Steps To Christian Maturity

Spiritual direction to Christlikeness

FREDRICK G. OMONDI

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Unless otherwise indicated, all scripture quotations are taken from King James Version of the Holy Bible.

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INTRODUCTION

In the natural, physical growth leads to physical maturity and likewise in the supernatural, spiritual growth leads to spiritual maturity. In Christianity when one becomes a Christian (born again in the Spirit) (John 3:1-6) one is considered a spiritual baby and has to grow spiritually taking spiritual food (milk) which is the word of God (1 Peter 2: 2) and continue to grow until one becomes a spiritual adult, that is, spiritually mature (Hebrews 5:14).

Now spiritual growth is not instant. You cannot become spiritually mature overnight as it is a process. Growth varies from one individual to another just as in the natural in Institutions of learning there are both fast learners and slow learners. One therefore need to be both aggressive and committed with a lot of passion for the world of God to be among the fast learners in addition to putting it into practise daily in obedience - James 1:22-25.

If one is really committed to the cause one makes it by maturing up. By the way Christian maturity

must be the goal of every Christian and as I said one need to work towards it by striving daily to get the word and to work on the word. (2 Timothy 3:14-17, Joshua 1:8) As it is a process, at some point you will be able to get there (Isaiah 28:9-10, Luke 6:40, Hebrews 6:1, Ephesians 4:13, Isaiah 34:16, Psalm 92:12-13, Philippians 3:12-16.

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Chapter 1

Christian Maturity at a glance

The scriptures are not silent on the issue of Christian maturity some of which we are going to look at. The goal of every Christian should be to come to the level of spiritual maturity. If a Christian has not set this as a priority and has no zeal for it, then somehow has missed the point and may be headed nowhere, that is, not going to reach the expected destination and which is sad indeed as no one knows the time of the rapture of the Church and as we know Jesus Christ is coming to take a mature Church and nothing short of that. Let us begin to peruse the Scriptures.

But **the day of the Lord will come as thief in the night:** in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought **ye to be in all conversation and godliness,**

Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

And account that the long suffering of our Lord is salvation: even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you;

As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also to the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.

But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

2 Peter 3:10-18

As we wait for the Lord to come and take us to heaven, meanwhile we have a duty to grow in the grace of God to be mature and perfect in his ways. It is a fact that in the physical babies do not inherit anything until they are mature (adults) on this earth. In the same way in the spiritual we must grow and mature into adulthood as sons and daughters of the Lord to be in a position to inherit the kingdom of God in heaven and so maturity is a must in the Christian life.

Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought:

But **we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:**

1 Corinthians 2:6-7

In this scripture we see Apostle Paul saying that they speak wisdom among them that are perfect meaning them that are mature. He goes on to say that that wisdom is hidden wisdom of God. Now you must be mature to be able to have all that. In this scripture and others, the word maturity in Christianity seems to have been substituted with the word perfection. You cannot be perfect in spiritual matters unless you yourself have matured spiritually.

Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God;

Even the mystery which hath been hid from the ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:

To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the

Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:

Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.

Colossians 1:25-29

In his epistle to the church at Colossae Apostle Paul was touching on Christian spiritual growth which is necessary in order for a Christian to mature spiritually being made perfect thereby.

Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;

And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,

According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:

In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.

Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.

For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his spirit in the inner man;

That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length, and depth, and height;

And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.

Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. A'-men.

Ephesians 3:8-21

In the above scripture we do find that apostle Paul when called to preach to the Gentiles he desired too for them who have believed in Christ, and to grow spiritually and he went ahead and prayed for them for that cause, knowing all well that it is through the growth of the inner man can one mature up spiritually and be able to be part of the family in heaven. All that was and is still possible by the power of the Holy Spirit in a believer.

Brethren be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, **but in understanding be men.**

1 Corinthians 14:20

In this scripture Apostle Paul still is touching on maturity in a Christian only here he does substitute it with understanding and men (adults - mature people). That one has to be an adult in understanding and not be a child, save for anything that is bad or harmful, that is, in malice.

For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of oracles of God, and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

But strong meat belongeth to them that are full of age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Hebrews 5:12-14

In the above scripture in verses 12 and 13 it is talking of one not skilful in the word of righteousness and still need to be taught the basics in the word of God and therefore has need in milk and is a babe (read 1 Peter 2:2). Verse 13 talk on one who take strong meat as is an adult (of full age) and can discern both good and evil as is skilful (mature spiritually).

THEREFORE, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection;

not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,

Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgement.

And this will we do, if God permit.

Hebrews 6:1-3

The writer, possibly apostle Paul in writing to the Hebrews he was trying to advice them to come out of being spiritual babes and to grow up into maturity in Christ Jesus by moving on from where they seemed to have stagnated.

The scripture is talking of moving away from the foundation of the word of God (the basics) as a child to Christian maturity (perfection) and only if God permits (there is time for such), those basics can be revisited/repeated. The aim/goal being to mature up in the faith in Christ.

Christian maturity cannot be attained if one remains only in the fundamental doctrines of Christ but one need to go a notch higher (deeper in the word of God).

Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.

Philippians 3:13-15

It is touching on the goal to be completely perfect in the Christian Walk. That is why one need not dwell just in one thing/doctrine but pursue more (go further and further in the knowledge of Christ). Any one who has a goal, must be focussed too. Here the apostle is touching on his own maturity and eager and zealous to see that he reaches full Christian maturity and at the same time encouraging the church at Philippi to follow suit and be like him.

But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.
(Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?
He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)
And he gave some, apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;
For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:
Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;

Ephesians 4:7-13

It is quite clear in this scripture. A Christian has to become a perfect man (a fully mature Christian) in the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.

2 Corinthians 13:11

It all boils to one very thing - spiritual maturity and perfection.

Chapter 2

The Importance of Christian maturity

In this segment we come now to the reason why it is important for a Christian to come to maturity in Christ Jesus. From the onset we need to appreciate the fact that at one time we are going to see our Lord Jesus Christ face to face not for a moment but to be with him for ever and ever (1 John 3:1-3, Philippians 3:20-21). Now that alone entails being/having Christ- likeness, as birds of the same feather fly together and more so we have to be in agreement by compatibility (Amos 3:3). One must master situations to be able not to be mastered and controlled by them and being submissive. There must be growth in a Christian before can think of /expect maturity in the end and therefore growth is key and a Christian must make all efforts in activities that do contribute to growth in Christianity.

God has set a standard for one to qualify to enter heaven and which every Christian must endeavour to reach and which I think and do compare with this scripture for some reason.

And Jacob went out from Beer-she'-ba, and went toward Har'-an.

And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep.

And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.

And behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed;

Genesis 28:10-13

It is every Christian's dream that one day he or she will be in heaven with the Lord. Just as Jacob saw God standing above the ladder that reached to heaven, likewise Christ will be standing above the sky and waiting for those who are ready as have attained God's set standard; to take them with him in the rapture of the holy and mature Church into

heaven to be in it and to possess it. To me that is what I can see as a scenario which will take place soon (Acts 1:9-11). Now let us come to the theme of the subject matter. Let's have two key scriptures on this:

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:
That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.
For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.
For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

John 3:14-17

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Romans 6:23

Now that's it in a summary form - Salvation by faith through Jesus Christ for eternal (everlasting) life. Salvation also is not good enough as it is not an end in itself but it is the conduit/channel that lead to the final destination which is the peak (best) of that salvation. Now from the foregoing we come to other very important scriptures that reveal to us the how of this matter.

THEN shall the kingdom of heaven be likened to unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bride groom.

And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.

They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them:

But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.

And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.

Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.

And the foolish said to the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.

But the wise answered, saying,

Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.

And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; **and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.**

Afterward come also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.

But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

Matthew 25:1-13

Now that scripture brings us to yet another very important event which is to do with marriage. In that scripture we are made to understand that for one to enter eternal (everlasting) life, one will need some initiation in a marriage. That scripture is talking about the kingdom of heaven which is the kingdom of God and which is in heaven where God

dwells and where those who have inherited eternal life will spend their eternity. The parable therein is none other than Christ Himself as the said bridegroom and the Church of Christ (Christians) as the ten virgins. Now this wedding is going to be a spiritual wedding as the bridegroom is a Spirit. It follows therefore that the bride has to be spiritual as well and spiritual indeed at a high level (spiritually mature) as the bridegroom is most spiritual as he is coming from God the Father who is a Spirit (John 4:24). Therefore a Christian too has the Spirit of God and must mature up in it. Why? So as to reach the level of her bridegroom of course. Now in explaining further on the same please you will bear with me as I switch into the natural realm. In a marriage, two issues come out straight away- maturity and readiness. Both partners (the bridegroom and the bride) must be mature enough for a marriage- are adults who now know what marriage is and have the capability to maintain it (to keep it intact) and also both are ready in that both have prepared well for it. It is a fact that in the natural babies or children are never wedded

together in any known marriage, same in the supernatural only adults (those full of age/mature) are wedded.

