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## Faith & Works

We have been exploring how our life in Jesus expresses itself in loving actions.

We have seen that our loving actions (often called good works in the Bible) serve our spiritual life in much the same way as exercise and activity relate to the health of our physical lives.

They are evidence that we are alive in Jesus and they strengthen our spiritual life.

And, we have discovered two important principles that at first glance appear to contradict each other.

We are saved entirely by God's grace. It's a gift made possible by what Jesus did at the Cross. We can never be good enough to deserve it.

*God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago. ([Ephesians 2:8-10](#), NLT)*

When you accept His gift of grace, you become *God's masterpiece*. He puts His law in your heart so you will begin living the way you were designed to live (see [Jeremiah 31:31-34](#)).

*Keeping the law is the evidence of Jesus at work in your life!*

Keeping the law does not give you salvation; it is the result of the gift of grace Jesus gives you when you invite Him to take control of your life.

But we have also seen that we are judged by our actions.

In the parable of the sheep and the goats ([Matthew 25](#)) Jesus made it clear that those on His right hand – the sheep – were saved because they were engaged in loving others in tangible ways. They were providing food, shelter, and clothing. They were ministering to those who were sick or in prison.

They were judged as righteous and saved because of their loving actions.

Those on the left – the goats – were lost, not because they did bad things, but because they failed to do loving things for others. They were focused on themselves.

We are judged by our actions because they demonstrate who has our heart. Loving actions are the results of trusting God enough to submit our lives to His plan.

## Good Fruit

Jesus illustrated this again when He spoke of good and bad trees:

*“A good tree produces good fruit, and a bad tree produces bad fruit. A good tree can’t produce bad fruit, and a bad tree can’t produce good fruit ... just as you can identify a tree by its fruit, so you can identify people by their actions.”* ([Matthew 7:17-20](#), NLT)

Our actions define who we are just like the quality of fruit defines the quality of a tree.

The Bible tells us what actions qualify as good fruit:

*The Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.* ([Galatians 5:22-23](#), (NLT)

Some of these are internal qualities such as joy, peace, and self-control. Others are principles that direct our interaction with others – love, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, and gentleness.

When your life includes these actions it shows that God is directing your life. The only way for these to be exhibited in your life is for you to be connected to God.

## What is a Hypocrite?

If I recognize that God wants me to relate to other people with patience, and I’m not feeling especially patient should I still act patient?

If I act patient when I feel extremely impatient am I being a hypocrite?

Our society puts a big emphasis on feelings. For many, feelings have become the guide for action. We are encouraged to get our feelings out, to express ourselves. If we are not being true to ourselves – which generally means our feelings – we are often defined by society as a hypocrite if we act differently than we feel.

This can be used as an excuse to avoid doing things we may not feel like doing. I don't feel like doing this and I don't want to be a hypocrite, so I will be true to my feelings and not do it.

Is this really what it means to be a hypocrite?

According to [Webster's Online Dictionary](#), a hypocrite is:

*a person who puts on a false appearance of virtue or religion or  
a person who acts in contradiction to his or her stated beliefs or feelings*

Early in His ministry while talking to the church folk, Jesus said:

*"You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you, for he wrote, 'These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me ...'" (Mark 7:6-7, NLT)*

Towards the end of His ministry, He said:

*"The teachers of religious law and the Pharisees are the official interpreters of the law of Moses. So practice and obey whatever they tell you, but don't follow their example. For they don't practice what they teach ... Everything they do is for show ..." (Matthew 23:2-5, NLT)*

The Biblical definition of a hypocrite is someone who claims to know what the right thing is, but fails to act on it. It's a failure to live up to what you believe.

James, the brother of Jesus, accurately describes a hypocrite:

*It is sin to know what you ought to do and then not do it. (James 4:17, NLT)*

A hypocrite is not someone who does something they don't feel like doing.

A person who does what they know is right, regardless of how they feel is the exact opposite of a hypocrite.

The other day when I was working in my office, Pat asked me for help with something. I don't remember what it was, but as soon as she asked it I recognized that she did in fact need my help and right then was the time to do it.

Now, I was in my groove doing important office stuff and honestly I was a little frustrated by the interruption and didn't really want to help at that moment.

But, I helped her anyway. Was I being a hypocrite? Or, was I acting on the fact that I love her enough to deal with a frustrating interruption in a loving way – by helping her.

The fact is, my love for her, which is deeper than the frustration I was feeling, motivated my action.

A hypocrite is someone who says one thing but does another. It's a person who knows what's right, but fails to do it.

*It is sin to know what you ought to do and then not do it. (James 4:17, NLT)*

So where do you and I fit into all of this?

As much I hate to admit it, I'm guilty of being a hypocrite.

When I speak to you from the pulpit, I do my best to speak the truth about God, about His love, and about our need to trust Him enough to follow His instructions. While I have never claimed to be perfect, it's true that my life is not always in harmony with what I know to be right.

There are many times when I share thoughts from God's Word, realizing that I need to hear and follow the truth as much as you do.

The bad news is, in reality most of us are practicing hypocrites. We say we believe in God, but our lives don't always support our words.

And the really bad news is that hypocrisy is about as bad as sin gets. It more than anything else turns people away from God.

The Good News is that God specializes in dealing with sin. And when we come to Him confessing our sin, He willingly forgives us and immediately begins the process of cleaning us up as pictured in [Ezekiel 36](#) where He says:

*"I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. Your filth will be washed away, and you will no longer worship idols. And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart. And I will put my Spirit in you so that you will follow my decrees and be careful to obey my regulations."*

[\(Ezekiel 36:25-27, NLT\)](#)

He takes the mess you've made out of your life and cleans it up.

He takes out your old stubborn heart, the one that got you into the mess to begin with and gives you a new one, a heart that is in tune with Him.

And then He puts the Holy Spirit into your life to keep from messing up your heart again and give you the power to love others.

The truth is, loving others is seldom convenient, comfortable, or fun. It requires you to look away from yourself and our comfort. It asks you to put aside your needs and your desires in order to provide Christ-like love to people who can be difficult to love.

The most loving thing that has ever happened was Jesus sacrificing His life on the cross. It was not only unpleasant and inconvenient, it was downright brutal. It caused extreme mental and physical anguish and it cost Him His life.

Jesus told us to love others like He did. That love has very little to do with warm fuzzy feelings. It is acting on principles in spite of how you feel.

This kind of love only comes from God. You can't manufacture it or pretend you have it. You only get it by being connected to Jesus.

This kind of love is the result of God putting His law of love in your mind and writing it on your heart (see [Jeremiah 31:31-34](#)).

This love is the evidence that God is in you and working with you.

If this love is missing, it's not an indication that you need to try harder. It means you need to come closer to Him.

It means you need to spend more quiet time listening to Him speak to you through the Bible and sharing your heart with Him in prayer.

