance. If we are slothful and unproductive, our spiritual development can be disastrous. If we search diligently and honor God, we should be producing fruit, which is the very substance of Godly character.

One way to fail in building Godly character is to allow Satan and this world to trap us from our duties. Ephesians 6:12,16 addresses Satan's wily craftsmanship. Satan is replete with cunning devices to cause us to stumble, get discouraged, stay away from Christian brethren, church service and cause divisions. To counter this evil influence, take up the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. In Acts 5:3, "*But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back part of the price of the land?*" Ananias and his wife desire the approval of the church community, and willing to do anything to look good, Satan got it for them! He saw the pilfering in their heart and worked on their minds to convince them that their plan was a good one. Tragic result was that two people lost their lives. Satan uses us, plays us, lures us, then we suffer consequences of our actions. All we have to do is keep our minds keenly aware any thought fueled by lust, greed, jealousy, envy, pride, strife gives Satan a chance at getting to us. *Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.* (Jam4:7).

Let us now discuss worldly influence. "*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world*" (1Jo2:15) Whenever any of us has greedy desire to have wealth, recognition, status, (vanity) we need to be careful because of the consequences of becoming ensnared by our own lusts/sins. True religion happens when believers strive for personal purity. By *keep yourself from being undefiled by the world and keep your tongue from evil and your lips from telling lies.* If we diligently seeking God, honoring God, producing fruit, we will be more discerning what is happening to our lives. Our decisions will become more Christ-centered rather than self-centered. We must develop wisdom, understanding, knowledge of follow, walk with Jesus. Paul's vision of God's reward drove him to achieve what he did for work of God. He said, nothing could separate us from the love of God. This vision will help propel us to greater service and dedication to Jesus Christ.

### **Job: Ability to remain patient**

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*There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job, and that man was blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil.*(Job 1:1-5) Job is one of the most outstanding characters in the whole of Bible. In Ezekiel 14:14, God declares that his righteousness is on a similarity with that of Daniel and Noah. *The morning after each feast, Job would get up early and offer sacrifices, burnt offerings for each of his children in order to purify them. He thought that his children might have sinned and renounced God in their hearts. Thus Job did continually.*(v.5) Job would send and consecrate them, and thus receive purification and forgiveness from the stain of guilt. The one who sought first the Kingdom of God, and to be right with Him - an example of paternal love and godliness. The head of the family served as the priest: he made the sacrifices and interceded for them; of one who identified his household in the service of God.

Job was blameless, a man of self-controlled, a man of integrity. He was honesty in heart and life. He knew that God had blessed him so that he could help the poor, the fatherless, widows, and the handicapped. This was the purpose that God had for him. Job was upright (or righteous) means straight or correct, living in the way God originally intended for man. He recognized that no one was without sin. But Job to his best efforts did what was right in God's eyes. He even avoided heart sins such as greed, idolatry, and rejoicing at his enemy's ruin. He never to depart from truth; abstain from flattery and slanderous, regard one's word as one's bond, go straight to our ends - this is the spirit of the "upright" man. He was God-fearing. He feared God, and God saw this as a commendable thing. The fear of God that we are to have is a heart attitude of awareness, respect, and humble submission towards God's authority over us. In other words, it is the fear of offending the One who loves us unconditionally, and whom we love in return. No man is perfect without being a fearer of God; none upright without departing from evil. Job's reasons for living blamelessly and righteously all focus around his fear of God. He is a man who departed from evil. This was the habit of his life. He took great care to avoid sin – he resisted temptation. His morality, leading him in a direct line of conduct, delivers from bypaths of deceit, transgression. Here, these four qualities have suggested the idea of complete piety, the picture of constant and a godly life. His habitual recognition of Creator God which is his gift of enhancing and consecrate every healthy pleasure of the body and soul. One of the fruits of the Spirit, one of the graces of the Christian life, one of the results of true godliness, is self-control.