Now that underscores the importance of Christian maturity which is nothing but spiritual maturity. Do you know why five virgins are called wise and five others are called foolish? It is because the five called wise are using wisdom in doing things and therefore are able to enter heaven as wisdom is a sign of maturity (Proverbs 12: 28; 16:31) and the five called foolish and do foolish things and cannot enter heaven their acts are childish (proverbs 22:15) Now look very keenly at what I have just said in this parable in the book of Matthew 25, what the wise virgins do right (verses 4, 9 and 10) compared to what the foolish virgins do (verses 3, 8, 10 and 11) you can see the contrast. The former (the wise) show readiness and the latter (the foolish) do show un readiness and missed the marriage as were immature and also the bridegroom could not see if they matched him at all (are babes and not adults-not fit for a wedding a marriage hence 'I know you not' in verse 12.

The Christian goal - maturity, preparedness and readiness (Matthew 24:36-44). If that is lacking, we have missed it all and don't reach our final destination (the climax of our salvation- heaven with the Lord in that everlasting life so inherited / received from God through his Son Christ Jesus).

In a wedding ceremony one need to present oneself at his or her best and not just anyhow, as one will be ashamed.

Now because this has to do with marriage which begins/starts with a wedding ceremony, let us look further at yet another scripture touching on the same.

And a voice came out of the throne, saying,
Praise our God, all ye servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.

And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me,

These are the true sayings of God.

Revelation 19:5-9

Now in heaven there is going to be a marriage supper of the Lamb of God (the Son of God Jesus Christ) and what a banquet it will be! The wife (bride) being the Church (the saints) and do you know what? It was granted that she be arrayed in fine linen clean and white (which is the righteousness of the saints) now she was ready. She was ready because she was among the five wise virgins and had lived a careful life in wisdom in righteousness of which has come up a fine linen, clean and white for her to be arrayed in. Truly she had prepared well to be ready for this important

occasion: No foolish person can be that ready as it requires true wisdom of God (Job 28:28, Proverbs 1:7, 2:1-8, 1 Corinthians 2:6-10). My reader, if you are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb, then you are truly blessed as has now reached your climax in the Christian Walk. That is the truth as God has affirmed it.

As I said earlier, these scriptures (Matthew 25:1-13 and Revelation 19:5-9) are some of the how we need reach our maturity, as a matter of great importance and reaching our final abode, in this precious Walk, the Walk of faith, the Walk in the Spirit of God the Father. Maturity comes by living the lifestyle of Christ Jesus with the full knowledge of the word of God in reverence to Him in holiness and righteousness.

Chapter 3

The Faith Factor

Faith is the essence of Christianity and serves as the spiritual foundation on which all other functions can be carried on. Faith is like a starter key/ignition key that enables all other spiritual issues to move (it is an initiator of sort).

And beside this, giving all diligence, **add to your faith……**

2 *Peter 1:5*

Other factors need be added to faith (faith being a foundation) in order to bring about a positive change (growth) in the Christian Walk and all of which combined together will eventually lead to maturity. As we are going to see even that faith need to grow / be enlarged to be able to accommodate all other factors that are to be added to it. Faith contribute to our stability and success in the Christian Walk. (James 1:5-7, 1 John 5:4-5, Galatians 5:6, Ephesians 6:16, Colossians 2:6-7).

If any of you lack wisdom, let him **ask of God**, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.

James 1:5-7

We can see in the above scripture that faith is a facilitator in prayer without which nothing moves. Read also Hebrews 11:6 on the same.

For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is **the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith**

Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

1 John 5:4-5

Faith makes a Christian to triumph.

For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; **but faith** which worketh by love.

Galatians 5:6

Here also we see faith brings success (is invaluable). Above all, **taking the shield of faith,** wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

Here also faith is quite hardy giving us the ability to fight back the enemy attacks. Please note the first two words of this scripture - above all and underscoring the factor of faith.

As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:

Rooted and built up in him, and **established in the faith,** as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

Colossians 2:6-7

Here also faith is stressed to Christians. Now faith is of such paramount importance that the disciples of Jesus asked him for an increase of faith in them

for their continual survival in their Christian Walk (Luke 17:1-5).

THEN said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offenses will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come!

It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.

Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.

And if he trespas against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.

And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.

Luke 17:1-5

The disciples wondered at those sayings which they found hard to stomach and ended asking for an increase in faith. Jesus told them that it was not an issue of quantity (an increase) but the presence of quality faith which can be exercised to do exploits.

Read also Mark 9:23. Walking by faith shows some maturity and one can do wonders. (2 Corinthians 5:7, Romans 8:1-8, Hebrews 11:4-40, 1 Corinthians 3: 13-15, 2 Timothy 4:6-8, James 1:12).

(For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

2 Corinthians 5:7

Faith is fundamental in the Christian growth which leads to full maturity of a Christian as walks daily by it.

THERE is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

That **the righteousness of the law** might **be fulfilled in us, who walk** not after the flesh, but **after the Spirit.**

Romans 8:1-4

Faith stands out tall bringing freedom and righteousness of the law unto perfection. Now look at what faith can do.

By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.

By faith E'-noch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and **became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.**

By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, **obeyed;** and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:

For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

Through faith, also Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was of past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.

Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the seashore innumerable.

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.

And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.

But now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,

Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called:

Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.

By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshiped, leaning upon the top of his staff.

By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.

By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.

By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeking him who is invisible.

Through faith he kept the Passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first born should touch them.

By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.

By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days.

By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.

And what shall I more say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gid'-e-on, and Bar'-ak, and of Samson, and of Jeph'-thah; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets:

Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

Women received their dead raised to life again; and other were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection:

And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment.

They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered

about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented;

(Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:

God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

Hebrews 11:4 - 40

You have seen for yourself what faith can accomplish through men and women. Now let me take you back a bit to verses 39 and 40. Why on earth should God after seeing all that these faithful passed through not give them his promise? Well, there is a special time for that. They perfected their lives for sure while on earth but God is now waiting for you and I to go through the same and then parade/assemble them and us together and to give out rewards as is necessary at one go. Read on the next scriptures on the same.

Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

If any man's work abide, which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself he shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

1 Corinthians 3:13-15

Yes, there is something for every one of us although just some variance which comes about as a result of our own making (work) and not God's. That reminds me of the case of Jacob and Esau before their father Isaac, although with God it is a bit different as God's eyes are not dim so that he cannot see things clearly and also he cannot be cheated as he has all the facts at his fingertips moreover God does not age. Read the book of Genesis 27:1-40 on the former and on the latter (on God) read Daniel 7:9, Revelation 1:8, Psalm 147:5, Hebrews 4:13, Job 31:4, 34:21 and Galatians 6:7, Revelation 22:12-13.

Now let me bring you back to the remaining scripture on the rewards.

For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.
I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, **I have kept the faith:**
Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearance.

2 Timothy 4:6-8

Even apostle Paul being led by the Holy Spirit uttered the very truth on rewards by God in heaven to the faithful (the saints).

Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

James 1:12

Even James the brother of the Lord uttered the same truth on rewards by God at the appointed

time. God is very faithful what he promises, he fulfils that promise. Surely God's promises are yea and Amen.

Now if you can remember very well our first scripture in this chapter was 2 Peter 1:5 in which it began with first touching on the faith factor as everything else is built and revolves on faith to it's fruition.

Now let us look at what God told Abram who became the father of faith.

AND when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; **walk before me, and be thou perfect.**

And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.

Genesis 17:1-2

In the above scripture God was giving Abram a conditional promise based on Abram's faith, which had to be perfected for God to multiply (bless) him exceedingly.

As you are aware, the Christian walk is a faith walk and that is why God told Abram to walk before him and not to sit or run before him. God was expecting him to walk unto perfection. That is, to mature up in his faith in God completely. A Christian also is walking before the Lord on a daily basis just as Abraham walked with God, even Enoch and Noah (Genesis 5:24; 6:9) by their faith. In fact Enoch seems to have walked with God and matured so much that he was no more for God took him away from the earth. (Genesis 5:21-24). So Christians must walk with God and grow and mature and mature and be ruptured with the Lord at his coming. A Christian must mature up fully in faith in the Lord. That I believe, is what apostle Paul had to tell the church at Colossae.

PAUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,
To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Co-los'-sae: Grace be unto you and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,

Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints,

For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of truth of the gospel;

Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth:

As ye also learned of Ep'-a-phras our dear fellow servant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ;

Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.

For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;

That ye might walk worth of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;

Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness;

Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:

Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

Who is the image of the invincible God, the firstborn of every creature:

For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invincible, whether they be thrones, or dominions or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

And he is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the first born from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.

For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell;

And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled.

In the body of his flesh through death, **to present you holy and unblamable and unreprovable in his sight:**

If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;

Colossians 1:1-23

In the above scripture the apostle sent that epistle to the church specifically because of the issue of their faith in Christ Jesus, which he had heard from another faithful servant of Christ called by the name Epaphras. The apostle was always praying to

that church so that they don't drift away from the faith they received in the gospel of Christ. The faith of the church was in danger by false teachers who had brought false doctrines to them. The apostle prays so that they remain grounded and settled in their faith which they received when they were ministered to by Epaphras, so that in the end they end up in heaven, which is awaiting them. He encouraged them to continue in the same faith until they are perfect (mature), as for now they were grounded in faith and had love to all the brethren but were yet to be settled in their faith.

Christians must be settled in their faith so as to be worthy and all pleasing to the Lord.

This they need to do as well as having others mentioned such as patience and endurance so that they become holy and unblammable and be partakers of inheritance in heaven. Please note here also the apostle was talking of walking in reference to their faith. Christianity being faith walking. By saying it was to be worthy it means it was to be a perfect walk.

But you, beloved, building in your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus unto eternal life.

Jude 20 – 21

Faith moulds our character and propels us more and more in the spiritual realm in our walk with the Lord.

Chapter 4

The Virtue Factor

The next thing after faith is the virtue factor (the goodness factor) which just as faith, both are fruit of the Holy Spirit as recorded in Galatians 5:22. The factor is also known as righteousness and is part and parcel of Christian growth to maturity and must be seen in a Christian's life.

And beside this, giving all diligence**, add to your faith virtue;**

2 Peter 1:5

Let your light so shine before men**, that they may see your good works,** and glorify your Father which is in heaven

Matthew 5:16

Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and **having on the breastplate of righteousness;**

Ephesians 6:14

Let people see you having on the breast-plate of righteousness (the acts of righteousness).

In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works: *i*n doctrine showing incorruptness, gravity, sincerity,

Sound speech that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.

Titus 2:7-8

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,

Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, **we should live** soberly, **righteously,** and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people**, zealous of good works.**

Titus 2:11-14

Living right is doing good works by faith in the living God.

This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou **affirm constantly, that they** which have believed in God might **be careful to maintain good works.** These things are good and profitable unto men.

Titus 3:8

The apostle Paul reminds Titus (a Christian) his son in the faith again in the chapter above, the same issue of virtue / goodness / righteousness.

And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful.

Titus 3:14

All the above scriptures keep on stressing on the need of good works in the Christian walk which makes one to grow and mature in God who is ever righteous. It follows therefore that a Christian must continue in good works and be purified thereby.

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

Not of works, lest any man should boast.

For **we are** his workmanship, **created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.**

Ephesians 2:8-10

A very vivid and powerful statement indeed and we have no alternative but to oblige honestly. If we are saved, we have been created in Christ Jesus who is our Saviour, Lord and Master in following his footsteps (as followers) just as he did while on earth and still do while in heaven at the right hand of God the Father. Read this:

How God anointed **Jesus of Nazareth** with the Holy Ghost and with power: who **went about doing good,** and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; For God was with Him.

Acts 10:38

Now it is not Jesus of Nazareth alone who God anointed with the Holy Spirit and power but he has done the same to truly born again Christians and

will continue to do the same on new converts, (John 14: 15-17, 1 John 3:24, Romans 5:5) and therefore we have no excuse but to go about in doing good works for the glory of the Father (we who have believed in his Son).
How about God? We have seen about his Son: Well like Son like Father- God himself is equally good read on.

And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?
And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? **There is none good but one, that is, God**:

Matthew 19:16-17

Good and upright is the LORD: therefore will he teach sinners in the way.

Psalm 25:8

He Loveth righteousness and judgement; **the earth is full of the goodness of the LORD.**

Psalm 33:5

The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him.

Nahum 1:7

It is very good and wise for one to trust in the Lord for he is but GOOD.

O taste and **see** that **the LORD is good**: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.

Psalm 34:8

You can do good works if you are a Christian through a spiritual birth (John 3:5-6). Please just read this example as well which was by a fellow human being just like you and me and not God or his Son.

Now there was at Joppa **a certain disciple named Tab-itha,** which by interpretation is called Dorcus: this woman **was full of good works and alms deeds** which she did.

And it came to pass in those days, that she was sick, and died: whom when they had washed, they laid her in an upper chamber.

And forasmuch as Lyd'-da was nigh to Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men, desiring him that he would not delay to come to them.

Then Peter arose and went with them. when he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all **the widows stood by him weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcus made, while she was with them.**

But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning him to the body said, Tab'-itha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up.

And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive.

Acts 9:36-41

That was quite amazing at Joppa as the scripture says, it is profitable to all with those in the faith to be involved in good works always (Titus 3:8). It was good for Tabitha to have been full of good works and alms deeds in her life as we can see it paid dividends.

The widows were weeping next to her body then as witnesses to her life and were showing the coats and garments which she had made as evidence of her life (just as in a law court, evidence is normally required from witnesses of what had transpired).

Now when the scriptures affirm the profitability of good works, it refers only to the saints more so and not necessarily the sinners. One has to be first in Christ being made a new and to do the good works by faith of God (Ephesians 2:8-10). If you are not satisfied by the scripture then look at these two as well.

But we are all as an unclean thing, and **all our righteousness are as filthy rags;** and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities.

Isaiah 64:6-7

Now the above is a confession of those who had gone astray and left the ways of God and were now living in sin in complete disobedience to God but were not thinking of going back to him in repentance. Those are a desperate lot who have no God in them. So my advice is, be in God and do good works and you will be rewarded as it is profitable that way before a holy God. If you are not in God, your good works you are doing in who and for who? If you think I am being too talkative, then go and read the book of Acts of the apostles (Acts 10: 1-8, 34-48) and you will see Cornelius busy in good works but no God in his life and God sympathised with him and sent an angel to direct him to the right way of God. Apostle Simon Peter was to preach to this religious man to be saved and receive the Holy Spirit and to continue in good works in the name of the Father and for the glory of the Father and not to remain in the status quo (a loser, prior to salvation). I hear the bell is about to be rung and I feel like closing but let me leave you with this one.

Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for **the fine linen is the righteousness of saints**

Revelation 19:7-8

Now that event is to be in heaven soon and very soon and the one to be wedded to Christ has to be in fine linen clean and white which is the righteousness of that individual.

Therefore righteousness in the Christian Walk (life) is key as well for entry into heaven.

Please note that the fine linen is not righteousness of sinners but of saints. Get me right here. Good works even by sinners is not bad per se but it comes to nought (is not profitable) to the sinner in the long run. Read also Galatians 6:8-10

The righteousness shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Leb'-a-non.

Those that be planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God.

Psalm 92:12-13

The righteous is one who abide in goodness (righteous acts) and therefore the above scripture tell us that such a one shall flourish like the palm tree (high growth) and grow like a cedar in Lebanon (be strong). It means that one matures quickly being tall and strong reaching adulthood in one's spirituality. That too underscores the importance of virtue in a Christian.

Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;

Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers**, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.**

1 Peter 2:11-12

Chapter 5

The Knowledge Factor

Knowledge is another step that leads a Christian to maturity. One cannot be mature as a Christian without having enough (much) knowledge of the word of God. Therefore one must have great passion for the word of God by taking time daily not only to read the word of God in the Holy Bible but also studying it and additionally meditating on the same. That way, one is really headed to the Christian maturity required by God and as I have said it must be desired. The steps I have taken you through and continue to do are but keys to heaven and each one of them will unlock the hurdles on your way to heaven which you meet on the way and each key takes you closer and closer to the entrance/gate of heaven such that if you have all of them and put them to work when the Lord will be coming in the much anticipated rapture of the holy Church he will find you near there and welcome you with the words ‘welcome home my beloved’. As he ushers you into heaven.

And beside this, giving all diligence, **add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge**;

2 Peter 1:5

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.