It seems like every discussion we have about following Jesus ends up here.

The secret to successfully following Him begins with coming to Him.

The secret to becoming the person God wants you to be is staying with Him.

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight. (Proverbs 3:5-6, NIV)*

The sooner you and I get this fixed in our minds, the better off we will be.

And God will be honored and glorified as you and I relate to those He brings across our paths with love and compassion.

And when that happens, people's lives will be changed. Our church will be reignited. And, our community will begin seeing God's love in action and be drawn to Him.

## Notes

Text you find in [this color](#) is a link to more information. It may take you to the Bible verse in context and/or in several different translations utilizing [BibleGateway.com](#). In some cases, it may take you to a website where there is additional information. And, it may take you to a PDF copy of previous sermons in this series.

## Previous Messages in this Series (click on the title to download it)

- May 9, 2020 – *Dead or Alive?* ([click here](#) to watch it on YouTube)
- May 16, 2020 – *Symptom or Disease?* ([click here](#) to watch it on YouTube)
- May 30, 2020 – *Out or In?* ([click here](#) to watch it on YouTube)
- June 6, 2020 – *Starve or Eat?* ([click here](#) to watch it on YouTube)
- June 13, 2020 – *Atrophy or Exercise?* ([click here](#) to watch it on YouTube)
- June 20, 2020 – *Just Love?* ([click here](#) to watch it on YouTube)

## Hypocrite

### Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary

- a person who puts on a false appearance of virtue or religion (noun)
- a person who acts in contradiction to his or her stated beliefs or feelings (noun)

### Dictionary.com

- a person who pretends to have virtues, moral or religious beliefs, principles, etc., that he or she does not actually possess, especially a person whose actions belie stated beliefs (noun)
- a person who feigns some desirable or publicly approved attitude, especially one whose private life, opinions, or statements belie his or her public statements (noun)

**Synonyms for Hypocrite:** bigot, impostor, cheat, deceiver, charlatan, con artist, crook, dissembler, fake, fraud, humbug, informer, lip server, malingerer, masquerader, pharisee, phony, poser, pretender, swindler, trickster, two-timer, two-face, wolf in sheep's clothing

## The Origin of the Word Hypocrite

A number of different things might pop to mind when we hear the word *hypocrite*. Maybe it's a politician caught in a scandal; maybe it's a religious leader doing something counter to their creed;

maybe it's a scheming and conniving character featured in soap operas. But it's likely that the one thing that doesn't come to mind is the theater.

A theatrical mask from the 1st century B.C.E. 'Hypocrite' comes from the Greek word 'hypokrites', which means "an actor."

The word *hypocrite* ultimately came into English from the Greek word *hypokrites*, which means "an actor" or "a stage player." The Greek word itself is a compound noun: it's made up of two Greek words that literally translate as "an interpreter from underneath." That bizarre compound makes more sense when you know that the actors in ancient Greek theater wore large masks to mark which character they were playing, and so they interpreted the story from underneath their masks.

The Greek word took on an extended meaning to refer to any person who was wearing a figurative mask and pretending to be someone or something they were not. This sense was taken into medieval French and then into English, where it showed up with its earlier spelling, *ypocrite*, in 13th-century religious texts to refer to someone who pretends to be morally good or pious in order to deceive others. (*Hypocrite* gained its initial *h*- by the 16th century.)

It took a surprisingly long time for *hypocrite* to gain its more general meaning that we use today: "a person who acts in contradiction to his or her stated beliefs or feelings." Our first citations for this use are from the early 1700s, nearly 500 years after *hypocrite* first stepped onto English's stage. (From [Merriam-Webster.com](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/hypocrite).)

## Scripture References

**Proverbs 3:5-12 (NIV):** *Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; <sup>6</sup> in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.*

<sup>7</sup> *Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil. <sup>8</sup> This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones.*

<sup>9</sup> *Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; <sup>10</sup> then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.*

<sup>11</sup> *My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline, and do not resent his rebuke, <sup>12</sup> because the LORD disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in. (Proverbs 3:5-12, NIV)*

**Isaiah 29:13-14 (NLT):** *And so the Lord says, "These people say they are mine. They honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. And their worship of me is nothing but man-made rules learned by rote. <sup>14</sup> Because of this, I will once again astound these hypocrites with amazing wonders. The wisdom of the wise will pass away, and the intelligence of the intelligent will disappear." (Isaiah 29:13-14, NLT)*

**Isaiah 58 (NLT):** *“Shout with the voice of a trumpet blast. Shout aloud! Don’t be timid. Tell my people Israel of their sins! <sup>2</sup> Yet they act so pious! They come to the Temple every day and seem delighted to learn all about me. They act like a righteous nation that would never abandon the laws of its God. They ask me to take action on their behalf, pretending they want to be near me. <sup>3</sup> ‘We have fasted before you!’ they say. ‘Why aren’t you impressed? We have been very hard on ourselves, and you don’t even notice it!’*

*“I will tell you why!” I respond. “It’s because you are fasting to please yourselves. Even while you fast, you keep oppressing your workers. <sup>4</sup> What good is fasting when you keep on fighting and quarreling? This kind of fasting will never get you anywhere with me. <sup>5</sup> You humble yourselves by going through the motions of penance, bowing your heads like reeds bending in the wind. You dress in burlap and cover yourselves with ashes. Is this what you call fasting? Do you really think this will please the LORD?*

*<sup>6</sup> “No, this is the kind of fasting I want: Free those who are wrongly imprisoned; lighten the burden of those who work for you. Let the oppressed go free, and remove the chains that bind people. <sup>7</sup> Share your food with the hungry, and give shelter to the homeless. Give clothes to those who need them, and do not hide from relatives who need your help.*

*<sup>8</sup> “Then your salvation will come like the dawn, and your wounds will quickly heal. Your godliness will lead you forward, and the glory of the LORD will protect you from behind. <sup>9</sup> Then when you call, the LORD will answer. ‘Yes, I am here,’ he will quickly reply.*

*“Remove the heavy yoke of oppression. Stop pointing your finger and spreading vicious rumors! <sup>10</sup> Feed the hungry, and help those in trouble. Then your light will shine out from the darkness, and the darkness around you will be as bright as noon. <sup>11</sup> The LORD will guide you continually, giving you water when you are dry and restoring your strength. You will be like a well-watered garden, like an ever-flowing spring. <sup>12</sup> Some of you will rebuild the deserted ruins of your cities. Then you will be known as a builder of walls and a restorer of homes.*

*<sup>13</sup> “Keep the Sabbath day holy. Don’t pursue your own interests on that day, but enjoy the Sabbath and speak of it with delight as the LORD’s holy day. Honor the Sabbath in everything you do on that day, and don’t follow your own desires or talk idly. <sup>14</sup> Then the LORD will be your delight. I will give you great honor and satisfy you with the inheritance I promised to your ancestor Jacob. I, the LORD, have spoken!” (Isaiah 58, NLT)*

