

THE VISIONARY METHOD
For Christian Practice™

The
VMFCP Press

FREE INTRODUCTION

CALLING

SPECIAL EDITION

Bible Companion

&

Journaling Guide

Chinasom U Elekwachi

Foreword

The teachings of this book are not old nor new, but are simply of the Truth—the Truth in words that are easily understood.

¹³ This is the end of the matter. All has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. ¹⁴ For God will bring every work into judgment, with every hidden thing, whether it is good, or whether it is evil. ~ Ecclesiastes 12:13-14”

Dedication I

In honor of the Lord, the Most High God, and
the Creator of Heaven, Earth and all that's in them.

May this book bring many into Your salvation, the Salvation made possible by Your sacrifice on the cross, which was born out of Your steadfast love for those who You have called Your own—and by the acts of your Prophets, Apostles, Servants and Scribes who labored through many acts of persecution, tribulation and troubles to grant many generations Your Word and Truth.

May those who truly seek salvation find it, for it is by Your grace alone that anyone is saved. It was my love for Your commandments and ways that this book came to be, as it was only through the grace of Your wisdom, and the understanding that I gained by living a Christian lifestyle (Christian Practice), that I am able to pass on this teaching to others, and so, my hope is that this book remains a testament to my wholehearted faith and love of the Lord, my God.

Thanks be to God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ for Yours is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory forever and ever. Amen.

Dedication II

This book is dedicated to my wonderful parents, Chioma Maria-Goretti Elekwachi and Nnamdi Elekwachi, because with them began my faith in the Lord Jesus Christ—they told me God was real when I was only a child, and I believed them, and in God with all my heart ever since! Not only that, but my parents showed me that it is good to be good, and without a doubt it's by this simple principle that God has never forsaken me, nor them.

Furthermore, my mother's faith, throughout all seasons of life (good and bad), greatly inspired and sparked the flame of my very own faith in the Lord, which now burns brighter than ever. This is the foundation on which this book was created, and my hope is that those who read it may find that very same faith.

Last but not least, I thank my brothers, Dan and Chigozie, and my sister, Olympia, for their encouragement and support towards me in all my efforts—their wholehearted kindness towards me in life will never be forgotten.

This book is recommended for adults aged 18+

The
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Cover Design: Chinasom Uzodimma Elekwachi

Illustrations: Chinasom Uzodimma Elekwachi

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Publication Date: 31st October 2020 (updated 12th July 2021)

All Scripture quotations are true and faithful copies taken from the 'Holy Bible: World English Bible Version', published by Bible Domain Publishing in 2016 (Public Domain Work)—ISBN-13:978-1530857654, and ISBN-10 1530857651.

This book contains journaling activity examples (exemplars), which were created for the purpose of Christian education, therefore, the activity exemplars do not in any way represent the author's personal circumstances or experiences.

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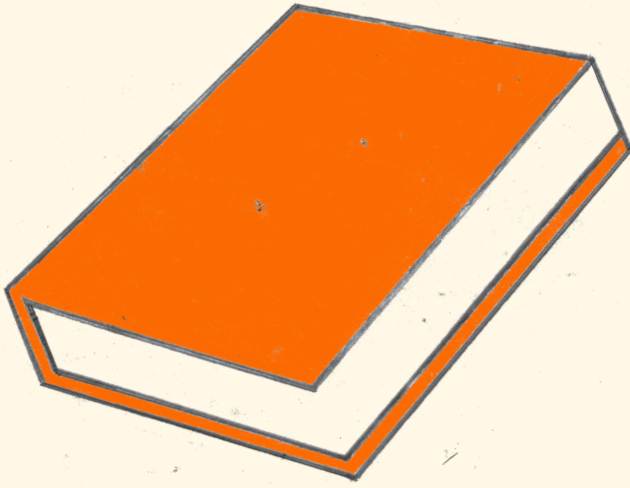
Welcome to CALLING: SPECIAL EDITION! This book is a FREE INTRODUCTION to The VMFCP Bible Companion and Journaling Guides!

This book features The Visionary Method for Christian Practice™ (The VMFCP), which aims to encourage your faith in the Lord, the Most High God, by teaching you the practical aspects of Christianity. The VMFCP is an innovative and informative method of Biblical evidence-based Christian practice (Christian lifestyle) that uses media (movies/television) and/or journaling-based activities.

The use of media and/or journaling activities makes The VMFCP a highly unique and engaging “visual” method for Christian education. Media provides an example of relatable human circumstances and behaviour, which helps you to better understand yourself. Journaling is a reader-friendly-and-focused approach that helps you visualize (see and understand) what’s in your head and in your heart—it is also used to help improve and strengthen your relationship with God!

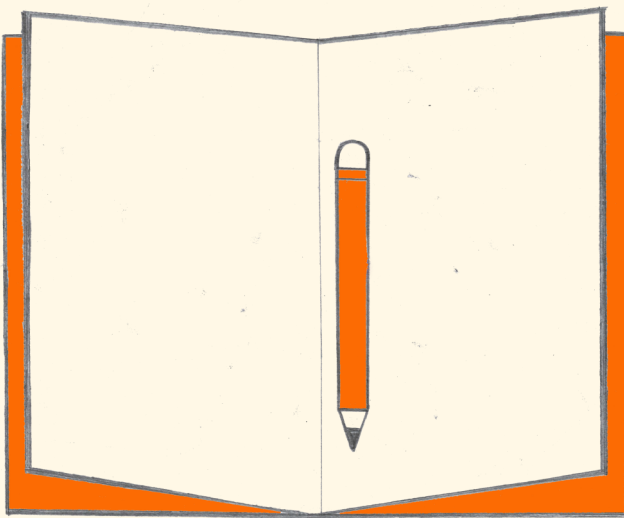
About The Calling Module (Section): The ‘Calling’ module features the ‘rules of righteousness’, which is essentially a systematic review-like summary of the 7 key principles of Christianity (Christian criteria), as outlined in the Holy Bible. Therefore, the ‘Calling’ module is designed to teach you the essential knowledge (Truth) about how to live a Christian lifestyle (Christian practice).

The ‘Calling: Special Edition’ Free Introduction does not involve the use of media for learning, instead it makes use of journaling activities. Therefore, to make the most of this book, you will need a journal and a Bible. However, The VMFCP website provides FREE teaching resources, such as ‘The VMFCP Digital Mentoring Workshops’, which summarizes each ‘Rule of Righteousness’, and pairs it with a form of media to provide all readers with a snapshot of the full VMFCP experience!



The Holy Bible.

THE HOLY BIBLE: This book provides evidence-based Christian instruction, but a Bible is necessary for your own reading, so that you are able to verify what is written (the Truth); Scriptures are needed for the activities; and it's important for Christians to become familiar with the Word of God—hopefully reading the Bible will become for your own further learning and entertainment.



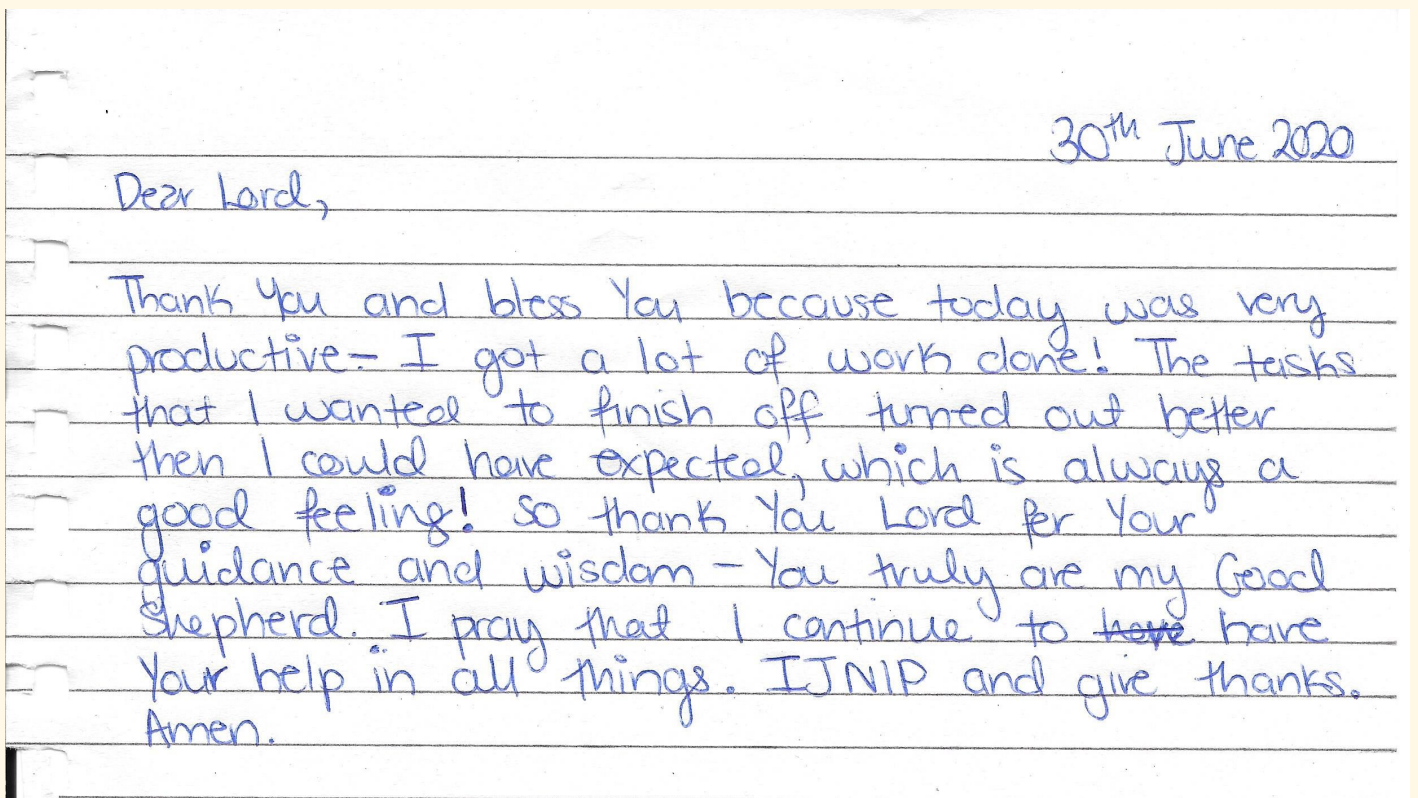
A Journal.

JOURNAL: Your journal will serve as a medium for you to engage with God. It's main purpose is for the recording of this book's guided self-reflection and metacognitive (thinking about how you think) activities, but you are also encouraged to use it for more i.e. you may also use it as a personal journal as well. For example, you can write down your thoughts (good and bad things), speak to God in prayer about your thoughts, and then write and say a prayer asking for God's help and guidance and/or to give thanks. This can help develop your relationship with God. There are some more tips about journaling on the next page...

JOURNALING GUIDE TIPS

- Your journal does not have to look perfect because it is for your own use.
- You can be as creative as you like in regards to how you structure, style and use your journal.
- Your journal can be in any format: an actual journal or diary, a notebook or a digital journal (an offline journal provides more privacy than online journals or journaling apps).
- There is an example journal entry below, and on the next page there is an example of the journaling activity, 'Reflection, Extension & Response' (RER), from the 'Calling' module (section). This should make the idea of VMFCP journaling clear to you. It is of note that the journaling activities are optional, as Christian Lifestyle change is MOST evident when you do not need to rely on this book for the purpose of Christian practice. Hence, the VMFCP journaling activities can be used multiple times i.e. the VMFCP is not a linear process, therefore, completing each activity once does not indicate a Christian lifestyle change—or “completing a test”.

GENERAL JOURNAL ENTRY EXAMPLE



30th June 2020

Dear Lord,

I have created an example of an activity from the VMFCP for my book. I pray that it is both insightful and helpful to those who use it. IJNIP and give thanks. Amen.

CALLING - RER activity (Lying)

Reflection A

- * God doesn't know if I lie.
- * God forgives everything, all I need to do is ask.

Reflection B

- * God know everything nothing is hidden from Him (Jeremiah 17:10)
- * God hates dishonesty (Proverbs 12:22)
- * God does not excuse willful sin (James 4:17)

Extension

- * Lying has never been socially acceptable.
- * People who lie can't be trusted.
- * Lies can be hurtful and harmful.
- * Constant lying can lead to a state of denial (not good for wellbeing) (James 1:22)
- * Constant lying makes people hesitant to trust one another.

Resolution

- * Start telling the truth (respectfully)
- * Stop telling or spreading lies.

HERE ARE SOME USEFUL NOTES AND TIPS TO HELP YOU OUT...

NOTE: The Scriptures used in this book are maintained in context i.e. random Scriptures are not put together to derive altered and/or incorrect meanings. Instead Scriptures that are related (linked) are brought together to explain or demonstrate their true meaning. This minimizes the risk of Scriptural interpretations that are contrary to God's commandments. For this reason, 'The Practical Bible Interpretation Technique' is provided to help you read the Bible.

- **1) UNDERSTANDING:** Make sure you understand what is written in a verse—you can compare different translations to get a clear understanding of its meaning.
- **2) PARA-CONTEXT:** Make sure that Scriptures are read in context—check a few verses before and after to gain an understanding of what is being referred to.
- **3) FACT-CHECKING & CROSS-REFERENCING:** Do not isolate verses and associate it with a singular or absolute meaning. The Bible should always be taken in whole, not part. This is done by fact-checking and/or cross-referencing...
 - **A) Fact-checking:** Finding out what God permits and does not permit under the Law of Moses (Old Covenant), or comparing Scriptures to determine Biblical fact. Notably, not much changed between the Old and New Covenant besides the removal of general religious and cultural practices from worship, and the terms and conditions of each covenant.
 - **B) Cross-referencing:** Search for Scriptures that speak about the same thing, as the same information is often repeated in slightly different ways or words throughout the Bible. By cross-referencing verses, you can be assured of their true meaning.
- **4) INTRA-CONTEXT:** When a Scripture is not repeated in other books take it in the context of that specific book or chapter.

HERE ARE SOME USEFUL NOTES AND TIPS TO HELP YOU OUT...

EXAMPLE SCRIPTURAL INTERPRETATION...

Here is an example of proper Scriptural interpretation which uses ‘The practical Bible Interpretation Technique’. This example should help you learn to interpret the Bible correctly on your own.

It is written in 1 Timothy 12:12, ¹²“But I don’t permit a woman to teach, nor to exercise authority over a man, but to be in quietness.” In response to this Scripture, most would wonder why a woman created a method and wrote a book for teaching Christian practice? Here’s the explanation...