Hosea 4:6

Now that is a stern warning to a Christian. A Christian can't just live like that without the knowledge of the word of God and still remain unscathed. One need not be easy prey to the Devil (Satan). Jesus Christ had the knowledge of the word of God, he Himself being the wisdom of God (Luke 11:47-51) and when Satan attempted to challenge him, he utterly defeated him by the knowledge he had (Matthew 4: 1-11). By rejecting the word of God, God rejects you because you have in so doing forgotten (don't know) the law (the word of God) and to make it even worse for you,

God will also forget your children as well and you cease to be his priest (servant).

As newborn babes, **desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby:**
If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

1 Peter 2:2-3

The desire for the word of God must be there in a Christian (a spiritually new born baby) so as to grow as it is only growth that will lead you and culminate to adulthood (maturity). In order for one not to forget the word of God once need to heed the following advice by God himself.

This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but **thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein.** For then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

Joshua 1:8

You meditate on what you have read and then do. If you do that, you are guaranteed first prosperity

(growth) and followed later by success (maturity). Here ideally in talking of prosperity the scripture is on spirituality and not materialism- not of wealth and passing of an academic examination or thriving of business and the like. But those too are automatic if you follow strictly the rules (Matthew 6: 24-34)

Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, **rightly dividing the word of truth.**

2 Timothy 2:15

One need to study the word of truth (the word of God) such that one is able to rightly (accurately, appropriately) divide (handle) the word one has accumulated over time. Read also the book of Acts (Acts 17:10-11).

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and **is profitable** for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:
That the man of God might be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

So even with the other key we just read on righteousness is hinged on knowledge (the word of God) why? Because it is only in the word of God will one get to know (distinguish, differentiate, separate, discern) what is good or what is bad. Outside the word of God there are philosophies, theories, rationalizations, logics, name it, all of which comes to nought. It is only the word of God that is truth (infallible) and is factual.

I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because **ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you,** and ye have overcome the wicked one.

1 John 2:14

The one known that is from the beginning is Jesus Christ (John 1:1-4; 8:57-58).

The scripture says to young men that they are strong why? Because they have eaten good food (the word of God) which rests in them comfortably.

Get to know that only the knowledgeable are overcomes and not the simple (the ignorant).
Because the word of God brings knowledge, let me bring you to some scriptures that touch on the same.

And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.
For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.
As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:
Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.
Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, **and not after Christ.**

Colossians 2:4-8

Christians need to be rooted in Christ by God's word which they have been taught and not be deceived by vain words (words of men).

i) Perfect

The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.

Psalm 19:7-8

Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.

Romans 7:12

ii) Valuable

The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver.

Psalm 119:72

Happy is the man that findeth **wisdom**, and the man that getteth understanding:

For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.

She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared to her.

Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour.

Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.

She **is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her:** and happy is every one that retaineth her.

Proverbs 3:13-18

iii) Durable

The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but **the word of our God shall stand for ever.**

Isaiah 40:8

For ever, O LORD, **thy word is settled in heaven.**

Psalm 119:89

Heaven and earth shall pass away, but **my words shall not pass away.**

Matthew 24:35

But **the word of the lord endureth for ever.** And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

1 Peter 1:25

iv) Pure

Seeing **ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth** through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, **see that ye love** one another **with a pure heart** fervently

1 Peter 1:22

Now **ye are clean through the word** which I have spoken unto you.

John 15:3

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;
That he might **sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,**

Ephesians 5:25-26

Wherewithal shall a **young man cleanse** his way? **By taking heed thereto according to thy word.**

Psalm 119:9

v) Life

THE hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones,
And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and lo, they were very dry.
And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O LORD GOD, thou knowest.
Again he said unto me, Prophesy upon these bones, and say unto them,
O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD.

Thus saith the LORD God unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you and ye shall live.

And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to bone.

And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them.

Then said he unto me, Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord God; come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon those slain, that they may live.

So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.

Ezekiel 37:1-10

It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing**: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.**

John 6:63

vi) Food

And he humbled thee, and suffered thee hunger, and fed thee with man'-na, which thou knowest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that **man** doth not **live by** bread alone, but by **every word** that proceedeth out of the mouth **of the LORD** doth man live.

Deuteronomy 8:3

Thy words were found, and **I did eat** them; **and** thy word **was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart**: for I am called by the name, O LORD God of hosts.

Jeremiah 15:16

vii) Light

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and **a light unto my path.**

Psalm 119:105

For the commandment is a lamp; and **the law is light**; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life:

Proverbs 6:23

The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: **the commandment of the LORD is pure**, **enlightening the eyes.**

Psalm 19:8

viii) Weapon

And take the helmet of salvation, and **the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:**

Ephesians 6:17

Because the word of God is so precious, it needs to be well safe guarded. Just as money is precious and is kept in a bank for safety purposes, the same applies to the word of God.

It needs to be kept in God's recommended bank here on earth. God's treasury money wise is in the local churches and spiritual wise is in his temple (the heart) and therefore, the word of God needs to be safely kept in our hearts (we who are Christians. That is why the scriptures warn us to guard our hearts as the issues of life comes from our hearts. If what we keep in our hearts is good (the word of God) it helps our life and the life of others. But if what we keep in our hearts is bad (sin) then it destroys us and those around us, so watch out your treasure house what kind of materials it holds. No wonder we are told to cleanse our hearts.

Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.

Proverbs 4:23

And **these words,** which I command thee this day, shall **be in thine heart**.

Deuteronomy 6:6

Treasure the word of God and hide it for safety purposes as it can be stolen by the thief who is on the loose (Matthew 13:19, John 10:10a)

When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is the which received seed by the way side.

Matthew 13:19

Don't ever leave the seed (the word of the kingdom, the word of God) at the way side (at the entrance to your heart) but let it sink deep inside your heart (hidden). The wicked one (the thief) is not sleeping but busy looking for opportunities in us. (Job 1:6-7, 1 Pet 5:8)

The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy:

John 10:10a

Our hearts need to be a vigilant house always watching what is coming in and what is going out (there has to be some control).

And when he had called all the people unto him, he said unto them, Hearken unto me every one of you, and understand:

There is nothing from without a man that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man.

If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.

And when he was entered into the house from the people, his disciples asked him concerning the parable.

And he saith unto them, Are ye also so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into a man, it cannot defile him;

Because it entereth not into the heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats?

And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man.

For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, theft, covetousness, wickedness, deceit,

lasciviousness, and evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:

All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

Mark 7: 14:23

As I said earlier, there has to be some control otherwise dirty things as above (sin) will come in and for sure the same will come out and defile us (as we act on them). Remember the acronym G.I.G.O (Garbage in garbage out)

I believe there is a solution to that dilemma. The solution is to pay much attention and being quite attentive when reading or listening to the word of God and also to ponder and meditate on the same so as for it to sink more and more into our hearts up to the bottom. As we meditating on the word of God we continue to get revelation / understanding and the sinking process has begun in us. (Joshua 1:8, Psalms 119:15-16; 97-100; 1:1-3).

I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways.

I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word.

Psalm 119:15-16

By meditating on the word of God often, it lingers / sticks / remains in your mind such that it does not become easy to forget it.

O how love I thy law! It is my meditation all day.
Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me.
I have more understanding than all my teachers: for **thy testimonies are my meditation**.
I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts.

Psalm 119:97-100

It is quite beneficial to mediate on the word-mind you, it is a weapon against your enemy and against sin. So hide it in your heart.

Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

Psalm 119:11

BLESSED is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

But **his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.**

And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

Psalm 1:1-3

One other thing is that a Christian need to have a receptive heart (always preparing it for the word of God in repentance and prayer) so as to be a good soil and must be a good listener too (being teachable) and by taking that route, one will be heading towards maturity and will soon begin to be fruitful to the Lord and for his kingdom. Let us look at the scripture on cleansing ourselves followed by the one on good soil able to bring fruit for the Lord.

HAVING therefore these promises dearly beloved, **let us cleanse ourselves** from all filthiness of the

flesh and spirit, **perfecting holiness in the fear of God.**

2 Corinthians 7:1

That is in reference to Mark 7: 14-23 as well as its applicability to what I have just said on our heart conditions to be receptive to God's word. Proceed now to read:

Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.

When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.

But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it;

Yet hath he no root in himself, but endureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offered.

He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world,

and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.

But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

Matthew 13:18-23

The question is which ground (soil) are you? The Lord would be happy if you are the last one in verse 23 (good ground) so that you are fruitful. If you are not in this one and bringing a hundredfold, sixty, or thirty, be sure you are still far from spiritual maturity and you need to pull up your socks quickly as the Lord is about to come and to take account. What will you have for him? a credit or a debit? (Revelation 22:12, 1 Corinthians 15:58).