**Isaiah 64:1-6 (NLT):** *Oh, that you would burst from the heavens and come down! How the mountains would quake in your presence! <sup>2</sup> As fire causes wood to burn and water to boil, your coming would make the nations tremble. Then your enemies would learn the reason for your fame! <sup>3</sup> When you came down long ago, you did awesome deeds beyond our highest expectations. And oh, how the mountains quaked! <sup>4</sup> For since the world began, no ear has heard and no eye has seen a God like you, who works for those who wait for him! <sup>5</sup> You welcome those who gladly do good, who follow godly ways. But you have been very angry with us, for we are not godly. We*

are constant sinners; how can people like us be saved?<sup>6</sup> *We are all infected and impure with sin. When we display our righteous deeds, they are nothing but filthy rags. Like autumn leaves, we wither and fall, and our sins sweep us away like the wind.*<sup>7</sup> Yet no one calls on your name or pleads with you for mercy. Therefore, you have turned away from us and turned us over to our sins. (Isaiah 64:1-6, NLT)

**Jeremiah 13:23 (NIV):** *Can an Ethiopian change the color of his skin? Can a leopard take away its spots? Neither can you start doing good, for you have always done evil.* (Jeremiah 13:23, NIV)

**Jeremiah 31:31-34 (NLT):** *“The days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah.<sup>32</sup> It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them,” declares the LORD.*

<sup>33</sup> *“This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time,” declares the LORD. “I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.<sup>34</sup> No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, ‘Know the LORD,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,” declares the LORD. “For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.”* (Jeremiah 31:31-34, NIV)

**Ezekiel 36:26-27 (NLT):** *And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart.<sup>27</sup> And I will put my Spirit in you so that you will follow my decrees and be careful to obey my regulations.* (Ezekiel 36:26-27, NLT)

**Matthew 6:1-5 (NLT):** *“Watch out! Don’t do your good deeds publicly, to be admired by others, for you will lose the reward from your Father in heaven.<sup>2</sup> When you give to someone in need, don’t do as the hypocrites do – blowing trumpets in the synagogues and streets to call attention to their acts of charity! I tell you the truth, they have received all the reward they will ever get.<sup>3</sup> But when you give to someone in need, don’t let your left hand know what your right hand is doing.<sup>4</sup> Give your gifts in private, and your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.*

<sup>5</sup> *“When you pray, don’t be like the hypocrites who love to pray publicly on street corners and in the synagogues where everyone can see them. I tell you the truth, that is all the reward they will ever get.<sup>6</sup> But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.”* (Matthew 6:1-5, NLT)

**Matthew 6:16-18 (NLT):** *“And when you fast, don’t make it obvious, as the hypocrites do, for they try to look miserable and disheveled so people will admire them for their fasting. I tell you the truth, that is the only reward they will ever get.<sup>17</sup> But when you fast, comb your hair and wash your face.<sup>18</sup> Then no one will notice that you are fasting, except your Father, who knows what you do in private. And your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.”* (Matthew 6:16-18, NLT)

**Matthew 7:1-5 (NLT):** *“Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. <sup>2</sup> For you will be treated as you treat others. The standard you use in judging is the standard by which you will be judged.*

*<sup>3</sup> “And why worry about a speck in your friend’s eye when you have a log in your own? <sup>4</sup> How can you think of saying to your friend, ‘Let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,’ when you can’t see past the log in your own eye? <sup>5</sup> Hypocrite! First get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend’s eye.” (Matthew 7:1-5, NLT)*

**Matthew 7:12 (NLT):** *“Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you. This is the essence of all that is taught in the law and the prophets.” (Matthew 7:12, NLT)*

**Matthew 7:15-23 (NLT):** *“Beware of false prophets who come disguised as harmless sheep but are really vicious wolves. <sup>16</sup> You can identify them by their fruit, that is, by the way they act. Can you pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? <sup>17</sup> A good tree produces good fruit, and a bad tree produces bad fruit. <sup>18</sup> A good tree can’t produce bad fruit, and a bad tree can’t produce good fruit. <sup>19</sup> So every tree that does not produce good fruit is chopped down and thrown into the fire. <sup>20</sup> Yes, just as you can identify a tree by its fruit, so you can identify people by their actions.*

*<sup>21</sup> “Not everyone who calls out to me, ‘Lord! Lord!’ will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Only those who actually do the will of my Father in heaven will enter. <sup>22</sup> On judgment day many will say to me, ‘Lord! Lord! We prophesied in your name and cast out demons in your name and performed many miracles in your name.’ <sup>23</sup> But I will reply, ‘I never knew you. Get away from me, you who break God’s laws.’” (Matthew 7:15-23, NLT)*

**Matthew 11:28-30 (NLT):** *Then Jesus said, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.” (Matthew 11:28-30, NLT)*

**Matthew 23:1-39 (NLT):** *Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, <sup>2</sup> “The teachers of religious law and the Pharisees are the official interpreters of the law of Moses. <sup>3</sup> So practice and obey whatever they tell you, but don’t follow their example. For they don’t practice what they teach. <sup>4</sup> They crush people with unbearable religious demands and never lift a finger to ease the burden. <sup>5</sup> “Everything they do is for show. On their arms they wear extra wide prayer boxes with Scripture verses inside, and they wear robes with extra long tassels. <sup>6</sup> And they love to sit at the head table at banquets and in the seats of honor in the synagogues. <sup>7</sup> They love to receive respectful greetings as they walk in the marketplaces, and to be called ‘Rabbi.’ <sup>8</sup> “Don’t let anyone call you ‘Rabbi,’ for you have only one teacher, and all of you are equal as brothers and sisters. <sup>9</sup> And don’t address anyone here on earth as ‘Father,’ for only God in heaven is your Father. <sup>10</sup> And don’t let anyone call you ‘Teacher,’ for you have only one teacher, the*

Messiah. <sup>11</sup> The greatest among you must be a servant. <sup>12</sup> But those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.

<sup>13</sup> “What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you shut the door of the Kingdom of Heaven in people’s faces. You won’t go in yourselves, and you don’t let others enter either.

<sup>15</sup> “What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you cross land and sea to make one convert, and then you turn that person into twice the child of hell you yourselves are!

<sup>16</sup> “Blind guides! What sorrow awaits you! For you say that it means nothing to swear ‘by God’s Temple,’ but that it is binding to swear ‘by the gold in the Temple.’ <sup>17</sup> Blind fools! Which is more important – the gold or the Temple that makes the gold sacred? <sup>18</sup> And you say that to swear ‘by the altar’ is not binding, but to swear ‘by the gifts on the altar’ is binding. <sup>19</sup> How blind! For which is more important – the gift on the altar or the altar that makes the gift sacred? <sup>20</sup> When you swear ‘by the altar,’ you are swearing by it and by everything on it. <sup>21</sup> And when you swear ‘by the Temple,’ you are swearing by it and by God, who lives in it. <sup>22</sup> And when you swear ‘by heaven,’ you are swearing by the throne of God and by God, who sits on the throne.