A verse of this likeness is repeated in the Bible (1 Corinthians 14:34—tip 3B), and so, tip 4 isn’t applicable in this situation. However, there is Biblical record of female prophets and leaders amongst God’s people, which indicates this Scripture is not as it appears. Therefore, tip 3A becomes useful for determining its correct interpretation. From the book of 1 Timothy it is made clear that the chapter is a letter addressed to Timothy for a church in Ephesus. This indicates that there was a specific reason for the instruction of no females being appointed as teachers in the Ephesian church. Therefore, the first step to the correct interpretation is finding the Scriptural evidence to help clarify the true meaning:

In 1 Corinthians 9:20 it is written, ²⁰“To the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain those who are under the law;” – this indicates that in the past, Christian churches were to be respectful of the traditions and culture of that specific region, in order to encourage genuine interest in the faith. Hence, the context (and true interpretation) of the Scripture, 1 Timothy 12:12, is that to encourage the establishment and spread of Christianity in Ephesus, no women were allowed to teach/preach because it was not accepted in that society (patriarchal).

As you can see, by taking the Scripture, 1 Timothy 12:12, as a whole i.e. by fact-checking (Tip 3A), its true meaning is revealed. Furthermore, it can be confirmed

HERE ARE SOME USEFUL NOTES AND TIPS TO HELP YOU OUT...

that: (1) God allows and appoints women to positions of authority and (2) any member of the Body of Christ (God's Spiritual Church. Reference 1 Corinthians 12) can be appointed by God to various positions regardless of factors such as biological sex. Here is the Scriptural evidence...

(1) In the Old Testament, God appointed a prophetess named Deborah as the leader of His people. Deborah judged God's people for 40 years. So, although female leaders were rare, God allowed the appointment of women in positions of authority – and as it happens Deborah was one of the best Judges of God's people:

- *Judges 4:4* –⁴ Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, judged Israel at that time.

(2) In the New Covenant, all who enter it are one in Christ. This means that those who have received the Holy Spirit are connected to Christ through His Spirit (Holy Spirit). Christ is greater than all, and so those who receive His Spirit are seen as equal regardless of biological sex, race, social or financial status. However, this does not mean that people are God or equal with Him. As it is God who appoints people of His choosing to different roles within in His Church (Body of Christ).

- *Galatians 3:27-28* –²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
 - **NOTE:** “put on Christ” means to receive the Spirit of Christ i.e. the Holy Spirit.

Lastly, many women are mentioned throughout the New Testament chapters of the Bible, but no information about their role is provided, therefore, they could have taught/preached anywhere but, Ephesus and places of similar tradition or culture. Notably, such Scriptures hold little relevance in today's world!

This is an example of proper Biblical Interpretation!

HERE ARE SOME USEFUL NOTES AND TIPS TO HELP YOU OUT...

It should be noted that 'The Practical Bible Interpretation Technique' is only relevant to Scriptures regarding Christian practice (how to live a Christian lifestyle or coordinating a genuine Christian congregation). Therefore, it does not indicate that the Bible should be interpreted practically, as such one note methods of Biblical interpretation do not work, because many Scriptures are metaphorical or refer to spiritual matters, which cannot be taken literally or interpreted practically. However, the metaphorical interpretations should support a Christian lifestyle in a way that is consistent with God's commandments. This concept can be explained by examining a metaphorical Scripture, such as Matthew 5:38-42.

- **Matthew 5:38-42** - ³⁸ "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.' ³⁹ But I tell you, don't resist him who is evil; but whoever strikes you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also. ⁴⁰ If anyone sues you to take away your coat, let him have your cloak also. ⁴¹ Whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. ⁴² Give to him who asks you, and don't turn away him who desires to borrow from you.

The Scripture Matthew 5:38-42 cannot be taken literally or interpreted practically because it is not conducive to personal wellbeing, the right to agency (choice), or the upholding of human rights. Furthermore, there is no evidence in the Bible that suggests that God endorses or supports the persecution, exploitation or harassment of people, however, it is written that the Lord supports the exact opposite of this, as the Lord says in Leviticus 25:27 and Matthew 22:39: ¹⁷ You shall not wrong one another, but you shall fear your God; for I am Yahweh your God and ³⁹ A second likewise is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' Hence, the Lord does not support the act of doing wrong or evil to another person. This then confirms that Matthew 5:38-42 is a hyperbolic metaphor, which is an exaggerated saying or phrase. As a hyperbolic metaphor, Matthew 5:38-42 conveys that Christians' should have the "patience of a saint", as the personal quality of patience provides the foundation for Christian character values such as not doing wrong or evil to others, especially if they have wronged

HERE ARE SOME USEFUL NOTES AND TIPS TO HELP YOU OUT...

you, which requires the qualities of tolerance, endurance, gentleness, and discipline, which essentially embodies the Biblical principle of love. Furthermore, although a Christian may have been wronged many times, their core values do not change, and so, Christians' persist in being helpful and compassionate according to their own conscience and choice i.e. you should also consider your own circumstances. Hence, the act of trying to be patient is what enables Christians to uphold the Lord's commandments without compromise. Therefore, Matthew 5:38-42 validates that Christians' are not weak, naïve, nor pushovers, but it is the exact opposite: Christians' embody strength of mind, heart and of spirit, which is the essence of good character and a righteous soul.

NOTE: 'The Practical Bible Interpretation Technique' can help improve your Biblical literacy, but it should not be considered as instantaneous mastery or expertise, as Biblical interpretation is also influenced by the grace of God's wisdom (a gift of the Holy Spirit). Furthermore, familiarity with Biblical expression is the result of dedicated long-term study and practice, which provides the knowledge and understanding required to read and interpret the Bible with great ease, clarity and accuracy.

NOTE: The Scriptures are used in full to maintain integrity, but the strikethrough is used where the words do not fit neatly into a sentence, or are part of a verse that may present confusing information i.e. "~~words that are not needed~~".

NOTE: This book is designed to teach you how to be a Christian. Whether you do it or not is up to you. So, use the knowledge that you acquire to persevere in faith knowing that God knows the intentions of your heart, and does not forsake those who are genuine towards Him. Therefore, keep in mind that you should use the time you have to do the things God asks of you, for it is written: "¹⁵ Therefore—watch carefully how you walk, not as unwise, but as wise, ¹⁶redeeming the time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷Therefore don't be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is." ~ Ephesians 5:15–17

HERE ARE SOME USEFUL NOTES AND TIPS TO HELP YOU OUT...

NOTE: This book contains a few prayers, but you are encouraged to write and say your own. There is always a prompt where prayer is encouraged. Here is a prayer for the purpose of re-committing yourself to Christ and for success with this book:

My Father in Heaven, blessed be Your Holy Name. I believe in You and Your Word, and I thank you God for sending Your only Son to die for me. I believe Jesus is the Son of God, and from this day I accept Him as the Lord of my life, and I ask that you help me through this process of change because I can't do it alone. It's only by your grace that I can be saved, and so, I pray that this book serves me well and imparts grace upon grace into my life. May it guide me to salvation, and in all else that I seek (Insert here). May your grace be with me. In Jesus' name I pray (IJNIP) and give thanks to You. Amen.

NOTE: The VMFCP Self-Review Tool is located in the Glossary. The Self-Review Tool is provided to help you review the progress you have made (or not made), and so, it can be used to help you stay on track, or get back on track with Christian practice. Overall, The VMFCP Self-Review Tool is provided to help you pro-actively manage your own lifestyle. The use of The VMFCP Self-Review Tool is not necessary, but it is helpful to those who feel the need for extra insight into themselves. Hence, the information provided by The VMFCP 'Calling' module is sufficient because it provides direct instructions and guidance about how to begin living a Christian lifestyle. Keep in mind that change doesn't have to happen all at once, but it should naturally happen overtime as you identify what you need to change, and pro-actively make the right changes in your own life i.e. using this books information to make informed choices by firstly stopping sins that are directly under your control i.e. actions—lying, stealing, or harassment, and then making sure to correct behavior-based sins like jealousy. Therefore, receiving the Holy Spirit may not necessarily be an indication of “completed” change, but of good motivations, genuine intentions, and true commitment to doing God's commandments as a way of life.

The Rules Of Righteousness

**An explanation of the one
true way to salvation.**

Rules of Righteousness

Before you learn the 'Rules of Righteousness', it's time to find out what you know about Christianity. In your journal, have a go at answering the following questions. Make sure you answer the questions honestly:

- Question 1: What do you think the "rules" of Christianity are?
- Question 2: What makes someone a Christian?
- Question 3: What makes someone not a Christian?
- Question 4: What category do you think you fit into, 'Christian' or 'not Christian'?
- Question 5: What are the reasons for your categorisation from question 4?
- Question 6: What knowledge was your answer based on?
- Question 7: Have you ever read or studied the Bible to verify if you obey the Lord as He asks and requires?

By answering these questions you have captured what you think a Christian is, and who they are, and now you will learn how God defines Christians—and remember He knows best! What and who is a Christian is described throughout the Bible, which sets out Gods expectations of a Christian, and therefore the criteria for Christianity. The Bible is a long text, and so, the 'Rules of Righteousness' is a summary of the Christian criteria. You are able to check and verify all that's written in this book by referring to your own Bible. This book simply reflects and conveys the same truth of the Bible, but in a more concise and easy to understand manner. Hence, all that's written is supported by Scriptural evidence, meaning that it's simply Biblical evidence-based knowledge of true Christian practice that is authorized and supported by the Lord Himself!

Rules of Righteousness

Religion and religious traditions have misled many people, and many people have misled themselves in relation to Christianity, and here's why: the Bible, or The Word of God, is composed of the OLD and NEW testaments, which represent the OLD and NEW Covenants. A testament is a will, and a will is an authoritative document that grants or gifts inheritance to one's child, children or loved ones. So the Bible is exactly that, the Will of God, the Father, to those who He calls His children— who are the ones He has judged as righteous (good/holy) under the New Covenant through true faith in Jesus Christ, His Son. A covenant is a binding agreement between two parties, and in Christianity the agreement is between the Lord and one's self. Therefore, to be a child of God you must adhere to the terms of the New Covenant, which grants entry into the Body of Christ (Kingdom of Heaven/God's Kingdom or Church). The 'Rules of Righteousness' serves as an explanation of these terms. Hence, it is written "²¹ Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ~ Matthew 7:21. and "⁴⁶ "Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and don't do the things which I say?" ~ Luke 6:46. The Scriptures also make it clear that there is only one true Christian doctrine, and that it's specified by the Holy Bible. So, you should begin to think of the Bible as the Christian constitution. This means that anything that is contrary to, or contradicts God's Word is not of Him, and because it's not of Him, it means He does not support it. This is important because without God's authorization no one can enter the New Covenant. Therefore, it's important to remind yourself of what God defines as good and evil. The do's and don'ts of Christian doctrine are even written throughout the Bible as a reminder and caution to all, for example: ***1 Timothy 6:3-5—³If anyone teaches a different doctrine, and doesn't consent to sound words, the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, ⁴he is conceited, knowing nothing, but obsessed with arguments, disputes, and word battles, from which come envy, strife, insulting, evil suspicions, ⁵constant friction of people of***

Rules of Righteousness

corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. Withdraw yourself from such.

Galatians 1:6-9—⁶*I marvel that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ to a different “good news”,⁷ but there isn’t another “good news.” Only there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the Good News of Christ.⁸ But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you any “good news” other than that which we preached to you, let him be cursed.⁹ As we have said before, so I now say again: if any man preaches to you any “good news” other than that which you received, let him be cursed.*

Matthew 15:8-9—⁸*‘These people draw near to me with their mouth, and honor me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.⁹ And in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrine rules made by men.’”*

Colossians 2:8—⁸*Be careful that you don’t let anyone rob you through his philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the elements of the world, and not after Christ.*

1 Timothy 4:1-3—¹*But the Spirit says expressly that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons,² through the hypocrisy of men who speak lies, branded in their own conscience as with a hot iron,³ forbidding marriage and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.*

Matthew 23:5-8—⁵*But they do all their works to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the fringes of their garments,⁶ and love the place of honor at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues,⁷ the salutations in the marketplaces, and to be called ‘Rabbi, Rabbi’ by men.*

Rules of Righteousness

⁸ *But you are not to be called ‘Rabbi’, for one is your teacher, the Christ, and all of you are brothers.*

- **NOTE:** Rabbi means teacher. Brothers refers to ‘brothers and sisters’ i.e. it refers to men and women.

Matthew 23:9-10—⁹ *Call no man on the earth your father, for one is your Father, he who is in heaven.* ¹⁰ *Neither be called masters, for one is your master, the Christ.*

- **NOTE:** The only exception is one’s biological father or actual father-figure (i.e. step-father) or in another family context—a wife calling her husband ‘dad’ or ‘daddy’, but no one in Christianity or otherwise should be referred to by any linguistic variant that bestows the title of father. Only God Himself is to be referred to as Father.

Matthew 23:14—¹⁴ *“But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you shut up the Kingdom of Heaven against men; for you don’t enter in yourselves, neither do you allow those who are entering in to enter.*

- **NOTE:** The Scribes also known as the Sadducees, and Pharisees did not practice Christianity properly under the Law of Moses or in the New Covenant. They taught their church members corrupted doctrine, thereby disqualifying themselves and all those who followed them from God’s Kingdom (Matthew Chapter 23). This is a major issue with many Christian church denominations—they do not uphold Biblical doctrine.

Colossians 2:18—¹⁸ *Let no one rob you of your prize by self-abasement and worshiping of the angels, dwelling in the things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,*

- **NOTE:** Self-abasement is self-inflicted punishment for sinning. God does not endorse this. You are simply to correct your mistakes and move on.

Rules of Righteousness

Colossians 2:21-23 ²¹ “Don’t handle, nor taste, nor touch” ²² (all of which perish with use), according to the precepts and doctrines of men? ²³ These things indeed appear like wisdom in self-imposed worship, humility, and severity to the body; but aren’t of any value against the indulgence of the flesh.

- **NOTE:** In brief, this means the above actions don’t equal Christian practice.

James 1:27—²⁷ Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this: to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, **and to keep oneself unstained by the world.**

- **NOTE:** The reference to the fatherless and widows has become less relevant overtime due to social services and social security.

To keep oneself unstained by the world is the most important aspect of pure Christian religion. The “things of the world” is all that God commands NOT TO DO, which have been outlined by the VMFCP Basic Standards and Principal Sins. The Basic Standards are simply an easy to understand explanation of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20), and the Principal Sins are the 12 sins that God disapproves of the most, as established through their repeated mention in the book of Proverbs. The VMFCP Basic Standards and Principal Sins are outlined in the glossary. Hence, there are set guidelines for the Christian lifestyle, which are described in the Old Testament. The Old Testament serves as the foundation for the ethics and morals of the New Covenant of the New Testament, which refines the Law of Moses by emphasizing the key principles that captures the essence of what God proclaims as righteous i.e. natural (laws of nature i.e. heterosexualism only—Romans 1:26-27), moral and ethical laws:

- *Galatians 3:23-24*—²³ But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, confined for the faith which should afterwards be revealed. ²⁴ So that the law has become our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

Rules of Righteousness

Christian righteousness (goodness/holiness) is to be firmly grounded in faith in God and the Lord Jesus Christ. An example of the ideal Christian faith is provided by the story of Abraham, who was, and is the patriarch of the Christian lifestyle. Abraham is the example of a person who exemplified obedience and faith in his relationship with God, and it was this bond that caused God to bless Him with the title of friend, and the granting of Abraham's greatest desire: an heir and son of His own, Isaac.

