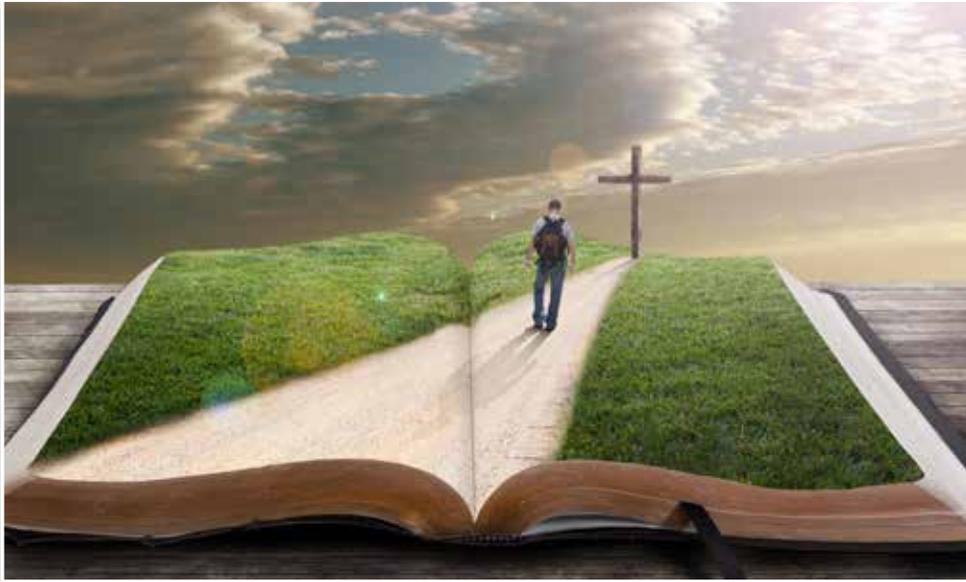




Lessons for Leaders

Biblical Principles for Successful Leadership

MINISTERING TO THE MEMBERS OF THE NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATURE



Responding to the Callings of God PART III

Each person has only one earthly life to live. The best way to live it is by letting God reveal His perfect will and plan for your life.

God has an amazing and glorious plan for mankind and has invited us to be a part of it. The most important decision that we will ever make is how we will respond to this invitation.

We have been called to a life of holiness and godliness.

"I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness" (I Timothy 2:1-2 NIV). The Bible tells us to pray for our leaders to govern wisely so that we can be free to lead holy and godly lives.

(a) Holiness and godliness are closely related concepts dealing with the moral and spiritual development of Christians through their relationship with God. Holiness is focused upon avoiding negative and sinful behaviors, while godliness emphasizes the acquisition of positive and Christlike qualities. In the New Testament, the word for "godliness" (Greek: "eusebeia" – literally "good-worship") is often translated "sanctification." All three of these words refer to:

SCRIPTURES OF THE WEEK



"Teach me to do Your will, for you are my God; let your good Spirit lead me into...the land of uprightness."

Psalms 143:10 (Amplified)

"You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me into glory."

Psalms 73:24 (NIV)

"I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people."

Ephesians 1:18 (NIV)



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- (1) Cleansing from sin and impurities;
- (2) Consecration and dedication to God to be used for His divine purposes; and
- (3) The impartation of godly characteristics through the power of the Holy Spirit.

(b) God is holy. He is morally and spiritually virtuous and pure in every way. Exodus 15:11 (NLT) says of Him: *“Who is like you among the gods, O LORD—glorious in holiness, awesome in splendor, performing great wonders?” In Heaven, the angels are so awed by God’s holy presence that “[day] after day and night after night they keep on saying, ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty—the one who always was, who is, and who is still to come’”* (Revelation 4:8 NLT).

(c) Beginning in the Old Testament, God’s people were called to be holy because God Himself is holy (Leviticus 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7; and 21:8; Deuteronomy 23:14). Leviticus 20:26 (ESV) says: *“You shall be holy to me, for I the LORD am holy and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be mine.”*

(d) One of our callings as Christians is to live lives that express and reflect the holiness of God. I Peter 1:15 (NIV) says: *“But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do.”* This means that we must engage in a battle against sin in our personal lives so that we can glorify God in how we think, speak and act and be a testimony to the world around us.

(e) Sanctification is a clean-up operation conducted by the Holy Spirit which is a vital part of God’s will for us. I Thessalonians 4:3a says: *“For this is the will of God, even your sanctification.”* This involves both abstinence from sexual and physical sin of any sort and the even more difficult task of cleaning up our hearts and minds.

(f) King David, after committing adultery with Bathsheba and re-

penting of it, prayed: *“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me”* (Psalm 51:10-11 ESV). If we are serious about wanting to be filled with God’s Spirit, we must be serious about avoiding and overcoming sin in our personal lives.

(g) We must also be serious about avoiding and overcoming sin if we want to have a blessed and close relationship with God. Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, spoke of this same godly goal when He said: *“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God”* (Matthew 5:8 ESV).