<sup>23</sup> “What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are careful to tithe even the tiniest income from your herb gardens, but you ignore the more important aspects of the law – justice, mercy, and faith. You should tithe, yes, but do not neglect the more important things. <sup>24</sup> Blind guides! You strain your water so you won’t accidentally swallow a gnat, but you swallow a camel!

<sup>25</sup> “What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are so careful to clean the outside of the cup and the dish, but inside you are filthy – full of greed and self-indulgence! <sup>26</sup> You blind Pharisee! First wash the inside of the cup and the dish, and then the outside will become clean, too.

<sup>27</sup> “What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs – beautiful on the outside but filled on the inside with dead people’s bones and all sorts of impurity. <sup>28</sup> Outwardly you look like righteous people, but inwardly your hearts are filled with hypocrisy and lawlessness.

<sup>29</sup> “What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you build tombs for the prophets your ancestors killed, and you decorate the monuments of the godly people your ancestors destroyed. <sup>30</sup> Then you say, ‘If we had lived in the days of our ancestors, we would never have joined them in killing the prophets.’

<sup>31</sup> “But in saying that, you testify against yourselves that you are indeed the descendants of those who murdered the prophets. <sup>32</sup> Go ahead and finish what your ancestors started. <sup>33</sup> Snakes! Sons of vipers! How will you escape the judgment of hell?

<sup>34</sup> “Therefore, I am sending you prophets and wise men and teachers of religious law. But you will kill some by crucifixion, and you will flog others with whips in your synagogues, chasing them from city to city. <sup>35</sup> As a result, you will be held responsible for the murder of all godly people of all time – from the murder of righteous Abel to the murder of Zechariah son of Berekiah, whom you killed in the Temple between the sanctuary and the altar. <sup>36</sup> I tell you the truth, this judgment will fall on this very generation.

<sup>37</sup> “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones God’s messengers! How often I have wanted to gather your children together as a hen protects her chicks beneath her wings, but you wouldn’t let me. <sup>38</sup> And now, look, your house is abandoned and desolate. <sup>39</sup> For I tell you this, you will never see me again until you say, ‘Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the LORD!’” (Matthew 23:1-39, NLT)

**Matthew 24:1-2 (NLT):** As Jesus was leaving the Temple grounds, his disciples pointed out to him the various Temple buildings. But he responded, “Do you see all these buildings? I tell you the truth, they will be completely demolished. Not one stone will be left on top of another!” (Matthew 24:1-2, NLT)

**Matthew 24:45-51 (NLT):** “A faithful, sensible servant is one to whom the master can give the responsibility of managing his other household servants and feeding them. <sup>46</sup> If the master returns and finds that the servant has done a good job, there will be a reward. <sup>47</sup> I tell you the truth, the master will put that servant in charge of all he owns. <sup>48</sup> But what if the servant is evil and thinks, ‘My master won’t be back for a while,’ <sup>49</sup> and he begins beating the other servants, partying, and getting drunk? <sup>50</sup> The master will return unannounced and unexpected, <sup>51</sup> and he will cut the servant to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” (Matthew 24:45-51, NLT)

**Matthew 25:31-46 (NLT):** “But when the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit upon his glorious throne. <sup>32</sup> All the nations will be gathered in his presence, and he will separate the people as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. <sup>33</sup> He will place the sheep at his right hand and the goats at his left.

<sup>34</sup> “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world. <sup>35</sup> For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. <sup>36</sup> I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me.’

<sup>37</sup> “Then these righteous ones will reply, ‘Lord, when did we ever see you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you something to drink? <sup>38</sup> Or a stranger and show you hospitality? Or naked and give you clothing? <sup>39</sup> When did we ever see you sick or in prison and visit you?’

<sup>40</sup> “And the King will say, ‘I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!’

<sup>41</sup> “Then the King will turn to those on the left and say, ‘Away with you, you cursed ones, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his demons. <sup>42</sup> For I was hungry, and you didn’t feed me. I was thirsty, and you didn’t give me a drink. <sup>43</sup> I was a stranger, and you didn’t invite me into your home. I was naked, and you didn’t give me clothing. I was sick and in prison, and you didn’t visit me.’

<sup>44</sup> “Then they will reply, ‘Lord, when did we ever see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and not help you?’

<sup>45</sup> “And he will answer, ‘I tell you the truth, when you refused to help the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were refusing to help me.’

<sup>46</sup> “And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous will go into eternal life.”  
([Matthew 25:31-46](#), NLT)

**Matthew 28:18-20 (NLT):** Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and *make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.*”  
([Matthew 28:18-20](#), NLT)

**Mark 7:6-13 (NLT):** Jesus replied, “You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you, for he wrote,

*‘These people honor me with their lips,  
but their hearts are far from me.*

<sup>7</sup> *Their worship is a farce,*

*for they teach man-made ideas as commands from God.’* ([Isaiah 29:13](#))

<sup>8</sup> *For you ignore God’s law and substitute your own tradition.”*

<sup>9</sup> Then he said, “You skillfully sidestep God’s law in order to hold on to your own tradition. <sup>10</sup> For instance, Moses gave you this law from God: ‘Honor your father and mother,’ ([Exodus 20:12](#)) and ‘Anyone who speaks disrespectfully of father or mother must be put to death.’ ([Exodus 21:17](#)) <sup>11</sup> But you say it is all right for people to say to their parents, ‘Sorry, I can’t help you. For I have vowed to give to God what I would have given to you.’ <sup>12</sup> In this way, you let them disregard their needy parents. <sup>13</sup> And so you cancel the word of God in order to hand down your own tradition. And this is only one example among many others.” ([Mark 7:6-13](#), NLT)

**Mark 12:28-34 (NLT):** One of the teachers of religious law was standing there listening to the debate. He realized that Jesus had answered well, so he asked, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?”

<sup>29</sup> Jesus replied, “The most important commandment is this: ‘Listen, O Israel! The LORD our God is the one and only LORD. <sup>30</sup> And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.’ <sup>31</sup> The second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ No other commandment is greater than these.”

<sup>32</sup> The teacher of religious law replied, “Well said, Teacher. You have spoken the truth by saying that there is only one God and no other. <sup>33</sup> And I know it is important to love him with all my heart and all my understanding and all my strength, and to love my neighbor as myself. This is more important than to offer all of the burnt offerings and sacrifices required in the law.”