At the beginning of his livelihood, Job appears to be very rich man with much livestock and large household. Satan sees Job's spiritual and material prosperity and slanders him before God, affirming that Job's spirituality will crumble if his material assets are removed. God allows Satan to put Job through a period of testing and through a series of catastrophes. Job's faith withstands these trials, and he refuses to blame God or fall into sin. Satan once again presents himself in the heavenly court, and when God reminds him that Job still retains his faith and integrity, Satan argues that if Job suffers physically, his faith will fail. God therefore permits Satan to afflict Job with ill health, but will not permit his life to be endangered. Job contracts a vile skin disease which causes him expelled from society. He sits in the town refuse dump, where he is advised by his wife to curse God and die. However, Job persistently refuses to say anything against God. Job accepted his difficulty, saying, *"The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD"*(v.22)

Later *"Job's three friends heard of all this adversity that had come upon him, [and] each one came [to] mourn with him, and to comfort him"*(Job 2:11) After a week of lamenting with him, they began to discuss his calamities and suffering. Job listed his complaints, showing inequities of life. Job's three friends, however, were certain that God was punishing Job for some secret sin, something Job could hide from everyone but God. Job vehemently denied that such was the case. In the end Job saw that the basis of his problem was his lack of understanding and excessive confidence in his self righteousness. Then his view of God's fairness changed. He saw that His critical attitude toward God was wrong: *"I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know . . . I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You. Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes"*(Job 42:3-6)

One of the things is how the three "friends" are restored to Job and to God. God says in v.8 that *"My wrath is kindled against Eliphaz and his two friends "for you have not spoken of me what is right, as My servant Job has."* How then shall they be restored to God's fellowship and escape His wrath? God says that they must ask Job to pray for them as they offer up for themselves a burnt offering, *"for I will accept his prayer not to deal with you according to your folly."* (v.9) so they do this. *"And the Lord accepted Job's prayer"* When Job had prayed for them, everything changed for him. *"The Lord restored the fortunes of Job, when he had prayed for his friends"*(v.10) Job's friends restored to God when Job's forgiving intercession for those offended. There should be reconciliation before acceptance of worship/forgiveness.

The suffering of a man explains much about why character is more important in God's eyes than the discomfort and pain we experience in this life. Job was righteous man. He carefully avoided acts of transgression against God's laws. He behaved blamelessly. But, like all of us, he had weaknesses.(Mark 14:38) Like Job, we can fail to understand that God sees far more than we see. No matter how severe a trial is, we should never assume God isn't listening or doesn't care. He sees lessons we need to learn that are beyond our present understanding. Bible acknowledges that we all know the story of Job, and how he was faithful in suffering, and in the end God restored to him what he lost.(James 5:10-11)

## Daniel: A Man Greatly Beloved

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There are only a few people in Scripture about whom nothing negative is recorded. Daniel is one of them. Daniel is three times described as “for you are greatly beloved”(Daniel 9:23;10:11,19) To be loved by God is to be “greatly loved.” Daniel was “desired” by the Lord because the love of God made him “precious,” “pleasant” and “goodly” in His sight. Daniel was a fine character, with an unblemished testimony and let us remember that his God is our God.

Although he was enslaved as a war captive of the Babylonians, he was promoted to governor. His unshakable trust in his God’s goodness led him to intercede for Israel, confessing his own sins and his people.(Daniel 9:3-13) Daniel’s prayer life was disciplined, yet dynamic. The regularity of Daniel’s prayer life was so constant that he faithfully prayed three times a day. It allow him to throw open the windows toward heaven and realize the excitement of a powerful and personal prayer life with God. God heard his prayers, gave him incredible insight, and showed His great love for Daniel and his people. Daniel was a humble student of the Scripture. As he was reading book of prophet Jeremiah, he realized that the captivity of Israel was almost over. *the end of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years.*”(Daniel 9:2)

Daniel is from David’s royal family - In 605 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon besieges Jerusalem and carries off some of the treasure from the temple of God to Babylon. He also captures some young men with him to serve him in his court.(Dan 1:3) Daniel is one of them.(v.6) He was of royal descent.(v.3), handsome, a man of culture and gifted in all wisdom, possessing knowledge and quick to understand.(v.4) Daniel’s insight came from God: “*To you, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, for you have given me wisdom and might, and have now made known to me what we asked of you*”(2:23) “*there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries.*”(v.28) “*this mystery has been revealed to me, not because of any wisdom that I have more than all the living*”(v.30) And God had a great work to do through Daniel.

Daniel’s righteousness is legendary status - Daniel was put on a course of training, and by the decree of the king he was to have special food and wine from the king’s table. Daniel chooses not to defile himself with the King’s food-the food would have dedicated to heathen deity and was therefore abhorrent and defiling to a godly Jew. He was determined to live a separated life and not to compromise in the slightest degree. It was a daring thing to do, but God will compensate His servants when they are true to Him. His faithfulness to God earns him honorable mention in Ezekiel 14:12–23.

