



LESSONS FOR LEADERS

Biblical Principles for Successful Leadership

TO: LEGISLATORS | FROM: PASTOR DALE WALKER | 518-588-8395 | dale@newyorkfamilies.org

Eight Tests to Measure Your Walk with God

The Christian life is not a to-do list. It is a personal relationship with God. Nevertheless, there are actions which we must take if we are to remain close to God and to fulfill our purpose on this earth. Are you ready for a check-up?



The diagram on the left is taken from a wonderful Christian ministry called the Navigators which pioneered the teaching that there are four necessary components to a genuine and successful Christian life: (1) Prayer, (2) The Word, (3) Fellowship, and (4) Witnessing. While I believe that there are other important dimensions to the Christian life, these four vital elements are a good place to begin.

DISCLAIMER: Before going any further let it be noted that just participating in certain Christian activities does not necessarily make one a Christian. No one is a Christian according to the Bible unless they have accepted Jesus Christ as their savior (John 1:14) been “born again” (John 3:5), and entered into a personal relationship with Him. Salvation is something that Christ paid for us on the cross, not something which we earn by performing a list of duties. For a greater explanation of this important distinction, turn to page four.

(1) GOT PRAYER? Prayer is communicating and interacting with God heart-to-heart. It is not repeating formulas or showing off one’s verbal abilities in public as the Pharisees did, rather, it is personal communication. A Christian is to “pray to your Father in private” as Jesus taught His disciples to do (Matthew 6:5-6 NLT).

Through prayer, we access the help, strength and wisdom that we need in order to fulfill God’s purpose for our lives. To the extent that we tap into the power of prayer, God will guide, direct and supernaturally equip us to succeed. If we do not pray, we are “going it alone,” living out our own plans, and doing it in our own strength. This is a form of spiritual poverty. As one Bible teacher said: “No prayer, no power. Little prayer, little power. Much prayer, much power.” A much-quoted Christian slogan reads: “Seven days without prayer makes one weak.” The cure for our natural human weakness is to cultivate a regular and robust prayer life. Charles Spurgeon once said: “All God’s giants have been weak men, who did great things for Him because they reckoned on His being with them.” Life, properly lived, is a joint venture between us and God!

Scriptures of the Week



“You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.”

Jeremiah 29:13

“And he answered, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.’”

Luke 10:27

“I will give them a heart to know me... They will be my people, and I will be their God.”

Jeremiah 24:7



(2) LIFE IS AN OPEN-BOOK TEST. HAVE YOU BEEN OPENING THE BOOK? The Bible is God's revelation of Himself to us, His directions for living the Christian life, and His description of our eternal purpose. If we do not find the Bible interesting or important enough to read, are we not, in effect, saying that we are not interested in really getting to know God, don't care about living a genuinely Christian life and do not consider our eternal purpose to be worth reading about? After all, there are more important things going on like...WHAT?

The Bible says that once becoming a Christian, we should have a natural hunger to learn more about the things of God with the same way that a newborn baby desires to be fed: "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (I Peter 2:2). Job said: "I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food" (Job 23:12). The Word of God is our spiritual Wheaties – necessary if we are to grow and remain strong in the Lord. For a serious follower of Christ, a regular intake of the Word of God is not a dry duty, but a necessity.

Evangelist Bill Keller laments that in 19 years of ministry around the world, "the biggest problem I have encountered with believers is the vast majority have never read the instruction manual!!! Statistical research shows that less than 10% of professing Christians have ever read the entire Bible. The church as a whole is Biblically illiterate!" Pastor Rick Warren writes: "On a typical evening an average Christian may sit and watch TV for three hours, but only read his Bible for three minutes before bedtime. Is it any wonder many lack spiritual maturity?" Our culture is addicted to entertainment but short on inner attainment! Are you getting your necessary food?

(3) HOW IS YOUR FAMILY LIFE? When you became a Christian, you were born into a new spiritual family, the family of God (Ephesians 2:19 NLT). You were "rescued...from the kingdom of darkness and transferred... into the Kingdom of his dear Son" (Colossians 1:13 NLT) where the Bible says you are now a citizen: "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Colossians 3:20 NASB). These things carry an enormous significance and should not be neglected.

One of God's main purposes in creating mankind was to purchase for Himself an eternal family with whom He could share His love forever. That family, as it exists now on the earth, is called the Church (or "ekklesia" in Greek) - meaning those who have been "called out of the world and into God's Kingdom and family. To be member of the Body of Christ is a "high calling" (Philippians 3:14) in which we are to use our gifts and talents (I Corinthians 12:1-31) "for the edifying [or building up] of the church" (I Corinthians 4:12), thus playing our part in the most important building project in the history of mankind. Jesus said: "I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18). Whether faithfully participating in a local assembly or "breaking bread from house to house" (Acts 2:46) as the early Christians commonly did, Christian fellowship means that we spend quality time with members of our spiritual family "not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near." Hebrew 10:25). Do you have a spiritual "home" that you visit regularly, or are you an estranged member of God's family?