<sup>34</sup> Realizing how much the man understood, Jesus said to him, “You are not far from the Kingdom of God.” And after that, no one dared to ask him any more questions. (Mark 12:28-34, NLT)

**Luke 6:27-36 (NLT):** “But to you who are willing to listen, I say, *love your enemies! Do good to those who hate you. <sup>28</sup> Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who hurt you. <sup>29</sup> If someone slaps you on one cheek, offer the other cheek also. If someone demands your coat, offer your shirt also. <sup>30</sup> Give to anyone who asks; and when things are taken away from you, don’t try to get them back. <sup>31</sup> Do to others as you would like them to do to you.*

<sup>32</sup> “If you love only those who love you, why should you get credit for that? Even sinners love those who love them! <sup>33</sup> And if you do good only to those who do good to you, why should you get credit? Even sinners do that much! <sup>34</sup> And if you lend money only to those who can repay you, why should you get credit? Even sinners will lend to other sinners for a full return.

<sup>35</sup> “Love your enemies! Do good to them. Lend to them without expecting to be repaid. Then your reward from heaven will be very great, and you will truly be acting as children of the Most High, for he is kind to those who are unthankful and wicked. <sup>36</sup> You must be compassionate, just as your Father is compassionate. (Luke 6:27-36, NLT)

**Luke 10:25-37 (NLT):** One day an expert in religious law stood up to test Jesus by asking him this question: “Teacher, what should I do to inherit eternal life?”

<sup>26</sup> Jesus replied, “What does the law of Moses say? How do you read it?”

<sup>27</sup> The man answered, “‘You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind.’ And, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

<sup>28</sup> “Right!” Jesus told him. “Do this and you will live!”

<sup>29</sup> The man wanted to justify his actions, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

<sup>30</sup> Jesus replied with a story: “A Jewish man was traveling from Jerusalem down to Jericho, and he was attacked by bandits. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him up, and left him half dead beside the road.

<sup>31</sup> “By chance a priest came along. But when he saw the man lying there, he crossed to the other side of the road and passed him by. <sup>32</sup> A Temple assistant walked over and looked at him lying there, but he also passed by on the other side.

<sup>33</sup> “Then a despised Samaritan came along, and when he saw the man, he felt compassion for him. <sup>34</sup> Going over to him, the Samaritan soothed his wounds with olive oil and wine and bandaged them. Then he put the man on his own donkey and took him to an inn, where he took care of him. <sup>35</sup> The next day he handed the innkeeper two silver coins, telling him, ‘Take care of this man. If his bill runs higher than this, I’ll pay you the next time I’m here.’

<sup>36</sup> “Now which of these three would you say was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by bandits?” Jesus asked.

<sup>37</sup> The man replied, “The one who showed him mercy.”

Then Jesus said, “Yes, now go and do the same.” (Luke 10:25-37, NLT)

**Luke 18:18-30 (NLT):** Once a religious leader asked Jesus this question: “Good Teacher, what should I do to inherit eternal life?”

<sup>19</sup> “Why do you call me good?” Jesus asked him. “Only God is truly good. <sup>20</sup> But to answer your question, you know the commandments: ‘You must not commit adultery. You must not murder. You must not steal. You must not testify falsely. Honor your father and mother.’”

<sup>21</sup> The man replied, “I’ve obeyed all these commandments since I was young.”

<sup>22</sup> When Jesus heard his answer, he said, “There is still one thing you haven’t done. Sell all your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”

<sup>23</sup> But when the man heard this he became very sad, for he was very rich.

<sup>24</sup> When Jesus saw this, he said, “How hard it is for the rich to enter the Kingdom of God! <sup>25</sup> In fact, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God!”

<sup>26</sup> Those who heard this said, “Then who in the world can be saved?”

<sup>27</sup> He replied, “What is impossible for people is possible with God.”

<sup>28</sup> Peter said, “We’ve left our homes to follow you.”

<sup>29</sup> “Yes,” Jesus replied, “and I assure you that everyone who has given up house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the Kingdom of God, <sup>30</sup> will be repaid many times over in this life, and will have eternal life in the world to come.” (Luke 18:18-30, NLT)

**Luke 21:1-4 (NLT):** While Jesus was in the Temple, he watched the rich people dropping their gifts in the collection box. <sup>2</sup> Then a poor widow came by and dropped in two small coins.

<sup>3</sup> *"I tell you the truth," Jesus said, "this poor widow has given more than all the rest of them. <sup>4</sup> For they have given a tiny part of their surplus, but she, poor as she is, has given everything she has."*  
(Luke 18:18-30, NLT)

**John 6:28-66 (NLT):** They replied, "We want to perform God's works, too. What should we do?"

<sup>29</sup> *Jesus told them, "This is the only work God wants from you: Believe in the one he has sent."*

<sup>30</sup> *They answered, "Show us a miraculous sign if you want us to believe in you. What can you do?"*

<sup>31</sup> *After all, our ancestors ate manna while they journeyed through the wilderness! The Scriptures say, 'Moses gave them bread from heaven to eat.'"*

<sup>32</sup> *Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, Moses didn't give you bread from heaven. My Father did. And now he offers you the true bread from heaven. <sup>33</sup> The true bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."*

<sup>34</sup> *"Sir," they said, "give us that bread every day."*

<sup>35</sup> *Jesus replied, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again. Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. <sup>36</sup> But you haven't believed in me even though you have seen me. <sup>37</sup> However, those the Father has given me will come to me, and I will never reject them. <sup>38</sup> For I have come down from heaven to do the will of God who sent me, not to do my own will. <sup>39</sup> And this is the will of God, that I should not lose even one of all those he has given me, but that I should raise them up at the last day. <sup>40</sup> For it is my Father's will that all who see his Son and believe in him should have eternal life. I will raise them up at the last day."*

<sup>41</sup> *Then the people began to murmur in disagreement because he had said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." <sup>42</sup> They said, "Isn't this Jesus, the son of Joseph? We know his father and mother. How can he say, 'I came down from heaven'?"*

<sup>43</sup> *But Jesus replied, "Stop complaining about what I said. <sup>44</sup> For no one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them to me, and at the last day I will raise them up. <sup>45</sup> As it is written in the Scriptures, 'They will all be taught by God.' Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me. <sup>46</sup> (Not that anyone has ever seen the Father; only I, who was sent from God, have seen him.)*

<sup>47</sup> *"I tell you the truth, anyone who believes has eternal life. <sup>48</sup> Yes, I am the bread of life! <sup>49</sup> Your ancestors ate manna in the wilderness, but they all died. <sup>50</sup> Anyone who eats the bread from heaven, however, will never die. <sup>51</sup> I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live forever; and this bread, which I will offer so the world may live, is my flesh."*

<sup>52</sup> *Then the people began arguing with each other about what he meant. "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" they asked.*

<sup>53</sup> So Jesus said again, “I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you cannot have eternal life within you. <sup>54</sup> But anyone who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise that person at the last day. <sup>55</sup> For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. <sup>56</sup> Anyone who eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. <sup>57</sup> I live because of the living Father who sent me; in the same way, anyone who feeds on me will live because of me. <sup>58</sup> I am the true bread that came down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will not die as your ancestors did (even though they ate the manna) but will live forever.”