The kind of companions he choose – Hananiah(Shadrach), Mishael(Meshach) Azariah(Abednego) were three Hebrews who had been captured and brought to Babylon with Daniel. The name Daniel means God has judged. On the question of dedication to God, separation from evil, these four young men joined together and refused to compromise. He served a God who was overruling in his life–Daniel was faithful to his Lord. God had caused the official to show Daniel favor.

Daniel’s specialty is a dream interpretation - He interpret some of the most troubling dreams and visions for king that nobody can interpret.(Dan2:27,30) “King Nebuchadnezzar... made him chief... because an excellent spirit, knowledge, and understanding to interpret dreams, explain riddles, and solve problems were found in this Daniel.”(Daniel 5:11-12) Daniel predicted all the following worldwide kingdoms until the appearance of the antichrist. “*Seventy weeks are decreed about your people and your holy city.*”(Dan 9:24-27) He predicted the Messiah, [the Anointed One was cut off] His crucifixion , a suffering servant who would take Israel’s iniquities and bear their punishment 483 years in advance! Jesus referred to “the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel”(Mat24:15) There has been a gap of almost 2000 years and still the last week(7years) to be fulfilled and Jesus return as “Lord of lords, and King of kings!

Daniel was Prime Minister in the kingdom of King Darius in Babylon, and he was known for his godliness and his faith in God. As a consequence, he had many enemies. In the royal court there were officials who were determined to bring about his downfall. King Darius signed a law that said he was the only god anyone could petition for 30 days. Daniel didn't protest against the law that prohibited him from praying to God. He quietly went about his routine of praying three times a day on his knees with his windows open toward Jerusalem. Daniel was thrown to the lions den, what happened to him and what was the result of his suffering. God actually allowed Daniel to be put into the den, just as previously He had allowed Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to be put into the fiery furnace.(Dan 3:17-23) Daniel put his whole trust in God for this new situation and stand out boldly for the Lord.He could have sung: My times are in Thy hand; My God, I wish them there; My life, my friends, my soul I leave Entirely to Thy care. When Daniel was in the den God’s angel was there with him and the lions. This was God’s power at work, He delivers completely after God shut the lions’ mouths. *who through faith... who shut the mouths of lions,*(Heb11:33) It was a great strengthener to faith, a challenge to stand firm in a time of testing and trial and a demonstration of the power of prayer. It is a prophetic picture of protection that God will give to His faithful people at the end of the age.It illustrates present help, enabling God gives to His people in times of testing. If you are in a horrible den, threatened by roaring lion, Satan, the same power that delivered Daniel will deliver you if you will put your trust in the living God. Daniel was strong and was unshakable in standing for God because he was convinced of God’s great love for him. That means God’s love can transform our life, in a similar way.

Judging from the king's consequent decree after Daniel's deliverance, it appears he did learn a big lesson. Darius decreed that all people on earth should “*tremble and fear before the God of Daniel. For he is the living God*”(Dan6:26)

## **Noah - An example of Righteousness**

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The Character called Noah is of importance that we shall consider him under two sub-titles: Noah - A preacher of righteousness, Noah - The Ark Builder. Noah means for "rest or relief". Noah was a man who lived at a time when the wickedness of the human race had provoked the wrath of God. The Bible tells us that the unrighteousness in the land was such that there was the inter-marriage of "the sons of God" with "daughters of men"(Gen 6:14) And the of fallen angels and their spiritual defilement of the children of men on earth.(Jud 6,2) This produced extraordinary men i.e. Giants who filled the whole the earth, with violence and all kinds of immorality and corruption.(Gen 6:1-22) The result was that wickedness of man was great in the earth and imagination of thoughts of his was only evil continually. God regretted that He ever created men on earth because they constantly grieved His heart with sin. The same thing happens today when a person commits any kind of sin the heart of God is grieved. Do you grieve the heart of God through sin?

Consequently, God had determined the unrepentant generation with a flood because of their sin.(v.17-21) God spoke to Noah and commanded him to build an ark to spare himself, his wife and his sons and their wives and pairs of the various land animals. It was only Noah in the whole of his generation that found favor in the sight of God because he was a righteous man, blameless and that he walked with God. "*But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord. Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God*"(v.8-9) The word grace translated as favor. The word just means made right in a moral sense—lawful, righteous. Since God's commands define righteousness. Noah was "perfect" or upright is to say that he was obedient to God's commands. Noah avoided violence, corruption, evil and standing out among the people of his days, and walked uprightly. Noah "walked" with God, which is to say that he lived by God's ways with an intimate relationship with God. Noah was living an exemplary life. The terms favor, just, perfect and walked—all describe characteristics of Noah. God extends His saving grace to Noah and his family.