- **Romans 4:18-22**—¹⁸ Besides hope, Abraham in hope believed, to the end that he might become a father of many nations, according to that which had been spoken, "So will your offspring be."¹⁹ Without being weakened in faith, he didn't consider his own body, already having been worn out, (he being about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb. ²⁰ Yet, looking to the promise of God, he didn't waver through unbelief, but grew strong through faith, giving glory to God, ²¹ and being fully assured that what he had promised, he was also able to perform. ²² Therefore it also was "credited to him for righteousness."

Hence, Abraham's relationship with God was defined by willing and friendly obedience to His commandments, and a firm faith in God and His Word (promises). This conveys that doing God's commandments i.e. living a Christian lifestyle is more fulfilling and joyous when you have a positive relationship with God, and so, you are encouraged to consider Him a friend who can help and understand you more than anyone else—which is the basis or foundation of a loving relationship. Furthermore, it is also a reminder that God wants to help you change; to help you become righteous; to save your soul, but you must be willing to truly follow His ways. To make it clear, Christianity is not predictable; this is a fact that is made clear in the Bible, particularly in the New Testament: God called, directed, and commanded His children as He desired and needed to fulfill His will in the world.

Rules of Righteousness

Hence, those who choose to obey God's commandments (live a Christian lifestyle) are in a certain manner, servants of the Lord and His righteousness, which essentially signifies your bond with God in the Spirit through faith in Christ.

This conveys that Christian's are required to follow God's will, whether it is only keeping His commandments, or the responsibility of servitude for the sake of His Kingdom, in which ever manner the Lord sees fit. Whereby, the reward of righteousness is the salvation of your soul i.e. immortality or eternal life, and life in the new age to come. This blessing extends to your dependent children (children who are not adults) and spouse (if they are not against a Christian lifestyle), see rule 6.

- **Romans 3:15-18**—¹⁵ What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under law, but under grace? May it never be! ¹⁶ Don't you know that when you present yourselves as servants and obey someone, you are the servants of whomever you obey; whether of sin to death, or of obedience to righteousness? ¹⁷ But thanks be to God, that, whereas you were bondservants of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were delivered. ¹⁸ Being made free from sin, you became bondservants of righteousness.
- **Genesis 12:1-3**—Now Yahweh said to Abram, "Leave your country, and your relatives, and your father's house, and go to the land that I will show you. ² I will make of you a great nation. I will bless you and make your name great. You will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who treats you with contempt. All the families of the earth will be blessed through you."

Rules of Righteousness

Hence, the core principle of Christianity is very simple: obedience and faith to God that's grounded in love (1 Corinthians 13) that is demonstrated by keeping His commandments, as evidence of faith in Him and His Word. Faith does not mean that life becomes instantly perfect, or that God will grant you overflowing material blessings, in fact it could be the exact opposite. However, it is known that God uses life's troublesome circumstances to test and refine your faith, for it is written:

- *Romans 8:35-39*—³⁵ *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Could oppression, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?* ³⁶ *Even as it is written, "For your sake we are killed all day long. We were accounted as sheep for the slaughter."*³⁷ *No, in all these things, we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.* ³⁸ *For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,* ³⁹ *nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from God's love which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Therefore, know that the Lord encourages all to seek Him, so that they may come into His salvation through the Truth of His Word, for it is written: ³³ *But seek first God's Kingdom and his righteousness; and all these things will be given to you as well.* ~ Matthew 6:33. Hence, the key to salvation is righteousness before all things i.e. wealth and status, which reiterates the importance God places on Christians committing to doing what is right, and not doing things that are wrong. Therefore, to live by faith is to believe that God's word is the Truth, which is demonstrated by doing His commandments i.e. works. Without true faith there is no works, as the works are based on God's commandments which guide the Christian lifestyle. This is noted in the Scripture James 2:18: ⁸ *Yes, a man will say, "You have faith, and I have works."* *Show me your faith without works, and I will show you my faith by my works.*

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Summary... True Christian religion, and therefore being a Christian, is doing as God asks and expects. This is the only one true doctrine and it is described by the Holy Bible (the Christian Constitution), which encourages people to uphold it as the TRUE Christian teaching and way of life (1 Timothy 1:3). The Holy Bible also serves as a caution to all, as it notes that people have always misused the Bible and the Christian faith without considering the consequences to themselves, and to those who choose to follow/accept corrupted teachings and traditions (Galatians 1:8, Galatians 6:7-12, 2 Peter 3:15-17 and Mark 9:42). In Mark 9:42 “these little ones” refers not just to children, but to all people who Christianity is taught/preached to, as it is adult people who actually become God’s children, as dependents are only sanctified (saved until adulthood) when their parent(s) is/are saved (receive the Holy Spirit). To help you understand God’s commandments, they have been summarised in the ‘Rules of Righteousness’, which explains the 7 key commandments of the New Covenant. At the end of each “rule” (criteria) you are encouraged to complete the ‘Reflection, Extension & Response (Resolution)’ (RER) activity in your journal—there will always be a prompt to remind you (see below). There is an example of the RER activity on the next page, which shows you what you need to do to successfully complete the activity. RER is the journaling activity used for the ‘Calling’ Module of The VMFCP. RER is designed to help you understand your own motivations, intentions, and choices to help you plan how to align them with a Christian lifestyle as you begin to make changes in your life. The RER activity is helpful because it provides you with a framework which helps re-adjust your reasoning that is tied to your moral conscience (the heart). Last but not least, do not feel the need to do everything all at once, rather, deal with each sin properly and definitively. As doing so will probably make overcoming each sin easier i.e. it is often the first few steps that are the hardest, but eventually Christian practice becomes natural.



Rules of Righteousness

Reflection, Extension and Response (Resolution) (RER) Activity	
Stealing Example	
<p>Reflection A (What I thought)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> God forgives everything as long as you ask for forgiveness, so it doesn't matter what you do.
<p>Reflection B (The truth about the sin according to the Bible)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> God does not forgive intentional sin i.e. God only forgives when you stop doing the wrong thing and are genuinely sorry about it, and then choose to do the right thing from then onwards. (James 4:17, 1 John 1:9, Acts 8:22, Hebrews 10:26)
<p>Extension (Reasons why God says not to commit the specific sin. You can find Scriptures that support the reason(s), but it is not necessary)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning to steal and/or actually stealing something is wrong. (1 Peter 4:15, Romans 2:21, Matthew 19:18) I would feel sad and angry if someone stole from me (Galatians 5:14)
<p>Response (Resolution) (The practical things that I can do to stop committing the sin)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not attempt to steal anything. Return stolen items if it's practical i.e. you stole your sister's T-shirt, and can return it with minimal consequence. If returning the item is not practical i.e. it would result in legal consequences. Then thank God that you weren't caught, and stop stealing.

Rules of Righteousness

(1) Christians serve God, and God alone.

If you claim that you are a Christian, but also serve or worship another god(s), this means you have forsaken God and His ways, therefore, disqualifying yourself from Christianity. This is made clear in both the old and new testaments. In the Old Covenant of the Old Testament, serving other gods led to punishment, but in the New Testament it prevents entry into the New Covenant i.e. receiving the Holy Spirit. This is conveyed by multiple Scriptures:

Exodus 20:1–6—¹ God spoke all these words, saying, ² “I am Yahweh your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.³ “You shall have no other gods before me.⁴ “You shall not make for yourselves an idol, nor any image of anything that is in the heavens above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: ⁵ you shall not bow yourself down to them, nor serve them, for I, Yahweh your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and on the fourth generation of those who hate me, ⁶ and showing loving kindness to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

2 Kings 17:24–41—²⁴ The king of Assyria brought men from Babylon, from Cuthah, from Avva, and from Hamath and Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel; and they possessed Samaria, and lived in its cities. ²⁵ So it was, at the beginning of their dwelling there, that they didn’t fear Yahweh. Therefore Yahweh sent lions which killed some of them. ²⁶ Therefore they spoke to the king of Assyria, saying, “The nations which you have carried away and placed in the cities of Samaria don’t know the law of the god of the land. Therefore he has sent lions among them, and behold, they kill them, because they don’t know the law of the god of the land.”²⁷ Then the king of Assyria commanded, saying, “Carry there one of the priests whom you brought from there; and let them go and dwell there, and let him teach them

Rules of Righteousness

the law of the god of the land.”²⁸ So one of the priests whom they had carried away from Samaria came and lived in Bethel, and taught them how they should fear Yahweh.²⁹ However every nation made gods of their own, and put them in the houses of the high places which the Samaritans had made, every nation in their cities in which they lived.³⁰ The men of Babylon made Succoth Benoth, and the men of Cuth made Nergal, and the men of Hamath made Ashima,³¹ and the Avvites made Nibhaz and Tartak; and the Sepharvites burned their children in the fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim.³² So they feared Yahweh, and also made from among themselves priests of the high places for themselves, who sacrificed for them in the houses of the high places.³³ They feared Yahweh, and also served their own gods, after the ways of the nations from among whom they had been carried away.³⁴ To this day they do what they did before. They don't fear Yahweh, and they do not follow the statutes, or the ordinances, or the law, or the commandment which Yahweh commanded the children of Jacob, whom he named Israel;³⁵ with whom Yahweh had made a covenant, and commanded them, saying, “You shall not fear other gods, nor bow yourselves to them, nor serve them, nor sacrifice to them;³⁶ but you shall fear Yahweh, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt with great power and with an outstretched arm, and you shall bow yourselves to him, and you shall sacrifice to him.

³⁷ The statutes and the ordinances, and the law and the commandment, which he wrote for you, you shall observe to do forever more. You shall not fear other gods.³⁸ You shall not forget the covenant that I have made with you. You shall not fear other gods.³⁹ But you shall fear Yahweh your God, and He will deliver you out of the hand of all your enemies.”⁴⁰ However they didn't listen, but they did what they did before.⁴¹ So these nations feared Yahweh, and also served their engraved images. Their children did likewise, and so did their children's children. They do as their fathers did to this day.

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Matthew 4:10-¹⁰ Then Jesus said to him, “Get behind me, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and you shall serve him only.’”

Matthew 6:24—²⁴ “No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You can’t serve both God and Mammon.

- **NOTE:** You can only love the Lord with your whole heart if He is your only God. Hence, no one can have two (or more) masters because loyalty would be divided. Mammon is money or possessions (material wealth), and becomes one’s god when you do anything to acquire it i.e. scheming, lying, or murder, which is lawlessness (1 John 3:4, Proverbs 1:7-19, 2 Thessalonians 2:7-8, Deuteronomy 27:24-25).

1 Corinthians 10:21—²¹ You can’t both drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You can’t both partake of the table of the Lord and of the table of demons.

- **NOTE:** Demons are evil or impure spirits, and in a strictly Biblical context, demons refer to any spiritual being other than God that presents itself to be worshipped and/or imparts spiritual abilities to its worshippers that are harmful to other people i.e. juju/sorcery/witchcraft/wizardry/voodoo/hoodoo and its equivalents. Evil spirits can also be referred to as gods, and in the Christian context a lower case ‘g’ is always used for such entities to indicate their inferiority to the Lord, the Most High God.

Summary...Christians serve God only: under the Old Covenant serving other gods brought punishment to His people, and you cannot enter the New Covenant unless you commit yourself to God only. For cases where people serve another god, there is a simple Scriptural evidence-based solution, and so, this means that any vows taken in service to other gods may be annulled.

Rules of Righteousness

NAAMAN'S RULE

In 2 Kings 5:1-19 there is an account of Naaman, the Syrian, who was healed and accepted by God based on his righteousness even though he served and was technically associated with another god, Rimmon. The close of the Scripture, 2 Kings 5:17-19, conveys Naaman's circumstance:

- *2 Kings 5:17-19—He urged him to take it; but he refused. ¹⁷Naaman said, "If not, then, please let two mules' burden of earth be given to your servant; for your servant will from now on offer neither burnt offering nor sacrifice to other gods, but to Yahweh. ¹⁸In this thing may Yahweh pardon your servant: when my master goes into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leans on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon. When I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, may Yahweh pardon your servant in this thing." ¹⁹He said to him, "Go in peace."*

NAAMAN'S RULE OUTLINE

The Scripture, 2 Kings 5:17-19, makes it clear that God (through His prophet, Elisha) excused or pardoned Naaman from being associated with another god because he was faithful towards God in his heart and ways (thinking, speaking and doing). Therefore, the same concept has always been applicable, and serves as Biblical evidence-based precedent to the fact that vows (oaths) taken to serve other gods can be "overruled" or annulled under the New Covenant. There are also Scriptures that support 'Naaman's Rule' in the New Testament, which concerns the New Covenant of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Rules of Righteousness

NAAMAN'S RULE IN THE NEW COVENANT

In the New Covenant, the righteous are justified on the basis of faith, not solely on the works of the Law of Moses (Old Covenant) i.e. the law about wearing garments of two different materials in Leviticus 19:19 is irrelevant because it has no bearing on what is good or bad (evil), and it doesn't concern God's natural, foundational, ethical, and moral laws. Under the Law of Moses, taking an oath to serve another god, which is a typical practice across all religions and spiritualities, would be considered idolatry and the renouncement of covenant with God, but under the New Covenant this law becomes irrelevant if, and when God has judged you faithful to Him. This means that by living a Christian lifestyle your oath to another god can be annulled by God. This is the blessing of the New Covenant, which is not solely based on the works of the Law, but apart from the Law as a promise to those who truly believe in the Lord (Rule 3.4e). This concept is clarified by a number of Scriptures:

- *Romans 3:21-28—²¹ But now apart from the law, a righteousness of God has been revealed, being testified by the law and the prophets; ²² even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ to all and on all those who believe. For there is no distinction, ²³ for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God; ²⁴ being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; ²⁵ whom God sent to be an atoning sacrifice through faith in his blood, for a demonstration of his righteousness through the passing over of prior sins, in God's forbearance; ²⁶ to demonstrate his righteousness at this present time; that he might himself be just, and the justifier of him who has faith in Jesus.²⁷ Where then is the boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith. ²⁸ We maintain therefore that a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law.*

Rules of Righteousness

NAAMAN'S RULE IN THE NEW COVENANT

- *Galatians 3:11*—¹¹ Now that no man is justified by the law before God is evident, for, “The righteous will live by faith.”¹² The law is not of faith, but, “The man who does them will live by them.”
- *James 2:18*—⁸ Yes, a man will say, “You have faith, and I have works.” Show me your faith without works, and I will show you my faith by my works.
- *Romans 3:31*—³¹ Do we then nullify the law through faith? May it never be! No, we establish the law.