(h) Though we will never be perfect, the Bible tells us that becoming progressively more holy (i.e., Christ-like in character) is something we should whole-heartedly pursue. I Thessalonians 4:7 (BSB) says: *“For God has not called us to impurity, but to holiness.”* The HCSB version of this same passage reads, *“... but to sanctification.”* Similarly, Hebrews 12:14 (HCSB) tells us to: *“pursue peace with everyone, and holiness—without it no one will see the Lord.”*

(i) Because we all possess an inborn sin nature often referred to as “the flesh,” the struggle against sin will always be present. This is a fight we cannot win without God’s help. If the truth be told, there is no way in which any of us can be holy without the presence and power of God’s Holy Spirit working in our lives.

(j) God is capable of empowering us to live holy and godly lives and to overcome our sinful natures. II Peter 1:3 (BSB) says: *“His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.”*

(k) Even with this divine assistance, we cannot hope to succeed without using the self-discipline necessary for victory. I Timothy 4:7b (NASB) gives us this exhortation: *“Discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness.”* I Timothy 4:8 (NET) continues, *“For physical exercise has some value, but godliness is valuable in every way. It holds promise for the present life and for the life to come.”* The word for “discipline” (Greek: “gumnazo”) is the word from which we derive our English word “gymnasium” and it describes the serious type of training in which athletes engage when preparing for

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NOTES





the Olympic Games. And, indeed, the battle between the flesh and the Spirit (Galatians 5:17) which every believer experiences is very much like a wrestling match.

(l) The Bible tells us that God trains us in godliness by allowing us to go through different kinds of life situations (including some very difficult trials) in order to grow in likeness to Christ. Just as an earthly father will discipline his children for their own good, our Heavenly Father will also put us through rigorous training in order to develop our character in Christ. This is what Hebrews 12:10 (KJV) means when it says: *“For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.”*

(m) Ultimately our happiness, blessedness, fruitfulness and success in life depend upon the degree of victory which we have in this important battle. For this reason, Ephesians 6:18 (BSB) tells us to *“[pray] in the Spirit at all times, with every kind of prayer and petition,”* because this is a battle which we cannot win in our own strength. But through prayer and the power of the Holy Spirit, *“God... always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place”* (II Corinthians 2:14 NASB) and will give us the victories which we need in order to serve Him (I Corinthians 5:57).

QUESTIONS: How are you doing in the quest to honor God by living a godly and holy life? Are you aware when the Holy Spirit is working in your life to point out areas where you need to change and lead you into holiness? What are the ways in which God been changing you to be more like Him?

God has called us to lives of specific obedience

Acts 9:6 (KJV): *“And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.”*

The Christian life is not just a matter of accepting Christ and going on our own merry way, hoping that He will bless us in whatever we do. God has created us for very specific purposes and, if we yield our lives to Him, will guide us into the center of His perfect will.

(a) The Bible exhorts us to seek seriously to discover God’s will for our lives: *“Therefore I exhort you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a sacrifice—alive, holy, and pleasing to God—which is your reasonable service. Do not be conformed to this present world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind,*

so that you may test and approve what is the will of God—what is good and well-pleasing and perfect” (Romans 12:1-2 NET).

(b) God knows what His plans are (*“I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD”* [Jeremiah 29:11a (ESV)]), and His plans are often different from ours. Isaiah 55:9 (KJV) tells us, *“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”* The NET version of this passage reads: *“So my deeds are superior to your deeds and my plans superior to your plans.”*

(c) Though we must be careful about comparing ourselves with people like Paul and Jeremiah, it is possible that God’s plans for us were ordained before we were ever born: *“Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you. Before you were born, I set you apart for my holy purpose. I appointed you to be a prophet to the nations”* (Jeremiah 1:5 GWT).

God has created us for very specific purposes and, if we yield our lives to Him, will guide us into the center of His perfect will.

(d) In fact, Ephesians 1:4-5 (NIV) tells us that God’s plans were made before the world was ever created: *“For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.”*

(e) The idea that God has prepared individual assignments for us to perform during our earthly lives is also suggested in Ephesians 2:10 (NIV): *“For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”*

(f) Based upon these considerations, a serious Christian should always make it priority number one to seek God’s will regarding all important life decisions – and even “lesser” decisions as well. Our attitude ought to be every day: *“Here I am, reporting for duty! What would you like me to do?”*

(g) As followers of Christ, we are here on Earth not primarily to do our will, but to do God’s will. This is exactly what Jesus meant when He said: *“For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me”* (John 6:38 NASB).

(h) Isaiah 50:4 (NASB) informs us that God can even give us daily instructions regarding specific people to minister to and



what we are to say to them: *“The Lord GOD has given Me the tongue of disciples, That I may know how to sustain the weary one with a word. He awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear to listen as a disciple.”*

QUESTIONS: How often do you consult God when making decisions? Do you pray regularly for Him to show you His perfect will and to guide you into fulfilling your specific calling on Earth?

We are called to be “fishers of men.”

“And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men” Matthew 4:19 (ESV). One of our most important callings is to spread the Christian faith to others by sharing the good news about Jesus Christ with them.