<sup>59</sup> He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum.

<sup>60</sup> Many of his disciples said, “This is very hard to understand. How can anyone accept it?”

<sup>61</sup> Jesus was aware that his disciples were complaining, so he said to them, “Does this offend you? <sup>62</sup> Then what will you think if you see the Son of Man ascend to heaven again? <sup>63</sup> The Spirit alone gives eternal life. Human effort accomplishes nothing. And the very words I have spoken to you are spirit and life. <sup>64</sup> But some of you do not believe me.” (For Jesus knew from the beginning which ones didn’t believe, and he knew who would betray him.) <sup>65</sup> Then he said, “That is why I said that people can’t come to me unless the Father gives them to me.”

<sup>66</sup> At this point many of his disciples turned away and deserted him. (John 6:28-66, NLT)

**John 13:33-35 (NLT):** Dear children, I will be with you only a little longer. And as I told the Jewish leaders, you will search for me, but you can’t come where I am going. <sup>34</sup> So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. <sup>35</sup> Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.”  
(John 13:33-35, NLT)

**John 15:1-17 (NLT):** “I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the gardener. <sup>2</sup> He cuts off every branch of mine that doesn’t produce fruit, and he prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more. <sup>3</sup> You have already been pruned and purified by the message I have given you. <sup>4</sup> Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me.

<sup>5</sup> “Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing. <sup>6</sup> Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned. <sup>7</sup> But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! <sup>8</sup> When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father.

<sup>9</sup> “I have loved you even as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love. <sup>10</sup> When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father’s commandments and remain in his love. <sup>11</sup> I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will

overflow!<sup>12</sup> *This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you.*<sup>13</sup> *There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends.*<sup>14</sup> *You are my friends if you do what I command.*<sup>15</sup> *I no longer call you slaves, because a master doesn't confide in his slaves. Now you are my friends, since I have told you everything the Father told me.*<sup>16</sup> *You didn't choose me. I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce lasting fruit, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask for, using my name.*<sup>17</sup> *This is my command: Love each other.*  
(John 15:1-17, NLT)

**Romans 2:21-24 (NLT):** *Well then, if you teach others, why don't you teach yourself? You tell others not to steal, but do you steal?*<sup>22</sup> *You say it is wrong to commit adultery, but do you commit adultery? You condemn idolatry, but do you use items stolen from pagan temples?*<sup>23</sup> *You are so proud of knowing the law, but you dishonor God by breaking it.*<sup>24</sup> *No wonder the Scriptures say, "The Gentiles blaspheme the name of God because of you."* (Romans 2:21-24, NLT)

**Romans 3:19-31 (NLT):** *Obviously, the law applies to those to whom it was given, for its purpose is to keep people from having excuses, and to show that the entire world is guilty before God.*<sup>20</sup> *For no one can ever be made right with God by doing what the law commands. The law simply shows us how sinful we are.*

<sup>21</sup> *But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago.*<sup>22</sup> *We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are.*

<sup>23</sup> *For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard.*<sup>24</sup> *Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins.*<sup>25</sup> *For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood. This sacrifice shows that God was being fair when he held back and did not punish those who sinned in times past,*<sup>26</sup> *for he was looking ahead and including them in what he would do in this present time. God did this to demonstrate his righteousness, for he himself is fair and just, and he makes sinners right in his sight when they believe in Jesus.*

<sup>27</sup> *Can we boast, then, that we have done anything to be accepted by God? No, because our acquittal is not based on obeying the law. It is based on faith.*<sup>28</sup> *So we are made right with God through faith and not by obeying the law.*

<sup>29</sup> *After all, is God the God of the Jews only? Isn't he also the God of the Gentiles? Of course he is.*<sup>30</sup> *There is only one God, and he makes people right with himself only by faith, whether they are Jews or Gentiles.*<sup>31</sup> *Well then, if we emphasize faith, does this mean that we can forget about the law? Of course not! In fact, only when we have faith do we truly fulfill the law.*

(Romans 3:19-31, NLT)

**1 Corinthians 13 (NLT):** *If I could speak all the languages of earth and of angels, but didn't love others, I would only be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. <sup>2</sup>If I had the gift of prophecy, and if I understood all of God's secret plans and possessed all knowledge, and if I had such faith that I could move mountains, but didn't love others, I would be nothing. <sup>3</sup>If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it but if I didn't love others, I would have gained nothing.*

*<sup>4</sup>Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud <sup>5</sup>or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. <sup>6</sup>It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. <sup>7</sup>Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.*

*<sup>8</sup>Prophecy and speaking in unknown languages and special knowledge will become useless. But love will last forever! <sup>9</sup>Now our knowledge is partial and incomplete, and even the gift of prophecy reveals only part of the whole picture! <sup>10</sup>But when the time of perfection comes, these partial things will become useless.*

*<sup>11</sup>When I was a child, I spoke and thought and reasoned as a child. But when I grew up, I put away childish things. <sup>12</sup>Now we see things imperfectly, like puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely.*

*<sup>13</sup>Three things will last forever – faith, hope, and love – and the greatest of these is love.*

**(1 Corinthians 13, NLT)**

**Galatians 5:22-26 (NLT):** *But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup>gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!*

*<sup>24</sup>Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there. <sup>25</sup>Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives. <sup>26</sup>Let us not become conceited, or provoke one another, or be jealous of one another. (**Galatians 5:22-26**, NLT)*

**Ephesians 2:1-10 (NLT):** *Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. <sup>2</sup>You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil – the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. <sup>3</sup>All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject to God's anger, just like everyone else.*

*<sup>4</sup>But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, <sup>5</sup>that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!) <sup>6</sup>For he raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus. <sup>7</sup>So God can point to us in all future*

ages as examples of the incredible wealth of his grace and kindness toward us, as shown in all he has done for us who are united with Christ Jesus.

<sup>8</sup> God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. <sup>9</sup> Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. <sup>10</sup> For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago. (**Ephesians 2:1-10**, NLT)

**James 1:19-27 (NLT):** Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. <sup>20</sup> Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires. <sup>21</sup> So get rid of all the filth and evil in your lives, and humbly accept the word God has planted in your hearts, for it has the power to save your souls.

<sup>22</sup> But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. <sup>23</sup> For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. <sup>24</sup> You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. <sup>25</sup> But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it.

<sup>26</sup> If you claim to be religious but don't control your tongue, you are fooling yourself, and your religion is worthless. <sup>27</sup> Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means caring for orphans and widows in their distress and refusing to let the world corrupt you.