Doing God’s Word (commandments) in good faith is to establish the Law (natural, moral and ethical principles). However, it’s God Himself who judges one’s faithfulness: no one else. Hence, the justification of your faith is based on God’s mercy alone, and how you live is the evidence, which is to show your faith by works. Keep in mind that God does not judge by appearances alone, but he searches your mind, heart, body, soul and spirit for genuine intention (Proverbs 20:27) and lifestyle change (repentance). Hence, by faith, “Naaman’s Rule” remains valid under the New Covenant. This means that even if you serve another/other god(s) through another religion, “secret” societies, cults or church cults i.e. the occult, you are able to enter the New Covenant by the justification of faith in Christ. This is supported by other Scriptures in the New Testament:

- *Romans 2:13-15*—¹³ For it isn’t the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law will be justified ¹⁴ (for when Gentiles who don’t have the law do by nature the things of the law, these, not having the law, are a law to themselves, ¹⁵ in that they show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience testifying with them, and their thoughts among themselves accusing or else excusing them)

Rules of Righteousness

NAAMAN'S RULE IN THE NEW COVENANT

Hence, the simple act of doing God's commandments, thereby establishing a relationship with Him, is how you are able to be justified by faith. If you truly want to be Christian then let God know like Naaman did. But remember, you must distance yourself from all things associated with other gods as much as possible (as Naaman did), and no longer partake in their works or practices. There's a simple prayer below for you to reaffirm your commitment to serving God only. Alternatively, you are encouraged to write and say your own prayer. If you say this prayer, make sure that you do not repeat the mistake of taking an oath to serve another god, or continue partaking in the practices of another god. Even the Bible provides cautionary Scriptures about taking oaths, for example, it is written in James 5:12: ¹² But above all things, my brothers, don't swear— not by heaven, or by the earth, or by any other oath; but let your "yes" be "yes", and your "no", "no", so that you don't fall into hypocrisy.

- **NOTE:** In the context of "Naaman's Rule", you cannot truly call yourself a Christian if you willingly chose or choose to serve another god, as it is completely and entirely incompatible with Biblical doctrine.

***PRAYER FOR THE NAAMAN'S RULE:** Thanks and glory be to the Lord for His goodness, grace, love and mercy. Lord, I have made a mistake in my life, but I have come to the truth, and it is in faith that I pray this prayer. Forgive me for serving another god. As You excused Naaman the Syrian from his situation, I pray that You excuse me knowing that my heart is towards You alone as my God. I believe in Your Word and the Way of the Lord, and in my heart, mind, body, soul and spirit, I am committed to living by faith. Lord, I pray that You are my constant help, and with Your help and in Your mercy may You judge me favorably. IJNIP and give thanks to You. Amen.*

Rules of Righteousness

NAAMAN'S RULE IN THE NEW COVENANT

Therefore, salvation is possible to those who seek it no matter what god they serve or oath they have taken, as God is willing to accept you if you do right by others and right by Him, as it is written in 1 Corinthian 10:24—²⁴ Let no one seek his own, but each one his neighbor's good. This means that those who accept God's ways do not intentionally harm another human being in open or in "secret", whether physically, mentally (stalking, invasion of privacy, intimidation, or harassment), or through spiritual means (spiritual warfare a.k.a. juju/sorcery/witchcraft/wizardry/voodoo/hoodoo); nor do they act to negatively impact another's livelihood, whether by harassment or slander. God does not withhold His mercy from those who choose Him, instead He offers a hope and a future to them and their dependents. This means that you are able to undergo baptism by water with the hope of entering the New Covenant, even when under oath to another god, because it's by God's authority (the highest authority) that anyone is justified by faith. Justification by faith is signified by the receiving the Holy Spirit (baptism by the Holy Spirit), which confirms entry into the New Covenant.

- **NOTE:** Baptism by water and the Holy Spirit is covered in rule 6. Make sure you fully understand what a baptism means before you decide to do it—there is also a prayer provided for the process of baptism by water.

Naaman's story demonstrates the extent of God's forgiveness and grace towards those who have erred greatly in their faithfulness to Him, as well as those who have never had faith in Him at all. Hence, Naaman's story is an example of how anyone is able to re-establish or establish their faith in Christ, through actual faith, which is to keep God's commandments as outlined by the Holy Bible.

Rules of Righteousness

(2) Loving God is characterized by doing His commandments.

A good and loving child would obey their parents, so in the same way, if you call God your Heavenly Father, you are to obey Him as a loving child would, and this means being a doer of His commandments. There are many Scriptures that repeat this concept:

1 John 5:3—³For this is loving God, that we keep his commandments. His commandments are not grievous.

John 14:15—¹⁵If you love me, keep my commandments.

John 14:23-24—²³Jesus answered him, “If a man loves me, he will keep my word. My Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our home with him. ²⁴He who doesn’t love me doesn’t keep my words. The word which you hear isn’t mine, but the Father’s who sent me.

- **NOTE:** The Lord Jesus Christ states the two most important commandments: “³⁷Jesus said to him, “You shall **love** the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.³⁸ This is the first and great commandment”³⁹ A second likewise is this, ‘You shall **love** your neighbor as yourself.’⁴⁰ The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments.”~ Matthew 22:37-40. Therefore, the sole minimum requirement of fulfilling God’s commandments is to love God and other people according to God’s ways. Love can be summarized as treating other people in the way you would like to be treated. No one wants bad things to happen to them, so you shouldn’t do bad things to other people. After all, it is written in Romans 13:10: “¹⁰Love doesn’t harm a neighbor. Love therefore is the fulfillment of the law.”

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James 1:22-24—²² But be doers of the word, and not only hearers, deluding your own selves. ²³ For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man looking at his natural face in a mirror; ²⁴ for he sees himself, and goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.

1 John 4:20-21—²⁰ If a man says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who doesn’t love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? ²¹ This commandment we have from him, that he who loves God should also love his brother.

- **NOTE:** This means that racism, which is a form of hatred, is not approved of by God in any way, shape or form. Racists are unable to enter the New Covenant unless truly repentant. The same applies to any form of hatred i.e. ageism or sexism.

Summary...God’s definition of love is explained in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8, which can be summarized as choosing to be respectful, considerate and polite to other people, and the absence of intentionally doing harm or wrong to another. From such behaviour and actions the emotional aspect of love is fostered between people, which may lead to the formation of a genuine bond. Hence, love is simply not saying the words “I love you”, but demonstrating that you have love through your behaviour and actions towards other people regardless of factors such as race, biological sex or age. To conclude, by having and doing love, a person is judged by God to have kept His commandments, as it is written: “⁸ However, if you fulfil the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself, you do well.⁹ But if you show partiality, you commit sin, being convicted by the law as transgressors. ~ James 2:8-9. To clarify, to show partiality is to do evil to another person for whatever reason i.e. wickedness, racism, sexism, ageism or jealousy.

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James 2:9 indicates that those who show partiality remain under the Law, this means that God does not permit such people entry into the New Covenant i.e. God's Kingdom or Church, and thus, He does not gift such people with the Holy Spirit, nor does He count them as His children. Overall, you should not do things that are wrong to other people, as this equates to doing wrong against your neighbor, as it is written in Leviticus 25:17 and James 4:17: "You shall not wrong one another, but you shall fear your God; for I am Yahweh your God" and "¹⁷ To him therefore who knows to do good, and doesn't do it, to him it is sin."

Lastly, it is of note that love is expressed differently towards strangers, family, friends and foes, and so, you are not expected to love your enemy like you love your family or those you consider your friends, but the defining point is that you do no evil or wrong towards anyone, and are genuinely good hearted towards other people. This concept is noted in Romans 12:17-21:

Romans 12:17-21: ¹⁷ Repay no one evil for evil. Respect what is honorable in the sight of all men. ¹⁸ If it is possible, as much as it is up to you, be at peace with all men. ¹⁹ Don't seek revenge yourselves, beloved, but give place to God's wrath. For it is written, "Vengeance belongs to me; I will repay, says the Lord." ²⁰ Therefore "If your enemy is hungry, feed him. If he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in doing so, you will heap coals of fire on his head." ²¹ Don't be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

- **NOTE:** This Scripture does not mean that you owe your enemy anything, but that Christians should do their best to be polite and considerate towards their foes. Therefore, Christians are essentially rewarded for their goodness or righteousness towards God and others by the salvation of their souls, but those who willingly do wrong towards God and others are not saved by the Lord, the Most High God. Hence, it pays to have and show genuine love because it is what God expects and rewards.

Rules of Righteousness

(3) True Christian worship is characterized by spirit and truth.

Those who God claims as His children know the Truth (God’s Word), and their spirit (character) has been judged by God as fulfilling the two most important commandments (to love God and others); which God desires, acknowledges and accepts as true worship. This concept is conveyed by the Scriptures:

John 4:23-24—²³ But the hour comes, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such to be his worshipers. ²⁴ God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”

- **Spirit** is described in further detail in rule 4, but for now it can be considered as the invisible self that defines or describes who you are. It determines how you think, speak and act—it is your character. God desires His children to be of a certain character, and these traits are listed in the Word of God: Galatians 5:22-23—²² But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith,²³ gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law.
- **NOTE:** These characteristics are what God says describes His children, therefore, those who want to be Christian should seek to have and do them.
- **Truth** is simply knowing the truths of God, which are based on His Word There are 4 basic truths:
 - 1) A Christian must believe that the Word of God is true
 - 2) A Christian must serve God only (refer to rule 1)
 - 3) A Christian worships the Living God not lifeless images, idols (symbols) that “represent Christianity” or any other gods.

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God forbids the use and worship of images, idols (or symbols), this includes the use of Jesus' or saints pictures or figures (statues); "symbols of Christianity" such as the crucifix (cross); prayer to and worship of saints, angels or "messengers" (refer to rule 4d, Acts 17:29, 1 John 5:21, Exodus 20:1-6, 1 Corinthians 10:14). There is no use of ANY of these items by any Christian in the Bible, and God's servants i.e. the prophets and apostles, and God Himself, says not to use them. God can hear your prayers without any of the mentioned items. After all, the Lord said Himself: *⁶But you, when you pray, enter into your inner room, and having shut your door, pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.* ~ Matthew 6:6

- 4) A Christian should believe that:

a) The Lord is One (God exists as the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit)

God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit are one entity, the only variance is His form. God, the Father, is God in His most true and Heavenly (spiritual) form; God, the Son, is the Lord Jesus Christ, who is God in the form of a man; and the Holy Spirit is an infinite portion of God's Spirit that grants eternal life and/or spiritual gifts in varying forms, but at the Lord's discretion—reference 1 Corinthians 12:4-11. However, this does not mean that someone who has received the Holy Spirit is God, or equal with Him.

Galatians 3:20—²⁰Now a mediator is not between one, but God is one.

James 2:19—¹⁹You believe that God is one. You do well. The demons also believe, and shudder.

John 1:1-2, 14—¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²The same was in the beginning with God...¹⁴The Word became flesh, and lived among us. We saw his glory, such glory as of the one and only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth.

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John 10:30—³⁰ I and the Father are one.”

Matthew 1:18—¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus Christ was like this: After his mother, Mary, was engaged to Joseph, before they came together, she was found pregnant by the Holy Spirit.

- **NOTE:** Mary being pregnant by the Holy Spirit indicates that God fathered or sired Himself a.k.a. Jesus, which is why His birth was/is considered a miracle. Hence, Joseph is recorded as the Lord’s adoptive father in *Luke 3:23: ²³ Jesus himself, when he began to teach, was about thirty years old, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli,*

b) Jesus was on Earth, and did according to the Word of God.

- The Bible chronicles the birth and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.

John 21:24-25—²⁴ This is the disciple who testifies about these things, and wrote these things. We know that his witness is true. ²⁵ There are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they would all be written, I suppose that even the world itself wouldn’t have room for the books that would be written.

1 Corinthians 15:3-4—³ For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.

c) Jesus died to atone for the sins of mankind, and was resurrected from the dead by the power of God, the Father.

1 Peter 3:18—¹⁸ Because Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring you to God, being put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the Spirit,

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1 John 2:1-4—¹My little children, I write these things to you so that you may not sin. If anyone sins, we have a Counsellor with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous. ²And he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the whole world. ³This is how we know that we know him: if we keep his commandments. ⁴One who says, “I know him,” and doesn’t keep his commandments, is a liar, and the truth isn’t in him.

- **NOTE:** “and not only for ours only, but also for the whole world” refers to the fact that salvation was not for the apostles and people of those times alone, but for the time past and the time to come, and throughout the world. Therefore all people are part of the world unless they enter the New Covenant. It does not mean that people can sin without consequence. God judges all mankind during their lifetime and/or thereafter.

1 Peter 1:3—³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead

d) Jesus is the one and only mediator (Priest) of the New Covenant.

This means that your prayers should be in Jesus’ Name alone. The Lord never preached that prayers are accepted through any other, nor did His servants. There are many Scriptures that make it clear that Jesus is the ONLY priest (mediator) of the New Covenant. This means that any other human or spiritual being does not carry prayers to God, the Father i.e. angels, spirits, messengers, or saints (In the Bible saints are those who God has granted His Holy Spirit, but NO ONE prays in the name of another saint in the Bible, but they pray in Jesus’ name for one another. This also applies to all saints including the Virgin Mary, Peter, Paul or any other Apostle. There is plenty of evidence of this in the Bible:

1 Timothy 2:5—⁵For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,

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Hebrews 4:14-15—¹⁴ Having then a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let's hold tightly to our confession. ¹⁵ For we don't have a high priest who can't be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but one who has been in all points tempted like we are, yet without sin.

*Hebrews 2:17—¹⁷ Therefore he was obligated in all things to be made like his brothers, that he might become **a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God**, to make atonement for the sins of the people.*

Hebrews 7:22-26—²² By so much, Jesus has become the collateral of a better covenant. ²³ Many, indeed, have been made priests, because they are hindered from continuing by death. ²⁴ But he, because he lives forever, has his priesthood unchangeable. ²⁵ Therefore he is also able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, seeing that he lives forever to make intercession for them. ²⁶ For such a high priest was fitting for us: holy, guiltless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;

- **NOTE:** The books of the New Testament show examples of the Apostle's or saints prayers, which are only made in the Name of the Lord (or God). No prayers in the Bible are made in the name of any other person i.e. saint or "messenger" (there is a misconception that other spirits/gods serve as intermediaries/intercessors with the Lord, but they are NOT). Here are some examples below:

Galatians 1:3-5—³ Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴ who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us out of this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father—⁵ to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Jude 25: ²⁵ to God our Savior, who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen.

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e) The righteous live by faith.

Living by faith means that you believe the basic Christian truths (1,2,3, 4abcd), and through this belief you walk (do) according to God's commandments. By doing so God grants the Holy Spirit (eternal life), which is the signature of the New Covenant, and of His Children.

