

SPIRITUAL RESOURCES

THE ASSURANCES OF GOD

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THE SCRIPTURES: SOURCE OF ASSURANCE

Read 2 Timothy 3:16 and 2 Peter 1:20,21.

The Bible is given through the inspiration of God the Holy Spirit and is profitable as our authority, for it corrects our living and guides us in Christian living. The Bible is a guide for life. It tells us what we should know, what we should stop, what we should correct, what we should start, and what we should be.

Read Psalm 33:6,9 and 1 Peter 1:23-25.

The "creative word" of God has produced the universe and its order and, thus, has been proven to be powerful. His "inspired word" also is powerful and steadfast and will never be irrelevant. The "Incarnate Word" is the reasoning and logical revelation of God to the world in person, fulfilling the revelation of the Scriptures and providing stability for one's life.

Read Isaiah 55:10,11 Joshua 1:8; and Matthew 5:6

The principles and precepts of the Lord are so worthy and so authoritative that anyone who obeys them and consciously seeks to employ the promises inherent in them will prosper. The Biblical truths produce wholeness and wellbeing for those who seek truth and are "hungry for righteousness."

Read Psalm 119:105; Matthew 7:24-29; and Hebrews 4:12.

For the devout student of scripture, the Bible performs as a light and protector, keeping the Christian away from sin and warning the Christian of that which is sinful. A lamp will show you a next step, and a light will reveal the further pathway. The teachings of Jesus provide a sure foundation, even when life is threatened. Therefore, the Scriptures become a focal point for surety and safety as well as a script for living. The disciple uses the Word humbly.

Read Acts 20:32; Ephesians 1:11-14; Galatians 3:29; 1 Peter 1:3,4; and 2 Peter 1:4.

The Holy Scriptures give testimony of the guaranteed inheritance that awaits all believers. From these promises of inheritance, the Christian discovers an assured and lively hope. The result of these promises is the confidence of faith in the daily routine. The Bible is a deed of inheritance for the believer. It is the guarantee of an everlasting covenant between God and the person of faith.

THE PROMISES IN CHRIST

Read John 3:16; Romans 10:9, and 1 John 4:14.

God has promised His love to the world and has demonstrated that love in the life of Jesus. If anyone would believe that Jesus is God's Son and that God raised Him from the dead, then they would be saved from the penalty of their sin. The promise of eternal life comes through Jesus Christ. Eternal life means quality of life rather than solely quantity of life. When one becomes a person of faith through repentance, eternal life for that person begins then. Salvation means having eternal fellowship with Christ; now, later, and forever.

Read Ephesians 1:6,7; 1 John 1:9; 1 John 2:1.

Jesus is the redeemer of mankind. His sacrificial blood brings the forgiveness of sin, and one who believes always may claim the promise of faithful forgiveness on the part of God, for not only has Jesus died to forgive our sin but lives to be our Advocate against sin before God.

Read Matthew 5:6; John 6:35; John 10:10; John 4:13,14; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Philippians 1:6, and Colossians 2:13.

Forgiveness of sin is the beginning of a new life. By faith in Christ, all people are promised a new life where old ways give way to new and regenerative ones. The follower of Christ is promised fulfillment and meaning in life because their search for it is in obedience to Christ. Life becomes the promise of growth and abundance.

Read Romans 5:1 and Ephesians 2:13,14.

Once an individual trusts his life to the forgiveness through Christ, then the promise of peace is granted. No longer is there enmity between the person and God, simply because Christ has taken away the sin that was the great separator. Further, new and meaningful human relationships are promised, for Christ indwells the believer with the ability to love.

Read John 14:27 and Philippians 4:6,7.

The believer is promised the kind of peace Jesus had upon the earth, but it will be the type of peace that the world cannot give and will have difficulty understanding. It is a spiritual dynamic and therefore, is received and maintained through faithful prayer and devotion.

Read John 14:23; John 15:4-5,7; 1 Corinthians 1:9; and Revelation 3:20.

The believer has the promise of eternal and daily fellowship with Jesus, and this affords the opportunity of answered prayer and fruitful living. The believer is promised fellowship, but it should be noted that this happens as a result of the choice of the believer to follow and obey. We have to “open the door.” He loves us far too much to force himself upon us. He wants to abide in us more than we want to abide in Him.

Read 2 Corinthians 12:9 and Philippians 4:19.

Because one is in fellowship with Christ, he has the grace and sufficiency of God available to him. At times of weakness God offers His child His strength, and in times of need God supplies according to His Will, assuring the faithful with the perfection of God’s wisdom and power. Whenever we are weak, God is prepared to be strong. Remember, “Your faith has made you whole.” Trusting faith opens the way for His abiding comfort, peace, and power.

