



The Lord says, "I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants, by loving the Lord your God, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him; for this is your life and the length of your days, that you may live in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them" (Deut. 30:19,20).

When we receive Jesus Christ into our lives as our Savior, God gives us a new and victorious life. He does not take away all our problems, but rather gives us the power to overcome them.

Temptations, guilt, rejection, loss of loved ones, disappointments, fiery trials of sickness, financial hardship, and mistreatment by others are common experiences to us all. Our adversary, Satan, would try to use these difficulties to beset us and make us miserable. Perhaps, you are experiencing frustration and misery right now. God has something better for you.

Eight Steps to a New You

STEP 1: -Receive God's Love

No matter who you are or what you have done, God loves you personally. You may feel your life is hopeless, but His

love is powerful enough to overcome every trial and problem facing you.

You are so valuable to God that He sent His only Son to die on Calvary's cross for you: "God showed His great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. And since by His blood he did all this for us, as sinners, how much more will He do for us now that He has declared us not guilty?" (Romans 5:8,9).

How will God help? First, He understands. There is no trial, temptation, or suffering that Jesus has not faced, experienced and overcome: "(Christ) understands our weaknesses, since He had the same temptation we do, though He never once gave way to them and sinned. So let us come boldly to the very throne of God and stay there to receive His mercy and to find grace to help us in our times of need" (Hebrews 4:15,16).

STEP 2: -Surrender Self to God

How was Jesus able to overcome all temptation and suffering without sin when we fail so often? The Bible tells us that Jesus did nothing of Himself, in selfishness (John 5:19), but rather lived by the power and direction of the Holy Spirit. That same power that strengthened Jesus is available to you: "So now we can obey God's laws if we follow after the Holy Spirit and no longer obey the old evil nature within us. Those who let themselves be controlled by their lower nature live only to please themselves, but those who follow after the Holy Spirit find themselves doing those things that please God" (Romans 8:4,5).

To receive this godly power, you must surrender the things of self. If you have been hurt or mistreated by others, forgive them. Christ has freely forgiven all your sins, so you can do the same. Holding unforgiveness, bitterness, resentment, or jealousy inside you blocks out Jesus' love and the Holy Spirit from working in your life. Don't wallow in discouragement and self-pity, which leave you open to Satan's attack, spiritually and physically: "The thief's (Satan's) purpose is to steal, kill, and destroy" (John 10:10). Someone has appropriately said, "You aren't likely to get your toes stepped on if you're kneeling in prayer or walking forward."

STEP 3: Give God Your Hurts

You may be hurting and think that no one cares. Jesus does: "We despised Him (Jesus) and rejected Him, a man of sorrows, acquainted with bitterest grief. . . He was despised

and we didn't care. Yet it was our grief He bore, our sorrows that weighed Him down" (Isaiah 53:3,4).

When your heart is hurting and breaking, God is right there to comfort and heal, "The Lord is close to those whose hearts are breaking" (Psalms 34:18); "No, I will not abandon you or leave you as orphans - I will come to you" (John 14:18).

Have you genuinely lifted your heartbreak and burdens to Jesus for His comfort and strengthening power? The Lord wants to heal that hurt and lift that load that you might be free and whole to experience the fullness of His life: "Come unto me, all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28, NIV).

Right now you can step out of your suffering and misery by lifting those hurts and things besetting you to God in prayer:

"Dear Father, and my Lord Jesus, I give You my burdens and sorrows (name them specifically), my need for love, and my whole life, that You will do a mighty miracle by your Holy Spirit to meet my every need. Thank You Jesus for dying on the cross for me, so I know You love me enough to take care of all my problems, too. Amen."

STEP 4: -You're Free To Fail

You have just obeyed God for He says, "Cast all your anxieties (problems) upon Him because He cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7, RSV). God accepts you in His love, all you are and all you're not. It is Satan that suggests you hide your failures and weaknesses from God and others. Concealing them only leads to living in fear and being bound and crippled by those sins and weaknesses.

All of us sin and fail. What makes a person successful and whole is not that they don't fail but that when they do fail, they get up again, confess that failure to God and try again. God is always faithful to forgive and help. "If we confess our sins to Him (God), He can be depended on to forgive us and cleanse us from every wrong" (1 John 1:9).