It is unfortunate that the Muslims seem to know the book of Koran than some Christians know the Holy Bible (the true word of God) and that alone should be a big challenge to you, if you are among those who know very little about the word of God. As I said in my first book 'The Christian Walk', as a Christian, you need to be wordy (that is, full of the

scriptures, hidden in your heart). Ideally your heart needs to be like a walking Bible in you such that you can apply the word of God in any situation appropriately without opening the Bible, same to preaching to people. If not, we may find ourselves very limited in our Christian life and service to the Lord.

Also as we have seen in the above scripture, let us not allow at any cost to allow external factors affect us so that we are unfruitful from the word of God that we received in our hearts.

Let us trust and value the word of God in us - which is greater than the external factors affecting us. In fact let us be using the word to address the problem before us and it can be over.

Let me now mention the Lord Jesus Christ on this issue of knowledge.

And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcision of **the child**, his name was called **JESUS,** which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

And when the days of her purification according to the Law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord;
(As it is written in the law of the Lord, every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;)
And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.
And the child **grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom**; and the grace of God was upon him.

Luke 2:21-24, 40

Here we can see that the child Jesus grew and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom. Wisdom has to do with knowledge and understanding. Jesus as the Son of God had wisdom in the things of God (the word of God).

But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows,

And saying, we have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you and ye have not lamented.

For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil.

The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold, a man gluttonous, and winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But **Wisdom is justified for her children.**

Matthew 11:16-19

Jesus was talking about the generation John the Baptist and him were in, of their indifference to them and that the lives of those who follow the true wisdom of God is well portrayed in them. John the Baptist and Jesus Christ all came from God and were living godly lives unlike them (the generation) A Christian has been born from on high by God of his Spirit and therefore has to live a life full of knowledge of the word of God, which is wisdom.

Chapter 6

The Temperance Factor

Temperance is another key to steps to Christian maturity. It is also known as self-control. One need to grow also in Temperance (self-control) to maturity in the Christian faith/walk. Without self-control in life, one can cause a lot of damage to oneself or to another fellow being and therefore it is equally important and must be added to one's faith as well as the others. This key happens to be among the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23)

And to knowledge temperance;…….

2 Peter 1:6

Now I take this very opportunity to bring to you a very good example of a person who had self-control who was a youth, called Joseph, who was the youngest son of Jacob.

AND Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Pot'-i-phar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard,

an Egyptian, bought him of the hands of the Ish'-mae-lites, which had brought him down thither.

And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian.

And his master saw that the LORD was with him, and that the LORD made all that he did to prosper in his hand.

And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him: and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put in his hand.

And it came to pass from the time that he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the LORD was upon all that he had in the house, and in the field.

And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand; and he knew not aught he had, save the bread which he did eat. And Joseph was a goodly person, and well-favored.

And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me.

But he refused, and said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand;

There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back anything from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?

And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her.

And it came to pass about this time,that Joseph went into the house to do his business; and there was none of the men of the house there within.

And she caught him by the garment, saying, Lie with me: and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out.

Genesis 39:1-12

Here we can see clearly that Joseph was a God-fearing young man and knew the word of God which he hid in his heart so as not to sin against God (1 Corinthians 6: 18-20; 12-13, Psalm 119:11)

From that scripture you can see that Joseph was made an overseer in the house of his master Potiphar and he did not abuse the power he was given but did use it wisely. He had many opportunities to lie with his master's wife but he did not take them. remember he was in a foreign land and could have thought and argued "after all our family, relatives and friends are not around let me just lie with this woman so that she stops bothering me day by day, by doing it I have not forced her to it (raped her) as she has asked for it herself". Do remember again the enemy sort of arranged for Joseph a golden opportunity for him to sin by having no man was around within, which totally back fired as Joseph fled for his life and never sinned with his master's wife. Joseph controlled himself in a most sober way. If he had no self control then it would have been a disaster in his life.

He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.

Proverbs 25:28

One who has no self-control is likened to a city which is broken down and has no walls. So it is that serious. One is exposed to all sorts of things and bad ones of course. In such a scenario, the enemy has an opportunity to attack you so that you mess up.

Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.

And every man that striveth for the mastery is **temperate in all things**. Now they do it **to obtain a** corruptible **crown**; but we **an incorruptible**.

I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:

But **I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection;** lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

Apostle Paul here in writing his first epistle to the church at Corinth is talking about the same issue of self-control/temperance in referring to the Christian life which is likened to a race (a natural race in the

world as compared to a supernatural/spiritual race in Christianity) and differentiating the crown for each one being corruptible of the world and the other incorruptible of God in heaven. He talks of keeping under his body and bringing it under subjection (control). Now self-control involves not only action but speech, as well as thoughts.

Let no sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should yield it in the lusts thereof.
Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

Romans 6:12-13

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.**

1 Corinthians 6:12

Hast thou found honey? **Eat so much as is sufficient for thee,** lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it.

Proverbs 25:16

It all talks about the need for self-control

He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; **and** he that **ruleth his spirit** than he that taketh a city.

Proverbs 16:32

For in many things we offend all. **If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man**, and able also to bridle the whole body.

James 3:2

And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank: so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king.
Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Han-a-ni'-ah, Mish'-a-el and Az-a-ri'-ah:

Unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names: for he gave unto Daniel the name Bel-te-shaz'-zah; and to Han-a-ni'-ah, of Sha'-drach; and to Mish'-a-el of Me'-shack; and to Az-a-ri'-ah, of A-bed'-ne-go.

But **Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself** with the portion of the King's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.

Daniel 1:5-8

Now that is another good example of showing self-control on the part of Daniel. They were in exile in Babylon under king Nebuchadnezzar and who provided for their meals and drinks from his table and which Daniel saw that he would be defiled by them and chose not to eat them but other things not from his table. Daniel also was a youth as well as his other comrades from Judah. Most likely ungodly youths would have reasoned differently and lusted at provisions coming from the king's table and given free and would have obviously not refused such an offer. To be a Christian it is good,

very good, as you can easily exercise self-control and avoid jumping into things. Lust and greed is brought under control, as one has a helper (the Holy Spirit).

One disciple of Jesus named Simon Peter had no self-control as well as two other brothers James and John and they ended behaving badly as the scripture has recorded. But they had not yet received the Holy Spirit then. (John 14:15-17, Luke 24:49-53, Acts 1:6-8). It was until the day of Pentecost that they received and were filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4). Now read the events prior to the Pentecost, first on Peter followed by that on James and John.

And while he yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him.

But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayeth thou the Son of man with a kiss?

When they which were about him saw what would follow they said unto him, Lord, shall we smite with the sword?

And one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear.

And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him.

Luke 22:47-51

That was Simon Peter in action.

And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem,

And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Sa-mar'-i-tans, to make ready for him.

And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem.

And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Eli'-jah did?

But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.

Luke 9:51-55

If these disciples had not sook for counsel from the Lord they would have messed. A Christian without earnestly practising self-control is more vulnerable to sin in act, speech or thought. Now the following scriptures help us by showing ways of being self controlled as a Christian:

For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.
For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.
Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.
So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.
Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.
For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

Romans 8:5-8; 12-13

Here are some examples of lack of self-control

Moses

Moses failed to control his tongue and God was not pleased with him as he did not give him honour before the Israelites when they murmured and asked for water to drink. (Numbers 20:1-13, Deuteronomy 32:48-52).

David

David failed to control the lust of the flesh by what he saw and he ended committing adultery (2 Samuel 11:1-5).

Samson

Samson failed to control his tongue and revealed his secret to Delilah who called in his enemies to take him captive (Judges 16:4-21)

Solomon

Solomon failed to control his love on women from heathen lands (1 Kings 11:1-13)

Gehazi

Gehazi failed to control his lust for “gifts” (2 Kings 5:20-27)

Judas Iscariot

Judas Iscariot failed to control his lust for silver (John 12:1-6, Matthew 26:14-16)

Get to know that the flesh (the body) is never satisfied of wanting things in life on a daily basis and even those things that are not necessary and therefore need to be controlled and managed properly. Lack of practicing self-control in life leads to immature behaviour in a Christian which is not good at all. It is the unregenerate that can do, say, eat or drink anything anyhow as do lack this fruit of the Holy Spirit, that is, self-control.

Moderation in everything is an important thing in every day life for qualitative lifestyle and I do thank God very much for providing self-control as part of the package in the Holy Spirit for His children (the Saints) - God surely is a God of order. If Christians lacked this fruit they would be in a dilemma. It is only in self-control that one can have

orderly living with checks and balances and of course sanity in life.