Read Romans 8:37 and Philippians 4:13.

The promise of victory in every aspect of life is a truly valuable asset to the Christian in today's world. Christ empowers the believer to be steadfast in purpose and confident in every opportunity or trial. We can because He is. Separation from His present love is unheard of in the Gospel.

Read Romans 8:38, 39 and 1 Peter 1:3-5.

The love of Christ is so strong toward the believer that it will never be diminished, diluted, or destroyed. Why? Jesus Christ is God’s anointed, and all things, whoever and wherever they might be, are subject to His Authority. His love is given by grace through faith, and once given and accepted, it cannot be removed. This love will bring an inheritance that has been made available by His Resurrection, creating for the faithful hope and security.

Read Romans 14:8 and Philippians 2:9-11.

The Christian has life from the exalted Savior and Lord. The disciple views Christ as their life. They are nothing without Him. They were lost from God’s fellowship and now have been recovered from the spiral of their own doing. The Christian knows then that the Lord Jesus deserves all manner of praise and adoration; and therefore, the Christian's life becomes marked by this praise of the Holy Son. Christians worship and confession is always centered in Christ, and they celebrate because they have the promise of always being the Lord's possession.

WHAT ARE THE ASSURANCES IN DISCOURAGEMENT?

Read Psalm 138:7, Isaiah 43:2; 2 Corinthians 4:8,9; and Romans 8:28.

The Lord is the basis of the believer's strength. As the foundation of the household the total structure remains firm through the storm, so God's merciful strength keeps the believer safe and secure. No trouble or trial is greater than God's sustaining love for His children. When the believer is discouraged, he or she should begin to meditate upon the care of God and the strength of God. He has the creative power to take all the things of

our lives and work them into a blessing, and faith tells us that we do not need to know what or how. We have to trust.

Read John 14:1,27; Isaiah 41:10; 1 Corinthians 10:13; and 1 Peter 1:6-9.

Believers attempt to figure out the why's of God's actions toward them. Why has God allowed this to happen to those who love Him so dearly? These moments are times for growth in the graces of God, times of close fellowship with Him, and opportunities for His refining work in us to proceed. When the believer is discouraged or depressed, he or she should claim the promises that God will work in it by strengthening, teaching, admonishing, and providing the means of both comfort and endurance. Fear is not to be the master.

Read Psalm 31:24; Galatians 6:9; and Philippians 4:6-8.

Those who find themselves in the clutches of discouragement and depression tend to do as little as possible. Roles and responsibilities do not seem important. However, no one who ever sat down and looked at the mountain ever climbed the mountain. Through faithful prayer and trust in the Lord's abiding strength, the believer discovers peace. The believer's part in all this is significant. They are to "think on" the properly positive things of God in order to keep their mind purified from the harmful negative inclinations of the human spirit. The discouraged or depressed believer, who continues to move upward in their faith trusting the Father, will receive the reward.

Read Isaiah 40:31; 2 Corinthians 1:3,4; and 1 Peter 5:6,7.

Discouragement and depression are great weapons against spiritual growth and vitality. The believer must "wait" upon God's caring guidance and must humble himself before God. This means that the faithful person releases their solution of the pending dilemma to God's capable hands. In other words, the believer continues to seek God's will in it rather than the "quick fix." When the believer does this, then they will be able to "mount up with wings as eagles." They will be able to walk confidently through the rubble.

THERE ARE ASSURANCES IN SUFFERING

Read Psalm 91:4-7; Proverbs 3:25,26; Romans 8:15; 2 Corinthians 12:9; 2 Timothy 1:7; and 3 John 2.

The most obvious mark upon the human being is the infirmity of the physical body. Physical sickness and suffering will come to everyone. No one is exempt. Fear is usually the companion of sickness and suffering. However, God's intention for man is not fearful suffering but joyful living. This is one of the very reasons for the ministry of Christ today. Through His Spirit one gains the capability to view life with both a new perspective and a new power, which is opposed to fear. The believer who faces suffering is assured of God's providential care and companionship.

Read Psalm 23:4,5; Psalm 27:14; Psalm 31:24; Isaiah 54:14; and John 14:27.

The believer in the Spirit of Christ will know the peace "that passeth all understanding," for the Lord will grant that gift freely and in much strength. The measure of peace given will be proportional to the individual's faith in God's provision in the suffering. Believers who have such faith are they whose hearts hunger not so much to be healed from the suffering but to be glorifying to God during the suffering.

Read Isaiah 26:3; Isaiah 40:31; Isaiah 41:10; Romans 15:13; Philippians 4:6,7,13.