Noah's obedient life demonstrated in his willingness to obey Lord's commands regarding the ark. In 2Peter 2:5, says Noah was a "preacher of righteousness" *and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly*; Hebrews 11:7 says that he "condemned the world" through his righteous actions. "*By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, built an ark to save his household, by which he condemned the world*" Noah is an example of a life of faith that pleases God. The word faith in this verse means trust and confidence in God and reliance on Him for salvation. After God warned Noah of the coming universal Flood, Noah moved with godly fear to build the ark and to save his family.

After many years of labor, the ark was nearing completion. "*Then the Lord said to Noah, 'Come into the ark, you and all your household, For after seven more days I will cause it to rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and I will destroy from the face of the earth all living things that I have made'*(Gen 7:1-4) After all the animals were loaded on board, Noah and his family entered the ark and God closed the door behind them. And the time had come for God to fulfill His warning to wipe the earth clean of evil men and to start the human race again through Noah and his family.

God commanded Noah to preach repentance from sin of the people of his day, may be they will turn away from their sin and receive the mercy of God. But the people mocked him and laughed him to scorn because his message was on what had never happened before. They ignored the obvious warnings or decided just to go along with the crowd. But when the floodwaters came, there was no escape—for the Flood covered the entire earth. *The world that then existed perished, being flooded with water*"(2Pe 3:6) The building the ark served to condemn the world. That people of the world brought judgment on themselves by dishonoring and disbelieving the warning message Noah delivered to them.

We can draw lessons from Noah's life. First, Noah's life shows us that we are saved by grace through faith.(Eph 2:8) God's grace was upon him, aside from which Noah would have perished with all of other wicked sinners in flood. Noah's blameless life is made manifest as he obeys the Lord in light of approaching day of wrath. God was patient concerning the coming judgment while Noah built the ark. The Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials. This truth stated in 2Pe 3:8-10, that the Lord will postpone final judgment until all of the elect reach repentance. We are serving a just God whose desire is not that any sinner should perish but that the sinner should repent and be saved. Finally, Noah's life serves as a reminder that judgment on sin will come. The Day of the Lord will come. Jesus uses the life of Noah as a foreshadowing of what it will be like when the Son of Man (Christ) returns in final judgment. The Bible says: "*And as it was in the days of Noah so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank...,until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all.*"(Luke 17:26-27) Be wise and do not be like the foolish men of the days of Noah, they rejected the message of salvation from the flood.

The time to act—to get your own life in order is now. Jesus Christ Himself spoke of a time of worldwide catastrophe still ahead of us in which humanity would again face destruction if not for God's intervention:(Mat 24:21-22) As such, we need to follow Noah's example and be a "preacher of righteousness" God's judgment is coming soon, we must warn this decaying world of its evil ways and urge people to turn to God in repentance and start putting God's laws into practice in their lives. "*This is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness.*(Jeremiah 23:6)



## **Joseph: The Man with a Divine Purpose**

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Joseph's story may be the greatest example of godly character and integrity in the Bible, and God's faithfulness and our calling to fulfill God's purpose for us. The Meaning of Joseph—God adds. Joseph was a shepherd. He did not participate in his brothers' misdeeds. Jacob his father loved him more than all his brothers. His story began with a dream at the age of seventeen. He knew dreams he was having were from the Lord that revealed God's purpose and plans for his life. *Look, I have dreamed another dream. And this time, the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me.* (Gen 37:6-11) In Joseph's second dream where the sun, moon, 11 stars bowed to him and he was quick to share this dream with his brothers and his father. However, this served to draw his father's rebuke and feed his brothers' growing hatred.