(**James 1:19-27**, NLT)

**James 2:14-26 (NLT):** What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don't show it by your actions? Can that kind of faith save anyone? <sup>15</sup> Suppose you see a brother or sister who has no food or clothing, <sup>16</sup> and you say, "Good-bye and have a good day; stay warm and eat well" – but then you don't give that person any food or clothing. What good does that do?

<sup>17</sup> So you see, faith by itself isn't enough. Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless.

<sup>18</sup> Now someone may argue, "Some people have faith; others have good deeds." But I say, "How can you show me your faith if you don't have good deeds? I will show you my faith by my good deeds."

<sup>19</sup> You say you have faith, for you believe that there is one God. Good for you! Even the demons believe this, and they tremble in terror. <sup>20</sup> How foolish! Can't you see that faith without good deeds is useless?

<sup>21</sup> Don't you remember that our ancestor Abraham was shown to be right with God by his actions when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? <sup>22</sup> You see, his faith and his actions worked together. His actions made his faith complete. <sup>23</sup> And so it happened just as the Scriptures say: "Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith." He was even called the

friend of God. <sup>24</sup> So you see, we are shown to be right with God by what we do, not by faith alone.

<sup>25</sup> Rahab the prostitute is another example. She was shown to be right with God by her actions when she hid those messengers and sent them safely away by a different road. <sup>26</sup> Just as the body is dead without breath, so also faith is dead without good works. (James 2:14-26, NLT)

**James 4:1-17 (NLT):** What is causing the quarrels and fights among you? Don't they come from the evil desires at war within you? <sup>2</sup> You want what you don't have, so you scheme and kill to get it. You are jealous of what others have, but you can't get it, so you fight and wage war to take it away from them. Yet you don't have what you want because you don't ask God for it. <sup>3</sup> And even when you ask, you don't get it because your motives are all wrong – you want only what will give you pleasure.

<sup>4</sup> You adulterers! Don't you realize that friendship with the world makes you an enemy of God? I say it again: If you want to be a friend of the world, you make yourself an enemy of God. <sup>5</sup> Do you think the Scriptures have no meaning? They say that God is passionate that the spirit he has placed within us should be faithful to him. <sup>6</sup> And he gives grace generously. As the Scriptures say, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble" (Proverbs 3:34)

<sup>7</sup> So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. <sup>8</sup> Come close to God, and God will come close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, for your loyalty is divided between God and the world. <sup>9</sup> Let there be tears for what you have done. Let there be sorrow and deep grief. Let there be sadness instead of laughter, and gloom instead of joy. <sup>10</sup> Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up in honor.

<sup>11</sup> Don't speak evil against each other, dear brothers and sisters. If you criticize and judge each other, then you are criticizing and judging God's law. But your job is to obey the law, not to judge whether it applies to you. <sup>12</sup> God alone, who gave the law, is the Judge. He alone has the power to save or to destroy. So what right do you have to judge your neighbor?

<sup>13</sup> Look here, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we are going to a certain town and will stay there a year. We will do business there and make a profit." <sup>14</sup> How do you know what your life will be like tomorrow? Your life is like the morning fog – it's here a little while, then it's gone.

<sup>15</sup> What you ought to say is, "If the Lord wants us to, we will live and do this or that." <sup>16</sup> Otherwise you are boasting about your own pretentious plans, and all such boasting is evil.

<sup>17</sup> Remember, it is sin to know what you ought to do and then not do it.

(James 4:1-17, NLT)

**2 Peter 1:3-9 (NLT):** By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence. <sup>4</sup> And because of his glory and excellence, he has given us

great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world's corruption caused by human desires.

<sup>5</sup> In view of all this, make every effort to respond to God's promises. Supplement your faith with a generous provision of moral excellence, and moral excellence with knowledge, <sup>6</sup> and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with patient endurance, and patient endurance with godliness, <sup>7</sup> and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love for everyone.

<sup>8</sup> The more you grow like this, the more productive and useful you will be in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup> But those who fail to develop in this way are shortsighted or blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their old sins. (2 Peter 1:3-9, NLT)

**1 John 1:8 – 2:6 (NLT):** *If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth. <sup>9</sup> But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness. <sup>10</sup> If we claim we have not sinned, we are calling God a liar and showing that his word has no place in our hearts.*

**2** *My dear children, I am writing this to you so that you will not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate who pleads our case before the Father. He is Jesus Christ, the one who is truly righteous. <sup>2</sup> He himself is the sacrifice that atones for our sins – and not only our sins but the sins of all the world.*

<sup>3</sup> *And we can be sure that we know him if we obey his commandments. <sup>4</sup> If someone claims, "I know God," but doesn't obey God's commandments, that person is a liar and is not living in the truth. <sup>5</sup> But those who obey God's word truly show how completely they love him. That is how we know we are living in him. <sup>6</sup> Those who say they live in God should live their lives as Jesus did.* (1 John 1:8 – 2:6, NLT)

**1 John 3:11-24 (NLT):** *This is the message you have heard from the beginning: We should love one another. <sup>12</sup> We must not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and killed his brother. And why did he kill him? Because Cain had been doing what was evil, and his brother had been doing what was righteous. <sup>13</sup> So don't be surprised, dear brothers and sisters, if the world hates you.*

<sup>14</sup> *If we love our brothers and sisters who are believers, it proves that we have passed from death to life. But a person who has no love is still dead. <sup>15</sup> Anyone who hates another brother or sister is really a murderer at heart. And you know that murderers don't have eternal life within them.*

<sup>16</sup> *We know what real love is because Jesus gave up his life for us. So we also ought to give up our lives for our brothers and sisters. <sup>17</sup> If someone has enough money to live well and sees a brother or sister in need but shows no compassion – how can God's love be in that person?*

<sup>18</sup> *Dear children, let's not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions. <sup>19</sup> Our actions will show that we belong to the truth, so we will be confident when we stand before God. <sup>20</sup> Even if we feel guilty, God is greater than our feelings, and he knows everything.*

<sup>21</sup> Dear friends, if we don't feel guilty, we can come to God with bold confidence. <sup>22</sup> And we will receive from him whatever we ask because we obey him and do the things that please him.

<sup>23</sup> And this is his commandment: We must believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as he commanded us. <sup>24</sup> Those who obey God's commandments remain in fellowship with him, and he with them. And we know he lives in us because the Spirit he gave us lives in us. (1 John 3:11-24, NLT)

**1 John 4:7-20 (NLT):** Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup> But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

<sup>9</sup> God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. <sup>10</sup> This is real love – not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.

<sup>11</sup> Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other. <sup>12</sup> No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us.

<sup>13</sup> And God has given us his Spirit as proof that we live in him and he in us. <sup>14</sup> Furthermore, we have seen with our own eyes and now testify that the Father sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. <sup>15</sup> All who declare that Jesus is the Son of God have God living in them, and they live in God. <sup>16</sup> We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love.