Galatians 3:11⁻¹¹ *Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for, "The righteous will live by faith."*

The Law is the Law of Moses a.k.a. the "Old Covenant". The Old Covenant was a binding agreement between God and His people—obedience to the Law would bring blessings, but disobedience would bring curses (punishment). Hence, the Old Covenant was based on fulfilling the Law of Moses which includes hundreds of laws. The "Old Covenant" was superseded by the introduction of the New Covenant, which was established through the fulfillment of the Law by the Lord Jesus Christ, which was preceded by the work of John the Baptist who preached repentance and baptism by water. Through the "Old Covenant", a promise was made through Christ that the righteous would come into salvation (receive the Holy Spirit) by faith in Christ (Galatians 3:13-14). The New Covenant is considered the better covenant because it leads to receiving the Holy Spirit, whereas practicing religious Mosaic Law does not. The following Scriptures help clarify this:

The Law of Moses was superseded by the New Covenant

Luke 16:16⁻¹⁶ *The law and the prophets were until John. From that time the Good News of the Kingdom of God is preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it.*

- **NOTE:** *"and everyone is forcing his way into it"* reads as: those who are truly faithful and genuine in their commitment to God and His ways

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- are those who receive the Holy Spirit i.e. are granted entry into God's Kingdom. This verse does not condone any type of wicked, violent or malicious action to attain "control" of God's Kingdom. God is in control of His own Kingdom, and permits entry to whoever He pleases and chooses: *Psalm 115:3- But our God is in the heavens. He does whatever he pleases.*

Galatians 1:13—¹³For you have heard of my way of living in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the assembly of God and ravaged it.

- **NOTE:** Apostle Paul, who was a Hebrew man, expressed that he no longer practiced Mosaic Law as a form of religion.

The Lord fulfilled the Law of Moses

Matthew 5:17—¹⁷“Don't think that I came to destroy the law or the prophets. I didn't come to destroy, but to fulfill.

- **NOTE:** Jesus Christ fulfilled the Law by completing it in full without fault, and by doing so, He made provision for salvation through faith.

Acts 3:19-22—¹⁹“Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, so that there may come times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, ²⁰and that he may send Christ Jesus, who was ordained for you before, ²¹whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God spoke long ago by the mouth of his holy prophets. ²²For Moses indeed said to the fathers, ‘The Lord God will raise up a prophet for you from among your brothers, like me. You shall listen to him in all things whatever he says to you.

- **NOTE:** Original prophecy about Christ is mentioned in Deuteronomy 18:15 - 19).

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Galatians 3:13-14—¹³ Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us. For it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree,”¹⁴ that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

- **NOTE:** Even though the “Old Covenant” was superseded, it is still relevant and useful to Christianity because by faith a Christian maintains the key aspects of the Law i.e. natural, moral and ethical principles, and by this, is justified on the basis of a promise and not adherence to all Mosaic Laws that cannot be fulfilled because they are impossible to fulfil or are irrelevant. Hence, Jesus redeemed people from the curse of the Law by fulfilling it Himself. This act was made possible through provisions within the Law of Moses that allowed for the establishment of the New Covenant, where salvation is established through a faith-based promise that is mediated through Christ.

Hebrews 8:6—⁶ But now he has obtained a more excellent ministry, by so much as he is also the mediator of a better covenant, which on better promises has been given as law.

The Righteous live by faith through Christ (New Covenant)

Romans 3:28 – ²⁸ We maintain therefore that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the law.

Romans 3:31—³¹ Do we then nullify the law through faith? May it never be! No, we establish the law.

- **NOTE:** The New Covenant is based on the following promise: if God has judged that you have walked in faith, then He will gift you His Holy Spirit, which grants eternal life and the forgiveness of all sins. Faith is not simply believing in God, but to have faith is to walk by it, which is to do God’s key

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commandments i.e. to obey God's Word. This is explained in the Scriptures:

Matthew 22:37-40—³⁷ Jesus said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.”³⁸ This is the first and great commandment. ³⁹A second likewise is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’⁴⁰ The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments.”

Galatians 5:14—¹⁴ For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, in this: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

- **NOTE:** The New Testament commandments are based on the Law of Moses, and is founded on the natural, moral, and ethical principles of the Law, which conveys that a Christian should be faithful to God, and treat other people the way they would like to be treated. Therefore, the Law of Moses serves as a guide for the New Covenant—this is even written in the Bible:

*Galatians 3:23-24—²³ But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, confined for the faith which should afterwards be revealed. ²⁴ So that **the law has become our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.***

- **NOTE:** Justification by faith through Christ is keeping God's commandments, as doing them demonstrates that you truly believe in God, and that you love Him and His ways. God determines who receives the Holy Spirit, which He considers as one's due reward for desiring to follow His ways. It is a gift because humans are not without sin, and nothing that a human does can pay for eternal life (immortality), but having judged or examined you, the Lord is happy to call you His own. This is conveyed by the Scriptures:

John 14:15-18—¹⁵ If you love me, keep my commandments. ¹⁶ I will pray to the Father, and He will give you another Counsellor, that he may be with you forever:

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¹⁷ the Spirit of truth, whom the world can't receive; for it doesn't see him and doesn't know him. You know him, for he lives with you, and will be in you.

- **NOTE:** The Counsellor is the Holy Spirit, which is also referred to as the Spirit of Truth, The Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ, Christ, or the Helper. The Holy Spirit is God's Spirit.

John 14:23—²³ Jesus answered him, "If a man loves me, he will keep my word. My Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our home with him.

John 6:64-65—⁶⁴ But there are some of you who don't believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who didn't believe, and who it was who would betray him. ⁶⁵ He said, "For this cause I have said to you that no one can come to me, unless it is given to him by my Father."

John 10:25-29—²⁵ Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you don't believe. The works that I do in my Father's name, these testify about me. ²⁶ But you don't believe, because you are not of my sheep, as I told you. ²⁷ My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸ I give eternal life to them. They will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. ²⁹ My Father who has given them to me is greater than all. No one is able to snatch them out of my Father's hand.

Romans 3:21—²¹ But now apart from the law, a righteousness of God has been revealed, being testified by the law and the prophets; ²² even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ to all and on all those who believe. For there is no distinction, ²³ for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God; ²⁴ being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ

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*Jesus;*²⁵ whom God sent to be an atoning sacrifice, through faith in his blood, for a demonstration of his righteousness through the passing over of prior sins, in God's forbearance;²⁶ to demonstrate his righteousness at this present time; that he might himself be just, and the justifier of him who has faith in Jesus

- **NOTE:** Only people who have entered the New Covenant are forgiven of all their sins. Therefore, if you have not entered into the New Covenant (or rather if you never do), then your sins have not been forgiven, and the Lord Jesus Christ does not intercede for you when you pray (John 17:9).

*Romans 6:23—*²³ *For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

- **NOTE:** God is not to be tested (Deuteronomy 6:16, Matthew 4:7), meaning that His goodness or forgiveness is not to be taken for granted. There is no forgiveness of sins for those to whom God has not granted the Holy Spirit, nor does He forgive those who deliberately sin and then confess, but do it again and again. For such people there is only forbearance (patient tolerance) until judgement:

*Romans 2:4-6—*⁴ *Or do you despise the riches of his goodness, forbearance, and patience, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?*⁵ *But according to your hardness and unrepentant heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath, revelation, and of the righteous judgment of God;*⁶ *who "will pay back to everyone according to their works:*

*Hebrews 4:13—*¹³ *There is no creature that is hidden from his sight, but all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of him to whom we must give an account.*

- **NOTE:** This means that nothing is hidden from God, not even a thought or intention—He knows if you truly keep His commandments, or whether you pretend to. Therefore, each person is accountable for their own choices.

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James 4:17—¹⁷ To him therefore who knows to do good, and doesn't do it, .

- **NOTE:** This means if you know something is wrong (evil), and you do it, then you condemn yourself in the eyes of God.

1 John 3:9—⁹ Whoever is born of God does not commit sin, because his seed remains in him, and he can't sin, because he is born of God.

- **NOTE:** This means that those who are given the Holy Spirit do not make a practice of sin. This is reiterated in the verse Romans 8:1...

Romans 8:1—There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who don't walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

- **NOTE:** “those who are in Christ Jesus” refers to people who have received the Holy Spirit i.e. entered the New Covenant.

Summary...The Old Covenant was superseded because it was flawed i.e. those who kept it still experienced the consequences of disobedience caused by the actions of others. The New Covenant is unique because the Holy Spirit is only granted to those who walk in faith, meaning that it is only given to those who keep God's commandments i.e. doing good and not evil. Hence, the New Covenant is the better covenant, as it is written: “⁷ For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second.”~ Hebrews 8:7. Therefore, Christians are to worship God in truth and in spirit, which is to live by faith. Living by faith is to keep God's commandments, which then leads to entry into the New Covenant. Entry into the New Covenant is confirmed by receiving the Holy Spirit, which is a decision that is made entirely at God's discretion, and His discretion alone. Hence, when you know that you do not live a Christian lifestyle baptism by the Holy Spirit should not be expected at all. However, if you have begun to, or do live a Christian lifestyle, perhaps God is testing your faith, and so, you are encouraged to persevere.

Rules of Righteousness

(4) There are practices that disqualify people from being Christian.

The practices that disqualify someone becoming Christian are called works or deeds of the flesh. No one who intends to do and/or accepts these things will be saved because God says He will not allow them into His Kingdom. It is impossible for such a person to receive the Holy Spirit.

- **The flesh:** the flesh is your mortal being, what is mortal is corruptible. What is corruptible accepts and commits the worst of sins (sins that lead to death - 1 John 5:16), and the wages (result or outcome) of sin is death (Romans 6:23); and being dead or to perish is to remain that way i.e. mortal (not receiving eternal life by the Holy Spirit). Those who choose to do God's commandments commit to not doing the deeds of the flesh, and instead walk by the spirit (inward/inner person, this is not the Holy Spirit).
- **The spirit:** The spirit is the self that is not seen, and it has two aspects: will and character. The will is simply intent and decision, and the degree of one's will can range from weak to strong. As for character, the spirit has many traits that can be righteous (good) or unrighteous (bad). The righteous walk by the spirit i.e. choosing to keep God's commandments (good). This strengthens (disciplines) the spirit, and as the spirit strengthens it rules over the flesh, and therefore guides the flesh to no longer do the sins that lead to death i.e. sin becomes unappealing. Hence, one who is led by the spirit walks in righteousness. Here are some Scriptures that speak of this phenomenon:

Galatians 5:16—¹⁶ But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you won't fulfil the lust of the flesh.

Galatians 5:24—²⁴ Those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and lusts.

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*2 Corinthians 4:16*⁶ *Therefore we don't faint, but though our outward person is decaying, yet our inward person is renewed day by day.*

- **NOTE:** One who has a weak (undisciplined) spirit is ruled by the flesh because the spirit is as the flesh: weak, and therefore characterized by unrighteous traits that lead to death. This occurs because you have accepted to do what leads to death, as sin comes from one's own self and no where else: *James 1:13*¹³ *Let no man say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God," for God can't be tempted by evil, and he himself tempts no one.* ¹⁴ *But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own lust and enticed.*

*Ephesian 3:16*¹⁶ *that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, that you may be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inner person,*

- **NOTE:** The Holy Spirit acts to further strengthen one's spirit.

*Galatians 5:19-21*¹⁹ *Now the deeds of the flesh are obvious, which are: adultery, sexual immorality, uncleanness, lustfulness,* ²⁰ *idolatry, sorcery, hatred, strife, jealousies, outbursts of anger, rivalries, divisions, heresies,* ²¹ *envy, murders, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these; of which I forewarn you, even as I also forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit God's Kingdom.*

- **NOTE:** These practices are defined in the glossary (What Not To Do List)

*Colossians 3:5-9*⁶ *Put to death therefore your members which are on the earth: sexual immorality, uncleanness, depraved passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.* ⁷ *For these things' sake the wrath of God comes on the children of disobedience.* ⁸ *You also once walked in those, when you lived in them;* ⁹ *but now you also put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and shameful speaking out of your mouth.* ⁹ *Don't lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old man with his doings*

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Romans 1:26-32—²⁶For this reason, God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women the natural function into that which against nature; ²⁷Likewise also the men, leaving the natural function of the woman, burned in their lust toward one another, men doing what is inappropriate with men, and receiving in themselves the due penalty of their error²⁸ Even as they refused to have God in their knowledge, God gave them up to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not fitting; ²⁹being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, malice; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil habits, secret slanderers, ³⁰backbiters, hateful to God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, ³¹without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, unforgiving, unmerciful; ³²who, knowing the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but also approve of those who practice them.

- **NOTE:** Verse 26-27 refers to engaging in lesbian and gay activity or relationships. Verse 32 means that one who willingly practices the aforementioned sin(s) will not be granted eternal life via the Holy Spirit. God extends this to those who encourage sin. This verse describes spiritual death, as 'dead' simply means mortal: everyone born into this world is 'dead' until/if/when they receive the Holy Spirit. Hence, anyone who does not have the Holy Spirit is 'dead'. Overall, Romans 1:26-32 does not endorse the murder of other people, it simply makes note of what characteristics or choices define those who are spiritually dead.

Summary...To become a Christian and remain a Christian, you cannot willingly be or do these things described in this rule, as summarised by The VMFCP Basic Standards, Principal Sins and What Not to Do List, because they are contrary to God's commandments and the character of a Christian.

Rules of Righteousness

(5) Repentance is turning from evil and doing good according to God's Word.

Repentance can be described as being truly sorry, which is demonstrated by ceasing to do things that are wrong, and doing what is right. Repentance can also be described as being 'born anew' because there is a renewing of yourself i.e. your better traits are magnified, and the not so great ones are diminished through Christian practice. Here are some Scriptures that convey this teaching:

John 3:3-7—³ Jesus answered him, "Most certainly, I tell you, unless one is born anew, he can't see God's Kingdom."⁴ Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born?"⁵ Jesus answered, "Most certainly I tell you, unless one is born of water and spirit, he can't enter into God's Kingdom.⁶ That which is born of the flesh is flesh. That which is born of the Spirit is spirit.⁷ Don't marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born anew.'

Acts 3:19—¹⁹ "Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, so that there may come times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord,²⁰ and that he may send Christ Jesus, who was ordained for you before,

- **NOTE:** In verse 20, "Christ Jesus" refers to the Spirit of Christ which is the Holy Spirit.

Mark 1:14-15—¹⁴ Now after John was taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Good News of God's Kingdom,¹⁵ and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and God's Kingdom is at hand! Repent, and believe in the Good News."

Summary... There's purposeful action involved in becoming Christian, and REPENTANCE (pro-active change) is its beginning. Hence, stopping sin is the basic requirement of change, but it may be circumstantial at first.

Rules of Righteousness

(6) To enter God's Kingdom there are two events that MUST occur, both are baptisms: baptism by water and baptism by the Holy Spirit.

Baptism by water and by the Holy Spirit can be considered the 2-step verification process for Christianity. Most notably, it is God alone who controls the final step: who receives the Holy Spirit.