Chapter 7

The Patience Factor

The next step to Christian maturity is Patience. Now this factor known as patience may seem strange in this dotcom era where there is a lot of technological breakthroughs brought about by the computer but the word of God remains sure and steadfast and a Christian must continue to stick to it as it has its own important aspect in Christianity, where there is no modernism. The other name for it is long-suffering and is among the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22).

And to knowledge temperance, and **to temperance** patience;…….

2 Peter 1:6

My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

But **let patience have her perfect work,** that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

James 1:2-4

Patience is equally important as it does a perfect work in us.

Be patient therefore**, brethren**, unto the coming of the Lord. behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.
Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

James 5:7-8

Here we find that patience is required of the brethren as they wait for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ who is their Saviour. Remember the case of the ten virgins (Matthew 25:1-13) all were waiting for the bridegroom (the Lord).

Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall:
But **they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles;** they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

Isaiah 40:30-31

God gives strength to those who wait upon him patiently. Now something else that seems quite interesting is that prophet Isaiah seems to be prophesying at the same time the rapture of the Church! Why? Because he is talking about those waiting trusting on the Lord shall mount up (fly) with wings. What I know, men don't fly on their own save for be flown in an aircraft or a huge balloon, but this is different as they the men shall have wings and go up (ascend).

But, behold, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but **is longsuffering to us-ward,** not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

2 Peter 3:8-9

Here we find that the Lord is patient towards men waiting for their repentance so that none perish for lack of it on their part. He is faithful on his promise

to come back to take His own. (John 14:1-3). Some already had come impatient wondering that the Lord had delayed to come and apostle Peter had to remind them about God's faithfulness over the matter.

Because they despised my judgements, and walked not in my statutes, but polluted my Sabbaths: for their heart went after other idols.
Nevertheless **mine eye shared them from destroying them,** neither did I make an end of them in the wilderness.
But I said unto their children in the wilderness, Walk ye not in the statutes of your fathers, neither observe their judgements, nor defile yourselves with their idols:
I am the LORD your God; walk in my statutes, and keep my judgements, and do them;
And hallow my sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the LORD your God.

Ezekiel 20:16-20

God was patient with the Israelites and was not quick at punishing them but was patient in giving them a chance to change. He is slow to anger.

But **in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience,** in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses,
In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings;
By pureness, by knowledge, **by longsuffering**, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned.

2 Corinthians 6:4-6

We approve ourselves as the ministers of God when we are seen to be patient in all things.

And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end:
That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who **through faith and patience inherit the promises**.
For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could sware by no greater, he sware by himself,

Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee.

And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.

Hebrews 6:11-15

I CHARGE thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom.

Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, **exhort with long-suffering** and doctrine.

2 Timothy 4: 1-2

In our preaching we should exhort with all patience as well.

Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward.

For **ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.**

For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry

Now the just shall live by faith: but if any draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

Hebrews 10: 35-39

It is after being patient and doing the will of God that will make one to receive the promise of God.

I WAITED patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.

Psalm 40:1-2

If the psalmist did not wait patiently for the Lord he would not have received the Lord's deliverance nor have been established by him, so it is very important for one to have patience. Some Christians are not patient even after praying to God and expect instant response from God but God does not necessarily work that way as he has his time for

everything. (Exodus 12:40-41, Ecclesiastes 3:10-11).

AND when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.

And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me.

And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron.

And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they, said,

These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, Tomorrow is a feast to the LORD.

And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.

Exodus 32:1-6

That is what the children of Israel did. It was both a sad and an absurd incident simply because they were not patient to wait for Moses the servant of God to come down out of the mount where he had been summoned by God to be given the Ten Commandments for them. They ended with a substitute an idol and not the true God who had delivered them out of bondage and had taken care of them throughout. As a Christian be patient otherwise you will end up with a substitute which is not God's will and plan for you. Don't be in a hurry as it has been said 'Hurry, hurry has no blessing!'.

SAUL reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel,

Saul chose him three thousand men of Israel; whereof two thousand were with Saul in Mich'-ma-sh and in mount Beth-el, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gib'-e-ah of Benjamin: and the rest of the people he sent every man to his tent.

And Jonathan smote the garrison of the Phil-is'-tines that was in Ge'-ba, and the Phil-is'-tines heard of it. And Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, Let the Hebrews hear.

And all Israel heard say that Saul had smitten a garrison of the Phil-is'-tines, and that Israel also was had in abomination with the Phil-is'-tines. And the people were called together after Saul to Gil'-gal.

And the Phil-is'-tines gathered themselves together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which is on the seashore in multitude: and they came up, and pitched in Mich'-mash, eastward from Beth-a'-ven.

When the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait, (for the people were distressed,) then the people did hide themselves in caves, and in

thickets, and in rocks, and in high places, and in pits.

And some of the Hebrews went over Jordan to the land of Gad and Gil'-e-ad. As for Saul, he was yet in Gil'-gal, and all the people followed him trembling.

And he tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel had appointed: but Samuel came not to Gil'-gal; and the people were scattered from him.

And Saul said, Bring hither a burnt offering to me, and peace offerings.

And he offered the burnt offering.

And it came to pass, that as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might salute him.

And Samuel said, What hast thou done? And Saul said, because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that thou comest not within the days appointed, and that the Phil-is'-tines gathered themselves together at Mich'-mash;

Therefore said I, The Phil-is'-tines will come down now upon me to Gil'-gal, and I have not made

supplication unto the LORD: I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering.

And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever.

But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee.

1 Samuel 13:1-14

That is a very big lesson indeed for both you and me. Let us not force to change our circumstances but rather wait on the Lord to change it for us. When Samuel told Saul to wait for seven days, it was not Samuel's word but God's word (the Lord's). Saul was supposed to wait until day seven was over-which was not the case as Samuel did not come to Gilgal on the eighth day but on the seventh day. But Saul became fearful of what he saw and became impatient at a time the day was not yet

over. Saul had many excuses but excuses before God are useless, save for true repentance (Adam and Eve had excuses but still received God's judgement on all of them).

God is not a man he cannot lie. (Numbers 23:19)- Saul would have waited a bit longer. Samuel asked Saul intentionally as he knew (as a prophet) Saul had messed up everything by rushing to offer sacrifices (which Samuel was to offer to God). Because of Saul's action his kingdom was not established for ever as God intended. Our salvation we Christians cannot be established with our impatience.

We just need to learn to be patient in our Christian Walk. At one time a brother-in- the Lord who happened to be my neighbour told me 'My brother, the salvation we received is a marathon don't run/rush or else you will tire up, go slowly!'. I believe he had a point on the issue of patience. By going slowly, he must have meant not getting tired quickly and then quitting. Some people have said that 'winners are not quiters'. We just need to wait and keep on hoping until we are finally there-

receive what we were waiting for (Romans 8:22-25).

For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.
And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves grown within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.
For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?
But **if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.**

Romans 8:22-25

We have to keep on waiting even for the redemption of our bodies (which is the consummation of our salvation). Read also Daniel 12:12, Philippians 3:20-21, 1 Corinthians 15:49-54.

THEREFORE being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

And not only so, but **we glory in tribulations** also: **knowing that tribulation worketh patience;**

And patience, experience; and experience, hope:

And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

Romans 5:1-5

The patience a Christian has brings about experience and experience in return brings hope, the hope of which does not bring shame why? Because that hope result in eternal life in heaven with the Lord of all glory (Romans 10:8-11, 1 Peter 1:3-4; 13-16). Get to know that if one does not get patient in one's life in Christianity one may end up like Abram with an 'Ishmael' and it will not be good for one (Genesis 15:1-6; 16:1-17:1-2). One need an Isaac and not an Ishmael (a substitute).

Abram spoilt for himself but God had mercy on him (Genesis 21:1-3).

We need not to behave that way as it can be pre-emptive and premature on our part. Let us be patient enough to receive the good fruit (full fruit) of our salvation.

Chapter 8

The Godliness Factor

Godliness is another factor leading to growth and maturity in the Christian life. This is (synonymous) - to Holiness. One has to mature in this as is yet another character of God.

And to godliness, brotherly kindness;

…….

2 Peter 1:7

God expects his children to be holy as he Himself is holy. If we are truly his children we are going to be like him in holiness partaking his nature.

Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like thee, **glorious in holiness**, fearful in praises, doing wonders?

Exodus 15:11

As you are aware, there are other gods apart from Jehovah God. But the only one who is holy among

them is God who is the only true God as other gods are false gods also known as idols.

Exalt the LORD our God, and worship at his holy hill; for **the LORD our God is holy**.