Regardless of the intensity and longevity of the suffering, the Lord is always strengthening and holding the faithful believer through the Spirit of Christ. This fact issues forth in hope. This means that God will never forsake or turn away, but will always grant the grace to grow even through the pain and anxiety. This hope and confidence allows the believer to be above the "rubble" of his suffering so that they may get through it, glorifying God every step of the way. The believer must remember their goal in life is to live eternally with God not eternally on the earth. While on the earth, the believer glorifies God in all things.

WHAT ASSURANCES CAN ARE THERE IN FINANCIAL STRESS?

Read Psalm 23:1; Psalm 34:10; Matthew 6:31-33; and Philippians 4:19.

One of the basics of the Christian faith is that God is the believer's Sustainer and Provider. All of the needs of the believer are supplied according to the priorities and the abundance of God and His Kingdom. Thus, the believer seeks those riches of God's Kingdom that may or may not be measured in human dollar amounts or earthly possessions.

Read Deuteronomy 28:2-8; Joshua 1:8; Matthew 19:29; Luke 6:26; and 2 Corinthians 9:6-8.

The categories and criteria of our human existence have always confused faith in God. In other words, some people determine whether or not God has blessed them by their health or by their wealth. This type of thinking is wrong. The promise for the believer is that keeping the word of God will bring prosperity according to God's criteria. In other words, when believers go after the things of God and not the things of the world, they will obtain far more than what the world is capable of giving. As the Lord blesses according to their sowing, they are expected to give to others and for others in God's name and out of thanksgiving for His blessings. True financial blessing is when believers join the spiritual life with financial resources.

Read Deuteronomy 8:7-14; Romans 8:6-8, Romans 12:1-2; Galatians 6:8; and 1 John 2:15-17.

Usually the heart of financial troubles is the feeling that there is always not enough. The believer uses financial trouble to reevaluate priorities in their life of faith. Wealth always has the ability to turn one's eyes away from God and His work. If one's intentions are to acquire great wealth, that will be all they will be able to receive. And the path of that quest will be full of anxiety, anger, exploitation, and envious strife. But if believers seek to sow into God's field, then they stand to receive all that God in His richness may give. So financial frustration is usually due to a priority problem: wishing to serve self rather than to obey God. There exists "I"-trouble. All that a believer is and all that a believer possesses is to be consecrated to the Lord for His service. This consecration gives the believer the right view of materials and wealth.

Read Isaiah 26:3; Philippians 2:5; Philippians 4:8, and Colossians 3:2,5.

The believer has the promise of sustained peace in any trouble when he keeps his mind on the things of God. The believer keeps their mind so by looking more attentively to good things and potentialities rather than the problems. All is based upon the Lordship and Authority of Christ. In all problematic situations, God provides peace through the measure of the believer's faith and trust.

GOD PROMISES YOU CAN DISCOVER HIS WILL.

Read Psalm 32:8; Psalm 48:14; Isaiah 30:21; Isaiah 48:17; Isaiah 58:11; and John 16:13.

God promises that He will guide His people. The guidance, which He offers is good even to the very throws of death, and His divine urgings will be along “the path” that would be best for His people. Not only is there the promise that He wishes to guide and that He will guide, but there is the promise that He will continually guide. Through trials, believers discover the truths of God and His Will and, therefore, direction for their lives in that will.

Read Joshua 1:8; Psalm 119:105; Proverbs 6:22,23; and John 15:7.

God promises that His Will is revealed in His Word. Through the inspired Word, the believer discovers the principles of faith and the promises of God's providential care. Abiding in the word (to live it) produces the avenue through which answered prayer is known. However, people should not read and study the Word for knowledge and selfish gain, but to seek its truths so as to conform their wills to the Will of God. So, in finding the Will of God, the believer must seek for it diligently in the Word of God. Anyone who refuses to be nourished from the Word will never know the Will of God for his or her life.

Read Psalm 37:23; Proverbs 3:5,6; Proverbs 16:3; and Luke 12:29-31.

By affirming God's delight in His children in directing their ways, the believer refuses to develop the human pride of wise thinking in human situations. The trust of the believer's life is trust in the wisdom of God, and the believer so acknowledges that wisdom. This takes commitment; a total resignation to life, not from life. Many feel too much has to be given up in order to be committed to the Lord. It is not a question really of what has to be denied as what there is to receive. The fact that someone is willing to seek God's Will implies a resolute attitude of commitment to one priority. Without that commitment, God's Will will remain allusive. So, in finding the Will of God, the believer must be so committed to the search that doubt in the Will remains buried and a longing for the Will remains paramount.

Read Mark 11:22-24; and James 1:5.