Baptism by water: Baptism by water is a rite of passage required for the New Covenant. Baptism by water represents the salvation of the righteous, where they survived and emerged from the great flood through obedience to God, but the unrighteous perished (Genesis 7, 1 Peter 3:21). Therefore, as Christ died as a sinner in the flesh, like the unrighteous did in the great flood; so does a Christian die to the flesh, but as Christ was raised to life by the power of the Holy Spirit; a Christian walks by the spirit and is granted eternal life through the Holy Spirit which raised Christ from the dead. It is of note that Christ's death and resurrection was also symbolized by Jonah, the prophet who was swallowed by a fish, and was restored to life by God's mercy and power after 3 days and nights (Matthew 12:39).

John 3:5—⁵ Jesus answered, "Most certainly I tell you, unless one is born of water and spirit, he can't enter into God's Kingdom.

1 Peter 3:18-21—¹⁸ Because Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring you to God, being put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the Spirit, ¹⁹ in whom he also went and preached to the spirits in prison, ²⁰ who before were disobedient, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, while the ship was being built. In it, few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. ²¹ This is a symbol of baptism, which now saves you—not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

- **NOTE:** "good conscience" refers to doing God's commandments.

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Romans 6:1-4—¹What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? ²May it never be! We who died to sin, how could we live in it any longer? ³Or don't you know that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life.

- **Baptism by water is paired with the act of repentance (pro-active change).**

Baptism by water is an adult process, a baby cannot repent because it doesn't know good from evil, and a child, although knowing right from wrong, is still learning. There is evidence to support that baptism by water is an adult only process. For example, in the four gospels of the Apostles (Matthew, Luke, John and Mark), John, the Baptist, baptizes many adult people, and in the Book of Acts, God sends His servants to those who He has called to be saved i.e. salvation is based on God's foreknowledge i.e. He knows who will believe in Him and follow His commandments because He has foreseen it. Reference 1 Peter 1-2).

Luke 3:3, 10-14—³He came into all the region around the Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for remission of sins....¹⁰The multitudes asked him, "What then must we do?" ¹¹He answered them, "He who has two coats, let him give to him who has none. He who has food, let him do likewise."¹²Tax collectors also came to be baptized, and they said to him, "Teacher, what must we do?" ¹³He said to them, "Collect no more than that which is appointed to you."¹⁴Soldiers also asked him, saying, "What about us? What must we do?" He said to them, "Extort from no one by violence, neither accuse anyone wrongfully. Be content with your wages."

- **NOTE:** In verse 3, it is specifically noted that repentance (change) leads to the remission (forgiveness) of sins. i.e. without repentance there is no forgiveness of sins. Also, only adults underwent baptism by water.

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Acts 8:29, 35-39 —²⁹The Spirit said to Philip, “Go near, and join yourself to this chariot.”...³⁵Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture, preached to him about Jesus. ³⁶As they went on the way, they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “Behold, here is water. What is keeping me from being baptized? ³⁷“If you believe with all your heart, you may.” He answered, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” ³⁸He commanded the chariot to stand still, and they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him.

- **NOTE:** The Apostles were sent to certain people based on God’s instruction i.e. there is a set criteria for who is Christian and God is the One who determines who is Christian.

Acts 8:12—¹²But when they believed Philip preaching good news concerning God’s Kingdom and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women

- **NOTE:** Adult men and women are mentioned, but not children.

Acts 16:14-15—¹⁴A certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, one who worshiped God, heard us. The Lord opened her heart to listen to the things which were spoken by Paul. ¹⁵When she and her household were baptized, she begged us, saying, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and stay.” So she persuaded us.

Acts 16:27-33—²⁷The jailer, being roused out of sleep and seeing the prison doors open, drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. ²⁸But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, “Don’t harm yourself, for we are all here!”²⁹ He called for lights, sprang in, fell down trembling before Paul and Silas, ³⁰brought them out, and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” ³¹They said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be

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saved, you and your household.”³² They spoke the word of the Lord to him, and to all who were in his house.³³ He took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes, and was immediately baptized, he and all his household.³⁴ He brought them up into his house, and set food before them, and rejoiced greatly, with all his household, having believed in God.

- **NOTE:** Lydia and the jailer’s households were baptized, but it’s likely that only those eligible for baptism by water underwent the process i.e. adults. Therefore, there is no need for children to undergo baptism by water because there is specific instruction provided in the Bible about the salvation of families with dependents.

1 Corinthians 7:12-14—¹² But to the rest I—not the Lord—say, if any brother has an unbelieving wife, and she is content to live with him, let him not leave her.¹³ The woman who has an unbelieving husband, and he is content to live with her, let her not leave her husband.¹⁴ For the unbelieving husband is sanctified in the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified in the husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy.¹⁵ Yet if the unbeliever departs, let there be separation. The brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases, but God has called us in peace.

- **NOTE:** These verses explain that by marriage, the spouse of an individual with the Holy Spirit is sanctified (holy), as the two are counted as one (Mark 10:7-8). Dependent children born to a/or Christian parent(s) are also sanctified to the Lord (holy until adulthood). The sanctification of a spouse is dependent on the amicability of the relationship (1 Corinthians 7:15). **Therefore, the sanctified spouse has no room for complacency,** but the children of the marriage remain sanctified (holy) regardless of circumstance. Examples not conducive to amicability include abuse, illegal trade, or actively serving other gods. In such circumstances the Christian spouse is free to move on (divorce) without penalty, as “departs” is a reference to an ununified marriage, and not the spouse choosing to leave.

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Baptism by the Holy Spirit: Baptism by the Holy Spirit is the reception of the Holy Spirit, and it is granted by God to those who He judges as faithful. The Holy Spirit is not granted at the discretion of God's servants, as from the Bible it is evident that when the Apostles prayed that the Holy Spirit would be granted, it only fell on those who God approved of i.e. God had judged them as faithful, and wanted to claim them as His children:

*Acts 19:1-7*¹ While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul, having passed through the upper country, came to Ephesus and found certain disciples. ² He said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" They said to him, "No, we haven't even heard that there is a Holy Spirit."³ He said, "Into what then were you baptized?" They said, "Into John's baptism."⁴ Paul said, "John indeed baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe in the one who would come after him, that is, in Jesus."⁵ When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶ When Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them and they spoke with other languages and prophesied. ⁷ **They were about twelve men in all.**

- **NOTE:** In Ephesus, only twelve men (and/or women) in a congregation were approved by God to receive the Holy Spirit. This demonstrates God's authority over who enters the Body of Christ a.k.a. God's Kingdom. This is made clear by other Scriptures:

*Acts 15:8*⁸ God, who knows the heart, testified about them, giving them the Holy Spirit, just like he did to us.

*Acts 13:48*⁴⁸ As the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of God. **As many as were appointed to eternal life believed.**

- **NOTE:** Appointed means chosen i.e. judged by God as faithful.

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2 Timothy 2:19–¹⁹ However God’s firm foundation stands, having this seal, “The Lord knows those who are his,” and, “Let every one who names the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness.”

John 10:14–¹⁴ I am the good shepherd. I know my own, and I’m known by my own;

- **NOTE:** The Lord appoints/chooses all those who are His, and He rejects those who are not. There is an example of this in the Scriptures, where Simon, the sorcerer, was rejected by God from receiving the Holy Spirit due to bitterness and unidentified inequities, also, he was a sorcerer, God does not permit sorcerers entry into the Body of Christ (God’s Kingdom):

*Acts 8:18-23–¹⁸ Now when Simon saw that the Holy Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles’ hands, he offered them money, ¹⁹ saying, “Give me also this power, that whomever I lay my hands on may receive the Holy Spirit.” ²⁰ But Peter said to him, “May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! ²¹ **You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart isn’t right before God. ²² Repent therefore of this, your wickedness, and ask God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. ²³ For I see that you are in the poison of bitterness and in the bondage of iniquity.”***

- **NOTE:** There is evidence of extended periods of time between baptism by water and baptism by the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:1-7). There is also a noted incidence of baptism by water and by the Holy Spirit occurring in the reverse order (Acts 10:45-48), and mass spontaneous baptism by the Holy Spirit, which occurred on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4). This tells you that God can work in different and wonderful ways where baptism is concerned, especially in times where it is His purpose to call many to salvation.

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Summary...God chooses who is saved based on His judgement of the person, but one who is saved **MUST** undergo Baptism by water and by Holy Spirit (in adulthood) to enter into the Body of Christ. Here is a prayer that you can use for your baptism by water (and hopefully Holy Spirit). Alternatively, you are encouraged to write and say your own prayer—whatever suits you best is perfectly fine.

***BAPTISM PRAYER:** Thank you Lord for Your goodness, grace, love, mercy and compassion. With this baptism by water, I confess and repent of my sins for which I seek Your forgiveness: [confess sins that you are genuine sorry and/or remind Him of the sins you have stopped]. I accept you as my Lord and God, and I hope and pray that You accept me as Your child. It is my heart's desire to walk and live by faith, and in this I ask for Your help so that I may receive the Holy Spirit according to Your grace. INNIP and give thanks to You. Amen.*

TIP 1: You are able to complete the baptism of water by yourself. You don't have to fully submerge yourself in water (you can if you want to), but a little sprinkle of water on your head is more than enough (author testimony).

TIP 2: Baptism by the Holy Spirit occurs at God's discretion. You can receive the Holy Spirit from God once He is convinced of (1) your genuine intention to repent and (2) evidence of repentance (change) in your lifestyle (God knows if you will truly follow Him based on His foreknowledge, and so, it cannot be "faked". Acts 15:18-19). The reception of the Holy Spirit is characterized by an intense feeling of joy and warmth in your heart (author testimony), and briefly speaking in tongues, which can be described as speaking, but not knowing what you are saying. Tongues is a language unknown to people, but known by and from God. (Author testimony, and references Acts 2:4, Acts 19:6, and Acts 10:45-46).

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(7) A child of God does not keep sinning, knowingly or willingly.

Christians do not and should not make a practice of sin. A child of God would be rejected by the Lord, and their salvation would be lost if they actually willingly engaged in sin. There is a specific example of this concept in the Book of Acts:

Acts 4:36-37, 5:1-10—³⁶ Joses, who by the apostles was also called Barnabas (which is, being interpreted, Son of Encouragement), a Levite, a man of Cyprus by race, ³⁷ having a field, sold it and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet... ^{5:1} But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira, his wife, sold a possession, ² and kept back part of the price, his wife also being aware of it, then brought a certain part and laid it at the apostles' feet. ³ But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back part of the price of the land? ⁴ While you kept it, didn't it remain your own? After it was sold, wasn't it in your power? How is it that you have conceived this thing in your heart? You haven't lied to men, but to God."⁵ Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and died. Great fear came on all who heard these things.

- **NOTE:** God is merciful, but He expects that if you know something is wrong that you wouldn't do it, and that you should choose to do what's right, when you know what's right. God is merciful towards those who do the wrong thing out of ignorance or by mistake, but He also expects you to learn from them. Overall, the above Scripture from The Book of Acts serves as a cautionary tale, and explains why obedience and dedication to keeping God's commandments is important.

Hence, willing obedience is what God desires above all things, it is essentially the major requirement for salvation: it cannot be compared to "sacrifices" such as going to church (especially churches that do not acknowledge the authority of God's Word/Ways. Matthew 23:1-36); reading, decorating with, or posting

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Scriptures online and not doing them (John 5:39-40, John 14:15); doing things in the Name of God such as preaching, teaching etc. but not according to the Truth of God's Word or when you willing sin i.e. a hypocrite (Reference 2 Peter 2:1-3, Romans 2:21-24, 2 Timothy 3:6-9) — it is in vain if you do these things, if you do not actually do what God asks and expects of you.

Proverbs 21:3—To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to Yahweh than sacrifice.

1 Samuel 15:22-23—²²Samuel said, “Has Yahweh as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying Yahweh’s voice? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams. ²³For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as idolatry and teraphim. Because you have rejected Yahweh’s word, he has also rejected you from being king.”

John 12:47-48—⁴⁷If anyone listens to my sayings, and doesn’t believe, I don’t judge him. For I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. ⁴⁸He who rejects me, and doesn’t receive my sayings, has one who judges him. The word that I spoke will judge him in the last day.

- **NOTE:** Verse 47 means that God saves i.e. grants the Holy Spirit to those who choose to do good, and verse 48 means that God rejects and judges those who do bad (evil) things. This indicates that God's judgement is made on the basis of your own life choices.

1 John 3:3-6 —³Everyone who has this hope set on him purifies himself, even as he is pure. ⁴Everyone who sins also commits lawlessness. Sin is lawlessness. ⁵You know that he was revealed to take away our sins, and no sin is in him. ⁶Whoever remains in him doesn’t sin. Whoever sins hasn’t seen him and doesn’t know him.

James 4:17—¹⁷To him therefore who knows to do good, and doesn’t do it, to him it is sin.

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Hebrews 10:26-27—²⁶For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more a sacrifice for sins, ²⁷but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and a fierceness of fire which will devour the adversaries.

1 John 3:7-12—⁷Little children, let no one lead you astray. He who does righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. ⁸He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. To this end the Son of God was revealed: that he might destroy the works of the devil. ⁹Whoever is born of God doesn't commit sin, because his seed remains in him, and he can't sin, because he is born of God. ¹⁰In this the children of God are revealed, and the children of the devil. Whoever doesn't do righteousness is not of God, neither is he who doesn't love his brother. ¹¹For this is the message which you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another; ¹²unlike Cain, who was of the evil one, and killed his brother. Why did he kill him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's righteous.

Summary...Becoming Christian is an actual process that is wholly dependent on God's judgement of a person's mind, heart, body, soul and spirit— and it is only by God's authority that a person becomes Christian a.k.a. a child of God. Jesus' sacrifice on the cross was not a golden ticket into heaven for all of mankind, because only those who enter the Body of Christ via the New Covenant receive its promises. Hence, whoever desires to be Christian must abide by God's ways preceding entrance into God's Kingdom and thereafter.

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NOTE: Here's what you should know and expect about Christianity, and its process based on the Scripture Matthew 13:18-23, the parable of the farmer.

- **Matthew 13:18-23** - ¹⁸ "Hear, then, the parable of the farmer. ¹⁹ When anyone hears the word of the Kingdom and doesn't understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away that which has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown by the roadside. ²⁰ What was sown on the rocky places, this is he who hears the word and immediately with joy receives it; ²¹ yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while. When oppression or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles. ²² What was sown among the thorns, this is he who hears the word, but the cares of this age and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. ²³ What was sown on the good ground, this is he who hears the word and understands it, who most certainly bears fruit and produces, some one hundred times as much, some sixty, and some thirty."

Explanation of the Parable of the Farmer...

- This parable expresses things that are spiritual and practical in nature i.e. the evil one is the Devil (Satan) who acts spiritually in this circumstance.
- The roadside, rocky place and good ground refer to the condition of the heart. Good ground = soft heart; rocky places = half soft and half hard heart; roadside = fully hard heart; thorns = mainly hard heart. The aim of Christian's is to have a soft heart, which is equivalent to the good ground spoken of in the parable.
 - A soft heart is a heart that accepts God's Word and does it. A hard heart is a heart that rejects God's Word and does not do it (Mark 8:17, 1 Samuel 6:6, Deuteronomy 10:16-17).