God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them. <sup>17</sup> And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So we will not be afraid on the day of judgment, but we can face him with confidence because we live like Jesus here in this world.

<sup>18</sup> Such love has no fear, because perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced his perfect love. <sup>19</sup> We love each other because he loved us first.

<sup>20</sup> If someone says, "I love God," but hates a fellow believer, that person is a liar; for if we don't love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we cannot see? (1 John 4:7-20, NLT)

## E.G. White References

**Desire of Ages, page 70:** Every child may gain knowledge as Jesus did. As we try to become acquainted with our heavenly Father through His word, angels will draw near, our minds will be strengthened, our characters will be elevated and refined. We shall become more like our Saviour. And as we behold the beautiful and grand in nature, our affections go out after God. While the spirit is awed, the soul is invigorated by coming in contact with the Infinite through His works. Communion with God through prayer develops the mental and moral faculties, and the

*spiritual powers strengthen as we cultivate thoughts upon spiritual things.*  
([Desire of Ages, Page 70](#))

**Desire of Ages, page 83:** *It would be well for us to spend a thoughtful hour each day in contemplation of the life of Christ. We should take it point by point, and let the imagination grasp each scene, especially the closing ones. As we thus dwell upon His great sacrifice for us, our confidence in Him will be more constant, our love will be quickened, and we shall be more deeply imbued with His spirit. If we would be saved at last, we must learn the lesson of penitence and humiliation at the foot of the cross.*

*As we associate together, we may be a blessing to one another. If we are Christ's, our sweetest thoughts will be of Him. We shall love to talk of Him; and as we speak to one another of His love, our hearts will be softened by divine influences. Beholding the beauty of His character, we shall be "changed into the same image from glory to glory." 2 Cor. 3:18. ([Desire of Ages, Page 83](#))*

**Steps to Christ, pages 30-31:** *God does not regard all sins as of equal magnitude; there are degrees of guilt in His estimation, as well as in that of man; but however trifling this or that wrong act may seem in the eyes of men, no sin is small in the sight of God. Man's judgment is partial, imperfect; but God estimates all things as they really are. The drunkard is despised and is told that his sin will exclude him from heaven; while pride, selfishness, and covetousness too often go unrebuked. But these are sins that are especially offensive to God; for they are contrary to the benevolence of His character, to that unselfish love which is the very atmosphere of the unfallen universe. He who falls into some of the grosser sins may feel a sense of his shame and poverty and his need of the grace of Christ; but pride feels no need, and so it closes the heart against Christ and the infinite blessings He came to give.*

*The poor publican who prayed, "God be merciful to me a sinner" ([Luke 18:13](#)), regarded himself as a very wicked man, and others looked upon him in the same light; but he felt his need, and with his burden of guilt and shame he came before God, asking for His mercy. His heart was open for the Spirit of God to do its gracious work and set him free from the power of sin. The Pharisee's boastful, self-righteous prayer showed that his heart was closed against the influence of the Holy Spirit. Because of his distance from God, he had no sense of his own defilement, in contrast with the perfection of the divine holiness. He felt no need, and he received nothing.*

*If you see your sinfulness, do not wait to make yourself better. How many there are who think they are not good enough to come to Christ. Do you expect to become better through your own efforts? "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." [Jeremiah 13:23](#). There is help for us only in God. We must not wait for stronger persuasions, for better opportunities, or for holier tempers. We can do nothing of ourselves. We must come to Christ just as we are. ([Steps to Christ, pages 30-31](#))*

**Steps to Christ, page 35:** Study God's word prayerfully. That word presents before you, in the law of God and the life of Christ, the great principles of holiness, without which "no man shall see the Lord." **Hebrews 12:14.** It convinces of sin; it plainly reveals the way of salvation. Give heed to it as the voice of God speaking to your soul.

As you see the enormity of sin, as you see yourself as you really are, do not give up to despair. It was sinners that Christ came to save. We have not to reconcile God to us, but – O wondrous love! – God in Christ is "reconciling the world unto Himself." **2 Corinthians 5:19.** He is wooing by His tender love the hearts of His erring children. No earthly parent could be as patient with the faults and mistakes of his children, as is God with those He seeks to save. No one could plead more tenderly with the transgressor. No human lips ever poured out more tender entreaties to the wanderer than does He. All His promises, His warnings, are but the breathing of unutterable love.

When Satan comes to tell you that you are a great sinner, look up to your Redeemer and talk of His merits. That which will help you is to look to His light. Acknowledge your sin, but tell the enemy that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" and that you may be saved by His matchless love. **1 Timothy 1:15.** Jesus asked Simon a question in regard to two debtors. One owed his Lord a small sum, and the other owed him a very large sum; but he forgave them both, and Christ asked Simon which debtor would love his Lord most. Simon answered, "He to whom he forgave most." **Luke 7:43.** We have been great sinners, but Christ died that we might be forgiven. The merits of His sacrifice are sufficient to present to the Father in our behalf. Those to whom He has forgiven most will love Him most, and will stand nearest to His throne to praise Him for His great love and infinite sacrifice. It is when we most fully comprehend the love of God that we best realize the sinfulness of sin. When we see the length of the chain that was let down for us, when we understand something of the infinite sacrifice that Christ has made in our behalf, the heart is melted with tenderness and contrition. (**Steps to Christ, page 35**)

**Steps to Christ, pages 62-63:** The condition of eternal life is now just what it always has been – just what it was in Paradise before the fall of our first parents – perfect obedience to the law of God, perfect righteousness. If eternal life were granted on any condition short of this, then the happiness of the whole universe would be imperiled. The way would be open for sin, with all its train of woe and misery, to be immortalized.

It was possible for Adam, before the fall, to form a righteous character by obedience to God's law. But he failed to do this, and because of his sin our natures are fallen and we cannot make ourselves righteous. Since we are sinful, unholy, we cannot perfectly obey the holy law. We have no righteousness of our own with which to meet the claims of the law of God. But Christ has made a way of escape for us. He lived on earth amid trials and temptations such as we have to meet. He lived a sinless life. He died for us, and now He offers to take our sins and give us His righteousness. If you give yourself to Him, and accept Him as your Saviour, then, sinful as your

*life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous. Christ's character stands in place of your character, and you are accepted before God just as if you had not sinned.*

*More than this, Christ changes the heart. He abides in your heart by faith. You are to maintain this connection with Christ by faith and the continual surrender of your will to Him; and so long as you do this, He will work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure. So you may say, "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." **Galatians 2:20**. So Jesus said to His disciples, "It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." **Matthew 10:20**. Then with Christ working in you, you will manifest the same spirit and do the same good works – works of righteousness, obedience.*

*So we have nothing in ourselves of which to boast. We have no ground for self-exaltation. Our only ground of hope is in the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and in that wrought by His Spirit working in and through us. (**Steps to Christ, pages 62-63**)*