To discover the will of God one must (1) believe that it is worthy to be had, (2) long for it with their whole being, and (3) strive after it in the Holy Word. But there must be another step beyond these: the believer must ask for it. Inherent in the search for God's Will during the believer's daily life is the desire to know and the need to believe that it can be known, but the action which is the believer's responsibility is to pray, asking to receive. The promise is that His will is knowable.

GROWING SPIRITUALLY

Read Deuteronomy 4:9; Hebrews 3:12-13; 2 Peter 3:18; and Revelation 3:2, 15-16.

The People of God are elected as agents of growth and, therefore, are expected to grow spiritually. The importance of growth is underscored repeatedly in scripture. The believer is to be aware of the need of growth and to beware of the tendency of being apathetic to growing in commitment and in knowledge of Christ's love and grace. The choice has to be made by the believer to grow, for spiritual growth is not automatic. It requires decision, diligence, and determination.

Read Colossians 3:16; 1 Timothy 4:15; 2 Timothy 2:15; and 1 Peter 2:2.

Spiritual growth comes from a sincere desire to understand more of God's ways and from the habit of scripture study and meditation. The study of God's Word causes the believer to be able to encourage others while being pleasing to God, unashamed of the life investment into God's word. Studying and meditating upon the Word of God brings "profit" in that the view of life is clarified and the sensitivity to God's ways is amplified, producing a sense of wellbeing and wholeness.

Read Ephesians 3:14-19; Colossians 1:9-11; and 2 Peter 1:5-8.

Spiritual growth produces within a believer an unmistakable character and inner strength, is not determined by physical ability or increase of resources. The inherent truth about spiritual growth is that growth is according to God's "riches in glory" and not according to man's humanistic way of evaluating growth. If one theme were to be chosen that would describe the results of spiritual growth, it would be "love," for the growing Christian is forever being confronted with and challenged to love as Christ would love. The growth in the spiritual things of Christ's words and purpose transform the believer's attitudes toward others and his own life. Love becomes the theme in personal relationships and "love" becomes the very purpose of the believer. So, love is the natural and logical result of spiritual growth. The believer who is growing is becoming "rooted and grounded in love."

OBEYING GOD HAS ITS REWARDS

Read Exodus 23:25,26; Deuteronomy 10:12; Deuteronomy 11:26-28; Deuteronomy 13:4; Joshua 24:15; and Jeremiah 7:23.

The Old Testament understanding of obedience is easily misunderstood. From its pages we are commanded to obey God in service to Him, diligently, with all of our being, and in every area of our lives. Obedience to God is linked with service to God. One cannot obey without service. The problem comes when the motive of obedience and service is incorrect. Read again the Exodus 23, the Deuteronomy 10 and 11, and the Jeremiah 7 passages and notice the connection between obedience and prosperity. The idea implies that if you obey and serve God, God will bless you. This fact is true; however, the People of God in the Old Testament abused the principle. They developed their entire system of faith and politics about the premise; that if one served and obeyed God's law then He is obligated to bless with prosperity and wealth. Obviously, this demonstrates a selfish motive for obedience and service. "I will obey God for I want to be blessed by Him." This is a statement that does not reflect the biblical truth. The point is that God acts and man responds to His action, not man acts and God responds to man's action.

Read John 14:15,21; Romans 7:6; Romans 12:1,2; and 1 John 2:3-6.

The New Testament is full of passages that discuss and imply obedience and service to the Almighty God and these discussions are centered on the premise, "God acts and has acted for man and man responds in obedience and service to the God who has acted." One's obedience and service to God is a demonstration (the logical, natural response) of a living relationship and communion with the One who has already blessed and given through His Son, Jesus Christ. Therefore, we obey out of a renewed spirit of love and thanksgiving and not out of an old law of "you obey and I will bless you." Someone once said that Jesus would spell "obey" l-o-v-e and would spell "love" o-b-e-y.

Read Colossians 3:20-24; and 1 Peter 2:13-20.

The believer obeys and serves God on a daily basis. How? Everyday duties and activities become the arenas of obedience, or rather, response to God. The believer responds to God by honoring and respecting people. This demonstration is out of reverence for God who is the author of every man. The believer obeys his supervisors as a servant of God and adheres to the laws of the land, since social laws are the will of God for the world. This daily, routine type of obedience is more powerful than one might realize, for it will bring to silence the ignorance of God that is so much a part of the lives of foolish men and women. The Christians believes God has acted out of love toward him or her, and toward all people as well. Consequently, the believer responds daily to God out of thanksgiving, love, and reverence in every act, duty, or way for the purpose of revealing God's love to those who need to see it, to know it, and be touched by it.