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The practically expressed aspects of the parable elaborate on who enters God's Kingdom, and how:

Matthew 13:18-19 –¹⁸ “Hear, then, the parable of the farmer. ¹⁹ When anyone hears the word of the Kingdom and doesn't **understand** it, the evil one comes and snatches away that which has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown by the roadside.

- **NOTE:** These Scriptures explain the people that hear/read God's Word, but do none of His commandments because they choose not to live a Christian lifestyle. Therefore, these people have hardened their heart because they did not want to follow God's ways. These people do not become children of God. The meaning of '**understanding**' in this Scripture's context is defined in Job 28:28: “To man he said, ‘Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom. **To depart from evil is understanding**” i.e. understanding is choosing to stop doing what God considers as evil/wrong.

Therefore, understanding is not dependent on being taught right from wrong, as what God classifies as right or wrong is repeated plainly throughout the Bible, and is also expressed through societal laws, policies and customs in regards to what is illegal, wrong or unacceptable. Hence, understanding relies on the choices each person makes in life, and the Lord, the Most High God, encourages people to turn away from HIS definition of evil, which is what He calls understanding. As for the evil one snatching away the seed, it conveys a person choosing to disregard God's commandments, which signifies “spiritual allegiance” to the ways of the world, and therefore the evil one (Ephesians 2:2).

The process of change can be daunting depending on what kind of lifestyle you have lived, but it is truly a logical sequence of choices. For your ease of mind, the process of Christian lifestyle change (repentance) has been simplified in a diagram on the next page...

Rules of Righteousness

BIG changes

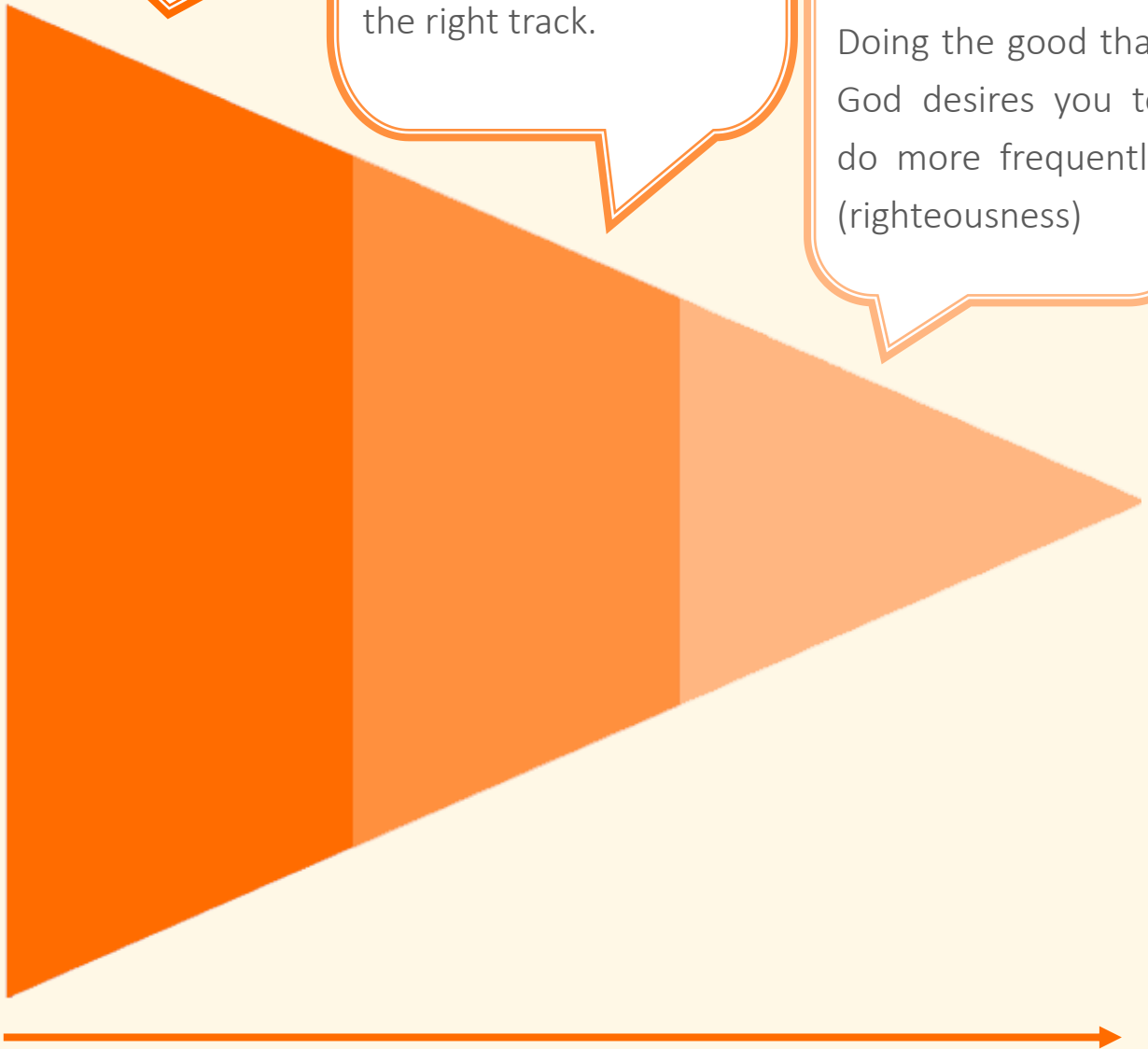
Stop doing things that God does not want you to do (evil). To begin, stop doing sins that are under your control (actions).

PROCESS of change

Doing what God wants you to do. If you make a sincere mistake, try again (it is a process)—if you are remorseful or upset you are likely on the right track.

SMALL Changes

Doing the good that God desires you to do more frequently (righteousness)



CHANGE (Repentance) Over Time

Rules of Righteousness

Matthew 13:20-21 – ²⁰What was sown on the rocky places, this is he who hears the word and immediately with joy receives it; ²¹yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while. When oppression or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles.

- **NOTE:** These Scriptures explain the people who hear/read God’s Word and begin to do God’s commandments, but stop because of the troubles that can arise in life when God tests their faith i.e. persecution by other people through: spiritual warfare, which can cause illness to varying degrees*, or issues at work, university or any other place, which can be frustrating and tiresome. However, these troubles are common to life whether you are Christian or not, and so, it is no reason to deter from God or Christianity because it is written in 1 Corinthians 10:13 and 2 Timothy 3:12: “¹³No temptation has taken you except what is common to man. God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted above what you are able, but will with the temptation also make the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it” (temptation means trouble or trial) and “¹²Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.” Therefore, people who choose not to endure the troubles of the world, without compromise, are considered unfaithful to God, and because of this they do not become children of God. *Alternatively, God uses illness to test one’s faith or “refine” His people i.e. the Book of Job and 2 Corinthians 12:7. However, an illness can still be made worse by other people through spiritual warfare.

Overall, God expects Christians to be patient and disciplined to the best of their ability, in whatever circumstances they find themselves in—as it is the essence of a test or trial of faith, as it is written “³~~knowing that~~ the testing of your faith produces endurance.~ James 1:3. This emphasises the individualistic nature of the New Covenant, where a physical church (building) or belonging to a congregation, does not guarantee or influence who receives the Holy Spirit i.e. who is accepted by God, as God alone determines who His children are.

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Matthew 13:22 –²² What was sown among the thorns, this is he who hears the word, but the cares of this age and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful.

- **NOTE:** These Scriptures explain the people who hear/read God’s Word, but eventually choose not to do God’s commandments due to compromise. The primary reason for compromise is given: the love of money that is rooted in materialism i.e. doing anything to acquire money without care for how it is acquired. These people are largely hard-hearted towards God, and therefore do not become children of God. Remember it is written in Hebrews 13:5— ⁵ Be free from the love of money, content with such things as you have, for he has said, “I will in no way leave you, neither will I in any way forsake you.” So, make it your mission to be content and live within your means, being thankful and grateful to God for what you have, rather than the things you do not have.

Matthew 13:23 –²³ What was sown on the good ground, this is he who hears the word and understands it, who most certainly bears fruit and produces, some one hundred times as much, some sixty, and some thirty.”

- **NOTE:** These Scriptures explain the people who hear/read God’s Word, and choose to do His commandments regardless of the troubles that can arise in life (as previously mentioned). Through faith in God they are able to endure the trials of life through patience and devotion to God by keeping His commandments. These people have soft or have softened their hearts, and their reward for faithfully following God’s ways is receiving the Holy Spirit, which is the defining hallmark of Christian’s (Children of God) under the New Covenant. The Holy Spirit is given to people that God has judged good and faithful in character i.e. bearing fruit, which is showing your faith by keeping God’s commandments regardless of trials or trouble (James 2:18).

Rules of Righteousness

Congratulations! You have come to the end of the 'Calling' section!

It is hoped that you choose to believe in the Word of God, so that you may come into His salvation. You are encouraged to be pro-active and take a stand for your own salvation, because in truth, it's you who holds the power to make a choice about how you want to live your life. Therefore, as you stand in faith remember that troubles or hardship in life do not mean that God is not with you, it actually means the exact opposite: the book of Job is obvious proof of this notion, furthermore, it is written in Romans 5:3-4: "³ Not only this, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴ and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope

This is not to say that suffering is good (it is not), but the knowledge of why you may be troubled is comforting i.e. my soul has been saved by the Lord, the Most High God. And so, as it is written "~~But since we belong to the day,~~ let's be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet, the hope of salvation." ~ 1 Thessalonians 5:8, you are encouraged to do so. To put on the breastplate of faith and love is to keep God's commandments, and so, you are reminded that The VMFCP Basic Standards, Principal Sins and What Not To Do List serves as an immediate guide to keeping God's commandments (glossary), while the entire 'Calling' section was the truth which provides a firm foundation for your faith. With this in mind, know that the hope of salvation is now known to you, and therefore possible because through His Word, God demonstrates that He is graciously loving and merciful towards all, especially the repentant and courageous. So be encouraged that your salvation is possible, for it is written...

2 Thessalonians 11-12—¹¹ To this end we also pray always for you, that our God may count you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire of goodness and work of faith with power, ¹² that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ

Rules of Righteousness

So, remember that whatever you do in life is of your own choice and doing, and it's on the basis of what you choose to do (or don't do) that God makes His judgement. **Therefore**, you are strongly encouraged to repent as soon as possible, because repentance is for the living, not for the dead (physical death). Keep in mind that once you die, your lifetime is complete, yet there's no more time to repent. This concept is highlighted by the story of the rich man and the beggar told by the Lord in Luke 16:19-31. Furthermore, it is to be noted that no matter who prays for you, or how many people pray for you, they cannot actually send your soul to heaven or to hell, nor guarantee that you will receive the Holy Spirit. God alone renders all mankind reward or penalty according to their works i.e. the choices you make while you are living determine your own fate, and so, you are encouraged to determine your own fate through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ...

1 John 5:16-17—¹⁶ If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin not leading to death, he shall ask, and God will give him life for those who sin not leading to death. There is a sin leading to death. I don't say that he should make a request concerning this. ¹⁷ All unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not leading to death.

- **NOTE:** The sins leading to death are noted in the glossary, and rule 4. Also note that it says prayer for people who choose to commit sins that lead to death is redundant, and this is because God will not grant them the Holy Spirit.

To conclude, in Matthew 23:26 it is written, ²⁶ You blind Pharisee, first clean the inside of the cup and of the platter, that its outside may become clean also." In this verse, the Lord is saying that a righteous person has a good heart (conscience), thoughts and intentions, and so, inside they are clean, which extends to their behaviour and actions (clean on the outside). Hence, the Lord is calling for people who desire to be good inside, which is the hallmark of a righteous person: forsaking what is wrong and holding fast to what's right.

Glossary

1. Basic Standards

2. Principal Sins

3. What Not To Do List

4. Self-Review Tool

Glossary

THE VISIONARY METHOD FOR CHRISTIAN PRACTICE™ BASIC STANDARDS

The Ten Commandments

1. God should be your only God.

You should not swear an oath to, worship or serve another god.

Commandment...

- *Exodus 20:3—³ “You shall have no other gods before me.*

Additional Supporting Scripture...

- *Matthew 6:24—²⁴ “No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You can’t serve both God and Mammon.*
- **NOTE:** Mammon is money or possessions (material wealth) typically gained by ill-gotten/unsavory means that is often associated with the occult.

Glossary

THE VISIONARY METHOD FOR CHRISTIAN PRACTICE™ BASIC STANDARDS

The Ten Commandments

2. Do not use idols or images in your worship of God.

You should not use idols or images that represent God, or any other person or entity for the purpose of worship.

Commandment...

- *Exodus 20:4-6*—⁴ “You shall not make for yourselves an idol, nor any image of anything that is in the heavens above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: ⁵ you shall not bow yourself down to them, nor serve them, for I, Yahweh your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and on the fourth generation of those who hate me, ⁶ and showing loving kindness to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

Additional Supporting Scripture...

- *1 John 5:21*—²¹ *Little children, keep yourselves from idols.*
- *Acts 17:29*—²⁹ *Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold, or silver, or stone, engraved by art and design of man.*

Examples of idols and images....

- **IDOLS** (sometimes referred to as icons or symbols): cross/crucifix.
- **IMAGES:** Any type of picture or figure (statue) that represents God (Christ) or other Christian figures such as saints (including the Virgin Mary), angels or representations of other gods.

Glossary

THE VISIONARY METHOD FOR CHRISTIAN PRACTICE™ BASIC STANDARDS

The Ten Commandments

3. Do not use God's Name in vain.
You should not misuse God's Name.

Commandment...

- *Exodus 20:7—⁷ “You shall not misuse the name of Yahweh your God, for Yahweh will not hold him guiltless who misuses his name.*

Further explanation of misusing God's Name...

- (a) You should not use God's Name deceitfully i.e. saying that God approves of “this, or that”, when He does not.
- (b) You should not call God your God if you WILLINGLY CHOOSE not to follow God's commandments as He asks and expects.
- **NOTE:** The Lord provided the Bible so that you can check what conduct and lifestyle He does and does not approve of. These things are written plainly, not in metaphors and are often repeated throughout the Bible i.e. Galatians 5:19-21, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, Matthew 15:19, 2 Timothy 3:1-5, Romans 13:13, and Colossians 3:5-9.

Glossary

THE VISIONARY METHOD FOR CHRISTIAN PRACTICE™ BASIC STANDARDS

The Ten Commandments

4. The Sabbath is flexible.

You are allowed to celebrate the Sabbath day however you like. The main point is to acknowledge the Lord and His Sabbath day. The Sabbath day is the original seventh day of the week (Saturday).

Commandment...

- *Exodus 20:8—⁸ “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹ You shall labor six days, and do all your work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is a Sabbath to Yahweh your God. You shall not do any work in it, you, nor your son, nor your daughter, your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your livestock, nor your stranger who is within your gates; ¹¹ for in six days Yahweh made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day; therefore Yahweh blessed the Sabbath day, and made it holy.*

Additional Supporting Scripture...