The brothers took Joseph, stripped him of his coat and threw him into a pit. Then the brothers sold Joseph for twenty pieces of silver into slavery and told his father he was dead. Joseph took to Egypt and sold himself to Potiphar to be a servant in his house. Potiphar saw that the Lord was with Joseph and everything prospered under his hand. Joseph's master appointed him manager over his entire house. Potiphar trusted Joseph completely! (Gen 39:6) However, the master's wife began to solicit this handsome young man to lie with her. He resisted her and explained that he could not do such a wicked thing. *"How then I can do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"* (v.9) He understood that he was accountable to God. One day they were alone in the house together, she again insisted that he have an affair with her. Joseph ran out of the house. Potiphar's wife lied to the master that Joseph had tried to rape her and fled. Master put him into prison. (v.19-20)

In Gen 39:2 defies the reason of Joseph's circumstances. *The Lord was with Joseph, and he was a successful man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian.* This was when he was serving as a slave. As he diligently labored, God blessed the work of his hands. True prosperity is knowing that God is with you and keeping His promise alive in your heart. And it is God's favor, anointing and power that work in your life to obtain it. Joseph believed he was successful because he knew it came from God, not man. In prison, the prison keeper also saw that the Lord was with Joseph and he put Joseph in charge of the prison. One day Pharaoh had dreams that his magicians could not interpret. His butler told Pharaoh how Joseph had correctly interpreted dreams, so Pharaoh sent for Joseph to come to interpret the dreams. He confidently answered in Gen 41:16 saying, *"It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace."* Joseph, by the Spirit, interpreted the king's dream. Joseph told Pharaoh that his dreams were a prophecy of seven years of abundance that would be followed by seven years of famine. Pharaoh put Joseph in charge of preparing for the famine. Promotion had truly come from God. Immediately, Joseph found himself promoted to a position of power, second only to Pharaoh. He kept his God-given vision alive, served others wholeheartedly, remained totally dependent upon God in the midst of such power and wealth, because he had a vision that had not yet been fulfilled. God made him prosper and successful.

When famine came, Jacob sent some of his sons to Egypt to buy grain. It was nine years from time Joseph was placed in power before his brothers came to Egypt seeking help. If he wanted revenge, he could have taken it. But Joseph did nothing; he refused to act in the flesh and remained dependent on God. Upon hearing their confession, Joseph revealed himself to his brothers. Their terror turned to tears of rejoicing. Joseph told, *You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, to save many people alive*" (Gen 50:20) Prosperity and success will test your character infinitely more than hardship! It's prosperity that often causes people to lose sight of their God-given vision. Joseph waited on the Lord in faith the dream to fulfillment! *"And when Joseph came home, they [his brethren] brought him the present which was in their hand into the house, and bowed themselves to him to the earth."* (Gen.43:26)

Life of Joseph in many ways resembles to the life of Christ. He was loved by his father, Rejected by his brothers, Turned to gentiles, Unjustly tried, Suffered, Was exalted with honor and glory, Delivered his people from death. Joseph found ways to live in forgiveness and hope, despite being sold into slavery and imprisoned on false accusations, God "broke" Joseph by taking him out of comfortable circumstances and stretching him. God often has to "break" us before He can use us. Joseph lived a life of integrity and was faithful to God in the midst of prosperity and adversity. Joseph's life teaches us that disappointments are vital to spiritual growth because they demand faith and resting all hope upon God.

Joseph used his life and calling to serve others even during the worst of circumstances. His insistence upon purity and faithfulness to God enabled him to do God's work in a way that blessed others. Joseph resisted temptation to remain pure and faithful to God and his master. Joseph was applauded by many for his abilities, but always gave God the glory. Joseph serves as an example to believers of how nothing can stop us from serving God and forgiving those who have done us great harm. Joseph had a divine purpose. His life was not always easy and was filled with ups and downs. Yet Joseph found favor with God and he allowed God to use him wherever he went. What is His divine purpose for your life? You were created for a divine purpose as well! If you will become determined to know His plan for your life, He will reveal it to you. Joseph's vision kept him on track during difficult times and when faced with great temptation. And believe that the fulfillment of his dream, vision was completely dependent upon God. Your God-given dream, vision or purpose, will inspire you, motivate you, and help control your fleshly desires. Let God use you to accomplish His divine purpose through you. In Ephesians 5:17 says, *Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.*

## **Nehemiah: A burden for His people**

- 10 -

The book of Nehemiah is the true story of how Jerusalem was rebuilt after the Jews returned from Babylonian Captivity. It's about leadership, hard work, organization. It shows a servant who understood his role, would not allow himself to be discouraged, distracted from his mission. And looks to and relies on God for strength, direction and wisdom thru prayer.