This divine promise means you can have a new beginning in your life today and everyday: "God's compassion never ends. It is only the Lord's mercies that have kept us from complete destruction... His loving kindness begins afresh each day" (Lam. 3:22,23).

STEP 5: -A New Heart and Mind

Your new beginning and success in life does not depend on your own effort and determination. If you just ask God, He will give you a new heart and mind. "And I will give you a new heart and right desires - and put a new Spirit within you. I will take out your stony heart of sin and give you new hearts of love" (Ezekiel 36:26).

It may be months, even years, since you felt your heart warmed by the presence of God. But if you will only ask God in the Name of Jesus Christ, He will remove the hardness from your heart and give you a new heart of love.

Your mind is the channel by which God looses these bonds and takes away the darkness and discouragement. The Bible tells us that as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he (Proverbs 23:7). So we are admonished to "Fix your thoughts on what is true and good and right. Think about things that are pure and lovely, and dwell on the fine, good things in others. Think about all you can praise God for and be glad about" (Philippians 4:8). When we can do this by meditating on God's word, the Lord promises to prosper all we do (Joshua 1:7, Psalms 1:2,3).

STEP 6:- Be At Peace

Frequently, Jesus told His disciples, "Be at peace." He speaks these same words of assurance to you today. In spite of struggles, greed, and confusion around you, God is in control of this world and your life, too, to the extent that you allow Him to reign in your life.

Discontentment is a sign of unbelief (Deut. 28:66,67), showing that we really don't trust God to guide us in the right way. Don't give in to worrisome feelings and allow them to control you. Commit your worries and fears to God. As you consider each decision in your life, "Let the peace of God rule (guide) your heart" (Colossians 3:15, KJV). If there is no peace, stop, wait, and pray until you have sure and confident direction.

STEP 7: Give God Your Future

God looks at you in faith, seeing you through Christ, completely forgiven and perfected in His love. He wants that same mind in you. "...we have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. 2:16). "It is God himself who has made us what we are and given us new lives from Christ Jesus and long ago He planned that we should spend these lives in helping others" (Ephesians 2:10).

Plan and expect to see changes in your life for good: "We should make plans counting on God to direct us" (Proverbs 16:9).

When trials and temptations come, realize God is right there to help you obey Him. "Loving God means doing what He tells us to do, and really, that isn't hard at all; for every child of God can obey Him, defeating sin and evil pleasure by trusting Christ to help him" (1 John 5:3).

Prepare for trials and storms by building up your relationship with God through prayer, reading His Word, and learning from other Christians: "All those who come and listen and obey Me (Jesus) are like a man who builds a house on a strong foundation . . . When the floodwaters rise and break against the house, it stands firm" (Luke 6:47,48). "Just as you trusted Christ to save you, trust Him too, for each day's problems; live in vital union with Him. Let your roots grow down into Him and draw up nourishment from Him. See that you go on growing in the Lord and become strong and vigorous in the truth you were taught. Let your lives overflow with joy and thanksgiving for all He has done" (Colossians 2:6,7).

STEP 8:- Live According to God's Word

Your life will abound with a new joy and confidence as you realize "God works all things together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28, KJV).

You are no longer your own and no longer alone. So live confidently and do things wholeheartedly, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord" (Colossians 3:23).

Every day, expect to grow as a Christian to know His love more and then to share that love with others. Pray with David, "Tell me where you want me to go and I will go there. May every fiber of my being unite in reverence to your Name. With all my heart I will praise you...for you love me so much!" (Psalm 86:11-13).

CHOOSE

LIFE

OR

DEATH

Message from a former

Manson Family member...

Stinky thinking causes emotional pain. Rather than doing something about our thought life, we choose the lazy way to deal with our pain, by medicating it with drugs, including alcohol. In other words, we choose death instead of LIFE.

But first, in order to CHOOSE LIFE, we must receive God's love. As we do, we receive God's Spirit and begin to see things from His point of view. A new identity begins to take shape in us, and our thoughts begin to line up with God's.

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