(4) WITNESSING FOR CHRIST – GETTING THE JOB DONE. The Church is not just a social club or an entertainment center; it is an army of Christ's followers who have been given an important job to do. That job, called The Great Commission, is to take the gospel of Jesus Christ "to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8 NIV) and "into all the world" (Mark 16:15) in preparation for His second coming. Evangelism is not just a special program to boost church attendance; it is our responsibility to share the soul-saving and life-changing message of the gospel of Jesus with family, friends and even strangers so that they, too, may become a part of His family. The last words that Jesus spoke before ascending to heaven were these: "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8) and "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19). Are you heeding this call?



Eight Tests to Measure Your Walk with God (Cont.)

How are you doing so far? The purpose of this Bible study is not to legalistically condemn you or to saddle you with a list of burdensome requirements. It is to ask you to consider the great privilege which you have of belonging to God's family and challenge you to live your Christian life to the fullest.

Four more for the road: The four spokes of the Navigators' wheel highlight key areas in our Christian walk which are vital to our growth and development. But there are others that are equally important. Here are four more:

(5) WORSHIP. One of the chief purposes for which we were created is to worship God, that is, to love Him wholeheartedly (Mark 12:30), to be captivated by the wonder of His divine perfection, and to find joy in the amazing privilege of knowing Him personally. Jesus referred to this when He said: "The hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him (John 4:23 ESV). When the practice of our Christian faith becomes a series of arduous duties rather than a love relationship with God, then we have missed the entire point of the Christian life.

The Apostle John puts it this way: "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome" (I John 5:3 NASB). How is your walk with God? Is it filled with duty or delight?

(6) LIVING IN THE SPIRIT. Another "commandment" which is not "burdensome" is to "be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18) and to "walk in the Spirit" (Galatians 5:16). The Christian life, rightly lived is not a form of fleshly servitude; it is a joyous experience of being brought into the presence of God, filled with His Holy Spirit, and, literally, sharing the life of God" (Colossians 3:4)!

"As Christians, we are called to experience the greatest joy which can be known in this life – to fall in love with God and find true satisfaction in knowing and walking with Him!"

At the moment of salvation (receiving Jesus Christ as our savior and becoming "born of the Spirit" John 3:6), something gloriously wonderful happens – the precious Holy Spirit of God comes into our heart to live, giving us a continuous supply of God's "love, joy, and peace" (Galatians 5:22) so that we can be "filled up to all the fullness of God" (Ephesians 3:19 NASB). This is the supreme privilege of the Christian life – to become, as Peter called it "partakers of the divine nature" (II Peter 1:4). If this is not your experience, then make sure that you have truly asked Christ into your life, for the Christian life is nothing less than Christ living in you (Colossians 1:27)!

(7) SERVING OTHERS. Once we have come to know Christ in a living way, we will find "no greater joy" (III John 4) than to use our gifts, talents and resources to serve and bless others. We were not placed on this earth to accumulate possessions (Matthew 6:19), to "eat, drink, and be merry" (Luke 12:19), or to live self-centered lives, but to have an impact upon the world around us for good.

Paul instructs us to live as Jesus did: "not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others" (Philippians 2:4 NASB). Have you discovered the joy of being a servant? If not, you are missing out on the very purpose of life.



Eight Tests to Measure Your Walk with God (Cont.)

(8) TRUE SURRENDER. The Bible does not tell us to occasionally give an ear to God, visit church once in a while to pay our respects, and do a few good deeds here and there to keep ourselves honest. It calls us to fully surrender ourselves to God so that He can show us His plan and will for our lives wherever that may take us.

Listen to what the Word of God says about this: “Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is-his good, pleasing and perfect will” (Romans 12:2 NIV).

We do this not by performing a few Christian duties, but by wholly giving ourselves to God and letting Him reveal the specific plans which He has for our lives. As the Apostle Paul wrote: “I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship” (Romans 12:1 NASB).

True Christianity is not singing a few hymns on Sunday and doing our own thing the rest of the week; it is doing what Paul did when He met Jesus on the road to Damascus and asked: “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” (Acts 9:6 KJV). Have you ever seriously asked God this question? Are you clinging to your plans of personal advancement in the world – or seeking to know how God would like to use you to advance His Kingdom? Christianity is not just being a “good person.” It is being God’s person and going on a glorious adventure with Him! You will never regret it if you do!



How did you make out in this eight-question test?

If you have read this far, you must have some seriousness about where you stand with God. I suggest that you make this summer and fall before the next legislative session erupts with all of its busy demands a time to seriously draw near to God and seek His will.

*Pastor Dale Walker
Legislative Chaplain*

A Few Thoughts on Making Your Future with God Secure

I have discovered that many well-intentioned and sincerely religious people do not fully understand God’s plan of salvation and what it means become a true child of God, forgiven of their sins, filled with God’s Spirit and assured of their place in heaven. The Bible says: “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9 (NIV). Have you ever received the salvation of Jesus Christ as a “free gift” (Romans 5:15-17; 6:23), not something which you are trying to earn? It is yours for the asking. Pray:

“Dear Jesus, thank you for dying on the cross to pay for my sins. I need you in my life. Please forgive my sins, come into my heart and fill me with your Holy Spirit, so that I can know you, love you and serve you as a true child of God. Please let me know that when I die, I will go to heaven to be with you, and help me to live a life worthy of you while I live on this earth. Thank you for saving me. Amen.”