Psalm 99:9

God needs to be worshipped in holiness as he is holy. (Read also 1Peter 1:15-16)

For **I am the LORD your God**: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and **ye shall be holy: for I am holy:** neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

For I am the LORD that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: **ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.**

Leviticus 11:44-45

IN the year that King Uz-zi'-ah died **I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne,** high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.

Above it stood the ser'-a-phim: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. **And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.**

Isaiah 6:1-3

The Seraphims in heaven affirm God's holiness: That God is holy.

Blessed are **the pure in heart**: for they **shall see God.**

Matthew 5:8

Only the pure in heart are going to see God. Purity of heart is holiness and comes about as a result of being washed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ his Son in salvation (at one's conversion) and need to be maintained by staying away from sin.

HAVING therefore these promises **dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness** of the flesh and spirit, **perfecting holiness in the fear of God.**

2 Corinthians 7:1

When we cleanse our flesh and spirit (not allowing sin to stay in) we are perfecting holiness in us which comes as a result of fearing God by staying away from sin.

Do all things without murmurings and disputing:
That ye may **be blameless** and harmless, **the sons of God,** without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye **shine as lights in the world;**

Philippians 2:14-15

Murmurings and disputings make us to be blammable before the world, hence the need to shun such behaviour.

Follow peace with all men, and **holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:**

Hebrews 12:14

We still see in this scripture that holiness (godliness) is key to seeing God (Remember Matthew 5:8)

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to **be in all holy conversation and godliness.**

2 Peter 3:10-11

A terrible time is ahead of us and as Christians it should find us living in holiness.

And a highway shall be there and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it;……

Isaiah 35:8

There is a way called the way of holiness and which only the pure in heart (holy ones) shall be able to pass over it. That way is the way leading to heaven and therefore one need to remain steadfast in holiness so as to remain in that way and finally

find ourselves in heaven ushered in by the Lord at his coming in the rapture of the holy Church.

Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall **we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?**
For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, **that we might be partakers of his holiness.**

Hebrews 12:9-10

God the Father of spirits chastens his children when they go astray for their profit to be partakers of his holiness.

For **God hath** not **called us** unto uncleanness, but **unto holiness.**

1 Thessalonians 4:7

We are as Christians saved by Christ Jesus, are called by God to be and remain holy in him staying away from sin.

If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:

That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

And **be renewed in the spirit of your mind;**

And that ye **put on the new man, which after God is created in** righteousness and **true holiness.**

Ephesians 4:21-24

We must continue to renew our mind in the spirit to continue being created by God in true holiness (holiness of God).

For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.

Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.

Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and iniquity unto iniquity; even so **now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.**

Romans 6:14-19

A Christian must yield one's members (body) servants to righteousness (righteous acts) in God which leads to God's holiness.

PAUL, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,

(Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the Holy Scripture)

Concerning his Son **Jesus Christ our Lord,** which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;

And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to **the spirit of holiness**, by the resurrection from the dead:

By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name:

Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus **Christ:**

To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and the peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 1:1-7

By accepting Jesus Christ into our life we are saved and receive the spirit of holiness.

I EXHORT therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;

For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may **lead a quite and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.**

For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and come unto the knowledge of the truth.

1 Timothy 2:1-4

Being godly involves praying for all people in the society including those that are in authority as well.

But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and **exercise thyself** rather **unto godliness**

For bodily exercise profiteth little: but **godliness is profitable unto all things,** having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation.

1 Timothy 4: 7-9

A Christian must refuse any thing that is not true or is unholy but to stick to sound doctrine which is of the faith in Jesus Christ and which is profitable in all things in life now and thereafter.

But **godliness with contentment is great gain.**

For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.

But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

1 Timothy 6:6-10

Godliness and contentment is great gain because it makes one to be free from hurtful lusts. Riches is not bad per se only it can lead one easily to a lot of mischief which is sinful. Money equally is not sin in itself but what is sinful is to love it, why? because it can easily lead one to seek for it by all means which is dangerous as one may go for unorthodox methods to get it eg through: immorality, tricks or crime which is sin. By not loving money or riches one may be saved from all this trouble. Those that love money have ended up even taking God's time being busy in employment work or their business and have no time to spare to

attend Christian fellowships or church services on Sundays or to read and study and meditate on the word of God or to pray and also to seek the face of God in fasting.

Say to the righteous, that it shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings.

Isaiah 3:10

The key is righteousness. Just be righteous and it will be well with you. God is righteous and therefore to be righteous is to be godly and that is most profitable.

Chapter 9

The Brotherly kindness Factor

Brotherly love or brotherly kindness in another word, is something that must grow in a Christian and mature up. This is another key to Christian maturity.

And to godliness **brotherly kindness;**

……

2 Peter 1:7

LET **brotherly love** continue.

Hebrews 13:1

It looks quite a simple statement but it is powerful. The continuity of brotherly love brings maturity in a Christian and hence it is highly encouraged.

He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.

1 John 2:10

Without brotherly love we cannot grow in Christ Jesus.

Be kindly **affectioned** one to another **with brotherly love;** in honour preferring one another;

Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;

Romans 12:10-11

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye **love one another, as I have loved you, that ye also love one another**

By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

John 13:34-35

Brotherly love must be in a Christian as one who is following the footsteps of Jesus Christ and proves one's discipleship to Jesus to all men. In the above scripture Christ commands brotherly love among the brethren. This love is specifically love between a Christian and his fellow Christian. The general love we will come to shortly after this subject on brotherly love. That general love, is love that one has towards all people whether saved or not.

This is my commandment, That ye **love one another,** as I have loved you.

John 15:12

Here too, Christ repeats to his disciples the same command that they love one another as brethren in the Lord.

Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.
He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

1 John 4:7-8

Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto the unfeigned love of the **brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:**
Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

1 Peter 1:22-23

A Christian has to show ardent love to his/her fellow Christians.

For this is **the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.**
Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother.
And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.
Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.
We know **that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.** He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.
Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.
Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.
But whose hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

My little children, **let us love** not in word, neither in tongue; but **in deed** and **in truth**.

1 John 3:11-18

In the above epistle of John (an apostle and the brother of James) to the Church of Christ he reminds the church of what the Lord told them when he was with them in the flesh (in human form) (John 13:34-35; 15:12) that they love each other as brothers in the Lord. He goes on further to explain that love (brotherly love) how and what it is and the consequences for lacking it giving the example of Cain (verse 12) and other examples applicable on Christians (verses 14c and 15 respectively). Verses 17 and 18 he wonders how one can claim to be a Christian (a brother in the Lord) and yet not show it and that it is shown in deed and truth (in action and not mere word or talk).

But speaking the truth in love, may **grow up into him** in all things, which is the head, **even Christ:**
From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth,

according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

Ephesians 4:15-16

And **be ye kind one to another**, tender- hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

Ephesians 4:32

Being kind one to another and forgiving one another is a sign of brotherly love by Christians.

Put on, therefore, as **the elect of God**, holy and, beloved bowels of mercy, **kindness,** humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering;

For bearing are another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

Colossians 3:12-13

Now let me direct you to a vivid brotherly love which is totally the opposite of the case of Cain on his brother Abel. Read on.

And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people.

AND Joseph fell upon his father's face, and wept upon him, and kissed him.

And Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father: and the physicians embalmed Israel.

And forty days were fulfilled for him; for so are fulfilled the days of those which are embalmed and the Egyptians mourned for him threescore and ten days.

And when the days of his mourning were past, Joseph spake unto the house of Pharaoh, saying, If now I have found grace in your eyes, speak, I pray you, in the your eyes, speak, I pray you, in the ears of Pharaoh, saying,

My father made me swear, saying, Lo, I die: in my grave which I have digged for me in the land of Canaan, there shalt thou bury me. Now therefore let me go up, I pray thee, and bury my father, and I

will come again. And Pharaoh said, Go up, and bury thy father, according as he made thee swear.

And Joseph went up to bury his father: and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt,

And all the house of Joseph, and his brethren, and his father's house: only their little ones, and their flocks, and their herds, they left in the land of Go'-shen.

And there went up with him both chariots and horsemen: and it was a very great company.

And they came to the threshing floor of A'-tad, which is beyond Jordan, and there they mourned with a great and sore lamentation: and he made a mourning for his father seven days.

And when the inhabitants of the land, the Ca'-na-an-ites, saw the mourning in the floor of A'-tad, they said, This is a grievous mourning to the Egyptians: wherefore the name of it was called A'-bel-miz'-ra-im, which is beyond Jordan.

And his sons did unto him according as he commanded them:

For his sons carried him into the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field of Mach-pe'-lah, which Abraham bought with the field for a possession of a burying place of E'-phron the Hit'-tite, before Mam'-re.