- *Colossians 2:16 - ¹⁶ Let no one therefore judge you in eating, or in drinking, or with respect to a feast day or a new moon or a Sabbath day,*

Glossary

THE VISIONARY METHOD FOR CHRISTIAN PRACTICE™ BASIC STANDARDS

The Ten Commandments

5. Respect your parents.

You should be respectful towards your parents.

Commandment...

- *Exodus 20:12*—¹² “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land which Yahweh your God gives you.”

NOTE: Being respectful to your parents teaches you how to be respectful to other people as well.

Additional Supporting Scripture...

- *Mark 10:19*—¹⁹ “You know the commandments: ‘Do not murder,’ ‘Do not commit adultery,’ ‘Do not steal,’ ‘Do not give false testimony,’ ‘Do not defraud,’ ‘Honor your father and mother.’”

Glossary

THE VISIONARY METHOD FOR CHRISTIAN PRACTICE™ BASIC STANDARDS

The Ten Commandments

6. Do not commit murder.

You should not attempt to kill, or actually kill another person. Nor should you act in a manner intended to drive another person to kill themselves.

Commandment...

- *Exodus 20:13—¹³ “You shall not murder.*

Additional Supporting Scripture...

- *Matthew 5:21—²¹ “You have heard that it was said to the ancient ones, ‘You shall not murder; and ‘Whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.’*
- *1 John 3:15—¹⁵ Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life remaining in him.*
 - **NOTE:** Racism is based on a man-made social hierarchy of the worlds different races i.e. it supports human inequality. However, in Christianity all are considered equal, because all are one in Christ (Galatians 3:28). Therefore, because a racist chooses not to accept the people of another race as equal, they are unable to enter the New Covenant. Furthermore, the behavior and actions (practices) associated with racism are the opposite of love i.e. hatred. As for why racism is equated to “murder” in the Bible: one of the main aims of racism is to cause self-hatred and an inferiority complex, which is consistent with the loss/destruction of identity. Therefore, racism kills the soul i.e. the one-of-a-kind identity and emotional profile that encompasses each person’s unique existence. Also people murder others based on race.

Glossary

THE VISIONARY METHOD FOR CHRISTIAN PRACTICE™ BASIC STANDARDS

The Ten Commandments

7. Do not commit adultery.

You should honor your marriage vows.

Commandment...

- *Exodus 20:14*—¹⁴ “You shall not commit adultery.

NOTE: Marriage (and romantic relationships) should be between a husband (man) and wife (woman), and intimacy should not occur/continue before a formal vow of marriage has taken place, which is an acknowledgement of the union before the Lord. A marriage vow can be said in a sincere prayer to the Lord, and should involve both parties. This is important for engaged couples who are already intimate and are wholeheartedly genuine in their commitment to one another. This is because the act of sex is what spiritually determines a marriage according to God’s Word, as indicated by the Scripture 1 Corinthians 6:16-18, and is supported by the Scripture John 4:17-18.

Additional Supporting Scripture...

Matthew 19:4-6—⁴ He answered, “Haven’t you read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female,⁵ and said, ‘For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall be joined to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh?’⁶ So that they are no more two, but one flesh.

Glossary

THE VISIONARY METHOD FOR CHRISTIAN PRACTICE™ BASIC STANDARDS

The Ten Commandments

8. Do not steal.

You should not try to steal, or steal something that does not belong to you. Nor should you try to possess something through illegal or unsavory means.

Commandment...

- *Exodus 20:15*—¹⁵ “You shall not steal.

Additional Supporting Scripture...

- *Matthew 19:17-18*—¹⁷ He said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good but one, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.” ⁸ He said to him, “Which ones?” Jesus said, “‘You shall not murder.’ ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ **‘You shall not steal.’** ‘You shall not offer false testimony.’

Glossary

THE VISIONARY METHOD FOR CHRISTIAN PRACTICE™ BASIC STANDARDS

The Ten Commandments

9. Do not falsely accuse other people or spread lies about them. You should not slander other people, or falsely accuse them of things that are not true.

Commandment...

- *Exodus 20:16—¹⁶“You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.*

Additional Supporting Scripture...

- *Matthew 19:17-18—¹⁷He said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good but one, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.”⁸ He said to him, “Which ones?” Jesus said, ““You shall not murder.’ ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ ‘You shall not steal.’ ‘You shall not offer false testimony.’*

Glossary

THE VISIONARY METHOD FOR CHRISTIAN PRACTICE™ BASIC STANDARDS

The Ten Commandments

10. Do not be jealous or envious of other people's lives.

You should not be jealous or envious of other people, nor of anything that is their possession.

Commandment...

- *Exodus 20:17—¹⁷ “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor’s.”*

Additional Supporting Scripture...

- *Colossians 3:5—⁵ Put to death therefore your members which are on the earth: sexual immorality, uncleanness, depraved passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.*

NOTE: In the Bible, covetousness (jealousy or envy) is mentioned as being equal to idolatry in terms of its severity as a sin. This means that God greatly disapproves of jealousy/envy.

Glossary

The VMFCP Principal Sins are sins that should not be practiced according to the instructions provided by the Book of Proverbs. The Book of Proverbs provides many examples of the sins that God dislikes the most, and so, it serves as evidence-based instruction for Christian conduct and attitude. There are 12 Principal Sins, with the 12th covering a multitude of sins that do not fit neatly into one description.

THE VISIONARY METHOD FOR CHRISTIAN PRACTICE™ 12 PRINCIPAL SINS

- 1. Despise** — Lack of respect and disregard towards others and/or God.
- 2. Pride**—A sense of self-superiority aimed at the maintenance of ego that is associated with the belief of actual self-superiority compared to others or God, or that one’s unsavory actions are without consequence and justified. The opposite of pride is humility, which is characterized by respect for others and God.
- 3. Bribery**—The act of giving and accepting material benefits or favours in return for carrying out unsavory deeds.
- 4. Anger**—Frustration that varies in intensity towards others or God that has no justification. i.e. Anger directed towards another person because you are jealous of them. God equates jealousy with idolatry.
- 5. Bitterness**—Deep rooted anger towards another person based on self-determined reasons, which are often not the other persons fault.

Glossary

THE VISIONARY METHOD FOR CHRISTIAN PRACTICE™ 12 PRINCIPAL SINS

6. Lust—A lack of self-control, and the tendency to indulge whimsical desires for the purpose of self-gratification rather than actual reason or need.

7. Covetousness—A desire to have something that is not yours, which can be associated with anger and bitterness towards the possessor. Covetousness can lead to unsavory deeds. God equates covetousness with idolatry.

8. Greed—A lack of contentment with what one has, that is associated with the desire to always acquire more.

9. Hatred—An intense dislike towards others and/or God.

10. Deviousness—An absence of issue with dishonesty or deceit towards the self, others and/or God.

11. Mercilessness—An absence of mercy towards others that is associated with not caring about how one's actions affect other people, and therefore, trying to justify mercilessness towards another person or people.

12. Perversion—An absence of issue with any form of wrong-doing (evil) that is noted in the Bible. Proverbs 6:16-19, Galatians 5:19-21, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, Matthew 15:19, 2 Timothy 3:1-5, Romans 13:13, and Colossians 3:5-9 cover many of these wrong-doings.

Glossary

THE VMFCP WHAT NOT TO DO LIST (GALATIANS 5:19-21)

Adultery

Sexual engagement outside of one's marriage or with a married person.

Sexual immorality

Sexual relations with anyone except one's spouse. Sexual immorality is described in Leviticus 18 (uncovering one's nakedness means to engage in sexual relations with...). Hence, intimacy should only occur in the confines of marriage, and before marriage you should only engage in relationships with the opposite sex. Pedophilia is a wrongdoing that would be classified under sexual immorality (Leviticus 25:17). God does not accept willing prostitution (Deuteronomy 23:15-17). Sexual immorality is also described and noted in Romans 1:24-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Colossians 3:5.

Uncleanness

Uncleanness (impurity) refers to purposely choosing what God does not accept i.e. cross-dressing (Deuteronomy 22:5); transgenderism (Deuteronomy 23:1); purposely looking at someone (other than your spouse) or watching something for the purpose of sexual gratification (Matthew 5:28); masturbation (including the use of sex toys). Uncleanness is often closely associated with lust and sexual immorality.

Lustfulness

A lack of self-control or indulging in unclean practices i.e. living outside of one's means or watching pornography.

Idolatry

Serving (worshipping) other gods that are often associated with an image, figure or idol (symbol). Christian's serve God only (Matthew 22:37-38, Matthew 23:10, 6:24; 2 Kings 17:24-41; Exodus 20:1-7).

Glossary

Strife

Causing trouble by one's words, behavior or actions for selfish reasons.

Sorcery

The use of occultic or magic practices for oneself, or to influence/harm others using juju/witchcraft/wizardry/voodoo/hoodoo or equivalent practices, which may include psychic abilities, spells, enchantments, hexes/curses, charms, rituals i.e. human sacrifice (Leviticus 18:21/Psalm 106:37); communicating with or summoning evil spirits i.e. familiar spirits or the dead (necromancy, 1 Samuel 28); divination i.e. numerology, astrology, runes, psychic/palm/tea leaf readings and tarot cards, as these practices are associated with other gods. (Deuteronomy 18:10-12, Revelation 9:21; Leviticus 19:31, Acts 16:16).

Hatred

The unjustified dislike of people that leads to unsavory actions. Hatred can come in many forms, and may be overt or subtle i.e. racism, classism, sexism or ageism (1 John 4:20). Hatred can also be towards God or other living things such as animals i.e. harming/killing animals out of malice (Leviticus 24:21).

Jealousies

Anger towards another person due to their life and/or their possessions that may lead to rivalry. This is considered covetousness and is described as equivalent to idolatry. (Colossians 3:5, Exodus 20:17, James 3:16).

Outbursts of anger

Anger that leads to intimidation, threat or harm to others that is without reason or cause i.e. a lack of behavioral discipline or a care for decency.

Rivalries

Competing with others for selfish reasons, and often no valid reason. Rivalry based on jealousy can lead to great offences (James 3:16).

Glossary

Divisions

Trying to cause division between people based on malicious, selfish and wicked intentions. i.e. trying to ruin someone's marriage.

Heresies

Teaching or engaging in non-Christian religious practices, and claiming they are Christian (1 Timothy 6:3-5, Mark 7:6-13).

Envy

Anger towards another person due to their life and/or their possessions, which can lead to strife and greater offences. This is considered covetousness and is described as equivalent to idolatry (References Colossians 3:5, Exodus 20:17).

Murders

Attempting murder, the act of murder, and trying to drive someone to suicide (which is to murder the soul i.e. the one-of-a-kind identity and emotional profile that encompasses each person's unique existence)

Drunkenness

Purposefully getting drunk or high to the point of losing your senses, and the ability to control your own behaviour.

Orgies

Sexual activity involving multiple (more than two) people

And things like these

Various behaviors and actions that are evil in God's eyes. Theft, lying, illegal activity, blasphemy, pride, engaging in bribery, scheming against others, stalking (invasion of privacy), bullying, harassment, greed, consuming blood etc. (Deuteronomy 27:24-25, Mark 7:20-22, Proverbs 1, 6:16-19, Acts 15:20)

Glossary

The VMFCP Self-Review Tool may be used to review the progress that you have made (or not made) in each rule of righteousness. By using the Self-Review Tool, you can verify how you have changed, and what you should change. Self-review is very important because The VMFCP aims to (1) help you transition to a Christian lifestyle in a manner that is relaxed and highly tailored to support the development of your own identity within the context of Christianity, so those who desire to become Christian are able to be saved (2) In the same context, The VMFCP aims to help Christians by aligning their practices with the Truth of the Holy Bible, so that the Lord is able to save those who have been long faithful to Him. Therefore, receiving the Holy Spirit is not necessarily an indication of “completed” change, but of good motivations, good and genuine intentions, and a true commitment to doing God’s commandments as a way of life.

There is an exemplar for The VMFCP Self-Review Tool on the next page. The exemplar uses the ‘Calling’ section, ‘Reflection, Extension & Response (Resolution)’ exemplar for stealing on page 11 to provide the context for the use of the tool. There are 4 self-review components: strengths; areas needing improvement; planned goals; and review of success. Each component requires you to provide a course of action (planned goal), or evidence of how you demonstrated the other components. This allows you to clarify what you should do to continue making positive changes in your life, and/or confirm what positive changes that you have made.

Glossary

THE VMFCP SELF-REVIEW TOOL EXEMPLAR FOR STEALING (pg.11)

STRENGTHS	AREAS NEEDING IMPROVEMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I was remorseful about stealing my sister's T-shirt. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being content with what I have, and not feeling entitled to what isn't my property. I think this area needs improvement because upon reflection, I liked my sister's T-shirt, and so, I took it, but now I have been reminded that I shouldn't take other people's things just because I want them. My actions were rude, selfish, and inconsiderate.
PLANNED GOAL	REVIEW OF SUCCESS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Returning my sister's T-shirt. Not attempting to steal anymore. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I haven't stolen anything since I decided to stop stealing, and I think reflecting on my actions has helped a lot. I returned my sister's T-shirt. She was not happy at all, but she said that I could borrow her clothes whenever I want, but that I had to return them in good condition.

FINAL NOTE

The period of time between my baptism by water and baptism by the Holy Spirit was approximately 3 months, yet prior to that I had already met the standards that became ‘The Rules of Righteousness’ (without knowing it at that time). Therefore, there is no defined timeframe for change to occur, but salvation is for those who truly begin and continue to change. Hence, Christian Practice (lifestyle) is a process that occurs over time. Therefore the most important part is having **faith**, which is demonstrated by an authentic belief in the Word of God as a document of Truth; a genuine intention to change; the **hope** that God will help you change; and pro-actively making changes in your lifestyle. Together, these three elements demonstrate a good conscience and **love** towards God and other people, because to love God is to keep His commandments, and to love your neighbor is to do no evil towards them by any means:

- *1 Corinthians 13:13—¹³ But now faith, hope, and love remain—these three. The greatest of these is love.*

Above all, Christianity is upheld by faith because it’s from faith that hope in God, and a love for God and others arises, and so, those who live by faith are the ones who have faith, hope and love. Therefore, it is through the Christian Faith that a culture of true peace, love and righteousness is born anew. After all it is written in John 3:3—³Jesus answered him, “Most certainly, I tell you, unless one is born anew, he can’t see God’s Kingdom.”



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The author, Chinasom Uzodimma Elekwachi, has a background in scientific research and experience in teaching and education, which are skills, experiences and knowledge that have contributed greatly to the creation of this book. This book contains Bible study commentary from the author's personal faith journals, which have been remodeled and stylized for the purpose of Christian education. The wisdom of this book is the result of many years of Biblical study, research and Christian practice (lifestyle)—all of which was given by the grace of God, so that many may come into His salvation.