The name Nehemiah means Lord has comforted. He was born during the time of Babylonian Exile. Nehemiah worked for the Persian king name Artaxerxes, as the king's cupbearer, that he would test the food and drink for poison before it was served to the king. Nehemiah's visitors came to him at palace, he inquired about the situation of Jews in Jerusalem. They told him: *"The survivors who are left from the captivity there in the province are in great distress and reproach. The wall of Jerusalem is also broken down, and its gates are burned with fire" So it was, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned for many days; I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven.*(Neh 1:3-4)

When Nehemiah heard the news about state of Jerusalem he immediately turned to God in fasting and prayer. He repented of the sins of Israel and interceded the Lord in pray to help them in their difficulty.(v.6-7) He had a sensitive heart towards God's people and was filled with compassion. When he heard of the suffering of his people and their shameful situation, he wept, fasted and took the problem to God. He was deeply devoted to God and His will. Nehemiah saw the great need, which burdened his heart. He saw what God wanted to accomplish. And, he committed himself to see it thru in spite of difficulties. Although he lived in richness in the king's palace; burden of his people crushed, kept him alert, prayerful. We see a man sensitive to the problems and difficulty of his people, a challenge to bring change that would glorify God

Nehemiah finds favor before the king, because he was faithful, cheerful and worked hard in the king's palace. He had such a personal relationship that the king knew when Nehemiah's heart was troubled for the city of Jerusalem and for the safety of his people—the nation of Israel. God gave Nehemiah a favor before the king who asked what was wrong. Nehemiah told the king of the suffering of his people. The king granted Nehemiah his request to go and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Nehemiah sets out to Judah to rebuild the broken wall and the city. The king gave him everything he needed, including the security that protected him. *"O Lord... give success to your servant today"*(Nehemiah 1:11)

Nehemiah was prudent, shrewd and cautious. He traveled down to Judah and did not tell anyone why he was there. He carefully surveyed the land, the broken city and wall. He took note of what needed to be done. Then after that, he met the leaders and the people. The people were happy that God has answered their prayers. They said to Nehemiah: "Let us rise and build."(Neh 2:20) Immediately the rumor spread that someone came to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, enemies of Judah who did not want Jerusalem rebuilt began to attack Nehemiah with threats and plots. Nehemiah encouraged the people and lifted their eyes to God who can deliver them and protect them. That God will fight for them; they should trust God, have faith in God and help each other.(Neh 4:14) When the wall was half complete the enemy began to make moves upon Jerusalem. Nehemiah organized the people to work and be prepared to fight. While they worked they held their tools in one hand and their swords in the other. They didn't even take time to change their clothes.(Neh 4:21,23)

Nehemiah was a leader who knew where he was going. He saw the vision and the goal destined for him. He knew how to motivate people and the leadership to get job done. He followed the dictate of his conscience, guidance of the Holy Spirit and God's will for his life. He held the people together in unity; spoke with strength, determination and confidence. Nehemiah's concern to straighten out internal problems shows that he knew his people's biggest threat was inside gates. He and his people had many enemies, opponents. He appointed people who watched day and night against their enemies. He was vigilant in protecting the people and did not allow himself to be distracted by allurements of the enemy.(Neh 4:9)

Nehemiah was courageous resolve in face of threats and enemies. When he was threatened that someone was going to kill him.(Neh 6:11) Here was a man who was not afraid of threats or plots. He knew who was in control of his life and events in the world. God protects the leader doing the right thing, whose motive is right. Nehemiah was a man whose faith and hope was set in God. He knew the God of Israel what He can do—the God who is in control. No enemy, people rulers or people hired could touch him or kill him. He became invisible because of his absolute trust, faith in the Lord. Nehemiah did not deviate from what God sent him to do, or his vision and destiny to pursue other irrelevant material things like money, women, alcohol, etc. He was completely focused to the burden of his struggling people. Nehemiah's attitude toward distractions can be summed up in his response: *"I am doing a great work and I cannot come down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and come down to you?"*(Neh 6:3) As a result, Nehemiah finished the work of rebuilding the wall and the city. *"So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of Elul, in fifty-two days"*(Neh 6:15)

What Nehemiah people have accomplished under his leadership? Is it that tremendous task of rebuilding ruined walls of Jerusalem! How is our local church spiritually?(2Cor11:28;Col2:1-7) The person God uses has a burden for His people, vision for His purpose, commitment to His purpose. Those who have power with God in prayer; leaders of integrity, fear God and love the people and serve; will encourage and build broken cities and walls. If you are willing to humble to adopt identity of a servant of God, then God will enable you to do everything He calls you to do! After rebuilding the wall there was great revival, Ezra the priest publicly read from God's Word every day, restored tithing, Sabbath and Holy Days!