And Joseph returned into Egypt, he and his brethren, and all that went up with him to bury his father, after he had buried his father.

And when Joseph's brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him.

And they sent a messenger unto Joseph, saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying,

So shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin; for they did unto thee evil; and now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father. And Joseph wept when they spake unto him.

And his brethren also went and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold, we be thy servants.

And Joseph said unto them,

Fear not: for am I in the place of God?

But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God, meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much **people alive**

Now therefore fear not: I will nourish you, and your little ones,

And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them.

Genesis 49:33-50:21

And now I leave that love in the family well displayed by Joseph to his brethren and bring you to the brotherly love in the church as recorded in the epistle of James to the Church of Christ, in challenging their faith.

What doth it profit, **my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him?**

If a brother or a sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,

And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give

them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?

Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

James 2:14-17

The above surely shows the lack of brotherly love and which should not be seen in a true Christian believer. No wonder Peter had to tell the Church in his epistle to add other ingredients (factors) to her faith (2 Peter 1:5-8). Faith need to be mixed with others to serve and complete its purpose in the body of Christ.

Finally, be ye all of one mind, **having compassion one of other, love as brethren**, be pitiful,

1 Peter 3:8

Honor all men. **Love the brotherhood**. Fear God. Honor the king.

1 Peter 2:17

Let all things be done perfectly.

BRETHREN, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

Galatians 6:1 – 2

From the above scripture you can see for yourself that if one truly loved another, one will care for him or her. One will have feelings and the other's burdens will seem to the one as his and will do something about them.

Chapter 10

The Charity Factor

Charity is another key or factor in Christian growth and maturity and which must be there in the life of a Christian. It is also called love. It is one of the gifts you find in the epistle of Apostle Paul to the church in Galatia (Galatians 5:22).

That **Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,**
May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;
And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye **might be filled with all the fullness of God.**

Ephesians 3:17-19

And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and **he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him**

1 John 4:16

The above two scriptures do point to us that in love we are filled with all the fullness of God as God

then dwells in us. So to speak as we continue in God's love we also at the same time mature in God who is love.

And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness **charity.**

2 Peter 1:7

God himself is love as we read in the Holy Scripture and therefore any one with God in him or her must have love, not may have love.

Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.
He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.
In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.
Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

No man hath seen God at any time**. If we love one another God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.**

Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.

And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.

Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he is God.

And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. **God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.**

Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgement: because as he is, so are we in this world.

John 4:7-17

From the above scripture it comes out clear that because God is love, we must remain in love in order to grow in God and become mature in God. Only by doing so is one perfected in the process.

Now that makes love to be quite a crucial factor in Christianity so as to be Christ like.

BUT of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.
For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as thief in the night.
For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.
But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.
Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.
Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.
For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.
But **let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love;** and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.

For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,
Who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

1 Thessalonians 5:1-10

The above scripture also gives a clear picture of the importance of love in Christianity without which one cannot enter into the rapture of Christ's holy Church to be with him forever (1 Thessalonians 4:14-17, Philippians 3:20-21) as we have to be and live in the love of God to be able to live with God into eternity after being perfected in love through the power of the Holy Spirit and by faith. Remember that our Lord Jesus Christ died for us on the cross as an act of love and therefore the life of a Christian is founded in love.

And above all these things **put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.**

Colossians 3:14

Now here we see Apostle Paul's epistle to the church at Colossae telling them that they need to put on charity (love) as it is the bond of perfectness.

Quite powerful this love of God, it just does wonders.

But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sad'-du-cees to silence, they were gathered together.
Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying,
Master, which is the great commandment in the law?
Jesus said unto him, thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.
This is the first and great commandment.
And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt **love thy neighbour as thyself.**
On these two commandments hang the law and the prophets.

Matthew 22:34-40

No wonder apostle Paul told the church at Colossae that love is the bond of perfectness. Jesus Christ also told that lawyer (a Pharisee) the importance of

love which need be twofold on two fronts: love to God followed by love to mankind.
That is why Jesus said the following:

Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye, even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

Matthew 7:12

Do you see the similarity in the wording of these two scriptures? The law and the prophets. It all touches on doing (action) and that is love. It has also been called as the golden rule- the scripture in the book of Matthew (Matthew 7:12). Now did I say loving is doing? Please read the following:

If ye love me, keep my commandments.

John 14:15

To love God is to keep (do) the commandments of God.

If ye keep my commandments, **ye shall abide in my love;** even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

John 15:10

My little children, let us not **love** in word, neither in tongue; but **in deed and in truth.**

John 4:18

Love is an action, a deed and not a speech or a mere word.

And the Lord make you to **increase and abound in love** one toward another, and **toward all men**, even as we do toward you:

To the end he may stablish your hearts unblamable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.

1 Thessalonians 3:12-13

Love is very important. Remember Colossians 3:14 - the bond of perfectness which is found in love. In the above scripture it talks of making (establishing) the heart to be unblamable before God.

THOUGH I speak with the tongues of men and of angles, and have no **charity,** I am become as a sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understanding all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not **charity**, I am nothing.

And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have no **charity,** it profiteth nothing.

Charity suffereth long, and is kind; **charity** envieth not, charity, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,

Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;

Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;

Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.

And now abideth faith, hope, **charity,** these three; but the greatest of these is **charity.**

1 Corinthians 13:1-8, 13

And now the winner is; Charity. Verses 1-8 charity has been mentioned seven times and as you are aware (I hope so) the number seven stands for complete or perfect in the spiritual realm. And now going to verse 13, charity is mentioned twice.

In the whole chapter 13 which is basically on charity (love) it is mentioned nine times and that is the number of the fruit of the Holy Spirit and which love is one of them being mentioned first among them. You talk of a coincident, this might be one of them.

For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt **love thy neighbour as thyself.**

Galatians 5:14

Owe no man any thing, but to love **one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.**

For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shall not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly

comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore **love is the fulfilling of the law.**

Romans 13:8-10

We are told to owe no man anything but to love one another as loving one another is fulfilling the law. Ideally our debt need be on love than on any other thing of monetary value. Why? Because love is free from God and one can easily pay that to another unlike money which is not as easy when it comes to its repayment. So my advice is we avoid borrowing as much as possible/is practicable and come to the realization that we need not love it much. In case we incur a debt, we need to come out of it in the shortest time possible. Get me right I am not trying to advocate putting the banks out of business but telling the truth as per the scriptures that repaying back a debt is usually not easy as one may think.

Also, the writing off of debt is not normally automatic and is also rare and not common. Do read the following scriptures as a guide: Nehemiah

5:1-5, 2 Kings 4:1-7, 2 Kings 6:1-7, Proverbs 22:7, Matthew 18:24-26.

You will allow me to add this other scripture based on the others I have just mentioned above (Matthew 22:34-40, 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13, 1 Corinthians 13:13, Galatians 5:14 and Romans 13:8-10).

For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to the strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;

That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; **that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,**

May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length, and depth, and height;

And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, **that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.**

Ephesians 3:14-19

From this last scripture on love I do hope you have seen what I have seen in verse 17 and 19 in both cases the last parts of the verse- Being rooted and grounded in love translates to being filled with all the fullness of God, which to me is but the fullness of Christ, as God and Christ are one (The Father and the Son - John 10:30; 37; 38; Colossians 1:15, 19; John 1:1-3).

Now concerning things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but **love edifies.**

1 Corinthians 8:1

So love is more important than anything else.

Notes to the reader

It is a pleasure to me for you to have taken the trouble to buy and read this book and which I believe your efforts to do so has not been in vain. If you have any comments don't hesitate to write using the address given.

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Steps to Christian Maturity

'The Vital Goal in Christianity'

The aim and the ultimate goal of any born-again Christian is to reach maturity in one's Christian Walk and be with the Lord in heaven. It is for that very reason that this book is coming to print to be of invaluable use for the believer to be able to achieve in his/her spiritual walk with the Lord. This is a must have read.

By reading this book you will get to know the following

- What the Bible says on maturity
- The Importance of maturity
- The various factors that touch on maturity
- That a born-again Christian has the potential to mature up
- The Conclusion

The Author Fredrick Geoffrey Omondi has authored many other books. He is 60 years old, married to one wife and they have four children. He is a preacher and a teacher of the word of God and holds a Diploma in Biblical Studies from both Emmaus Bible School and Voice of Prophecy in Nairobi, Kenya. He is an active life member of the Scripture Union of Kenya and do fellowship at King's Outreach Church under the Ministry of Repentance and Holiness.

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