(a) Helping other people to find Christ and to receive His gift of salvation is one of our most important job assignments. Proverbs 11:30 (KJV) tells us, *“The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.”*

(b) Reaching lost people with the gospel in order to build His Kingdom and His Church is the reason why Jesus came to Earth. Luke 19:10 (NLT) says: *“For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost.”* In Matthew 16:18b (NLT), He declares, *“I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it.”*

(c) Jesus’ ultimate goal—and the primary mission of the Church—is to preach the gospel to the entire world. Acts 1:8 (Holman) says: *“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”* Matthew 24:14 (NIV) adds: *“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”*

(d) It is our duty to tell other people about Christ’s salvation; otherwise, they may not know how to receive it. Romans 10:10 explains this process fully: *“For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!’”*

(e) Surveys show that 95% of Americans do not clearly know how to be saved through the gracious salvation of Jesus Christ; millions would probably respond to the gospel if someone

were to explain it to them. This is a solemn responsibility given to the Church and to everyone who names the name of Christ.

(f) Not everyone is called to be a full-time “evangelist” (a specific office in the Church mentioned in Ephesians 4:11), but we are all called to evangelize.

(g) Surveys show that most people come to Christ not through a pastor, preacher, teacher or evangelist, but through a friend or acquaintance who befriends them, invites them to church or personally explains the gospel to them. Each one of us has a particular responsibility to reach out with the gospel to those within our personal circle of influence. This includes our family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, classmates and others with whom we regularly interact.

Helping other people to find Christ and to receive His gift of salvation is one of our most important job assignments.

QUESTIONS: Do you understand the salvation of Jesus Christ and how to receive it well enough to lead other people to Christ? How often do you have spiritual conversations with others hoping to help them become saved through the gospel?

We are called to be soldiers in a spiritual war.

“Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ” II Timothy 2:3 (KJV).

(a) Most of the wrong things which we see on Earth today are the results of a spiritual war which has been going on since Lucifer fell from Heaven. What we know about him—his rebellion, his fall from Heaven and his activities on Earth—can be pieced together from a number of Scriptural accounts in different parts of the Bible. A brief synopsis can be found in an article (<https://www.gotquestions.org/Satan-fall.html>) published at GotQuestions.org:

Why did Satan fall from heaven? Satan fell because of pride. He desired to be God, not to be a servant of God. Notice the many “I will...” statements in Isaiah 14:12-17. Ezekiel 28:12-15 (KJV) describes Satan as an exceedingly beautiful angel. Satan was likely the highest of all angels, the anointed cherub, the most beautiful of



all of God's creations, but he was not content in his position. Instead, Satan desired to be God, to essentially "kick God off His throne" and take over the rule of the universe. Satan wanted to be God, and interestingly enough, that is essentially what Satan tempted Adam and Eve with in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:1-5).

Isaiah 14:12-17 (NKJV) reads as follows:

*"How you are fallen from heaven,
O Lucifer, son of the morning!
How you are cut down to the ground,
You who weakened the nations!
For you have said in your heart:
'I will ascend into heaven,
I will exalt my throne above the stars of God;
I will also sit on the mount of the congregation
On the farthest sides of the north;
I will ascend above the heights of the clouds,
I will be like the Most High.'
Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol,
To the lowest depths of the Pit.*

*"Those who see you will gaze at you,
And consider you, saying:
'Is this the man who made the earth tremble,
Who shook kingdoms,
Who made the world as a wilderness
And destroyed its cities,
Who did not open the house of his prisoners?'"*

Ezekiel 28:12-15 (NJKV) says:

"Son of man, take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre, and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord God:

*"You were the seal of perfection,
Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.
You were in Eden, the garden of God;
Every precious stone was your covering:
The sardius, topaz, and diamond,
Beryl, onyx, and jasper,
Sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold.
The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes
Was prepared for you on the day you were created.*

*"You were the anointed cherub who covers;
I established you;
You were on the holy mountain of God;
You walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones.
You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created,
Till iniquity was found in you."*

(b) Having been cast out of Heaven, Satan has a demonic anger and rage against God and His people. Revelation 12:12 (Amplified) says, "Woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in fierce anger (fury), because he knows that he has only a short time left." His anger is fueled by the knowledge that he will ultimately be cast into hell and the lake of fire (Revelation 20:2-3).

(c) Satan's primary objective is to destroy everything which belongs to God, including God's people. His purpose is to lure people away from God and keep them from finding Him, knowing Him, loving Him, serving Him, and telling others about Him.

(d) Satan seeks to accomplish this goal through various "methods" and "strategies" against which we need to guard ourselves. Ephesians 6:11 (NLT) tells us: "Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil." The Greek word for "strategies" is "methodeia." Those methods include.

- (1) Lying to people and deceiving them, as he did with Adam and Eve;
- (2) Tempting people to worship him and live worldly lives, self-glorifying lives, as he did face-to-face with Jesus in Matthew 4:1-11;
- (3) Creating false religions through angelic revelations;
- (4) Tempting people to sin through stimulating their minds and fallen sin natures; and
- (5) Persecuting, attacking and intimidating those who become Christians and desire to serve and follow God.

(e) Satan chiefly rules as "the god of this world" (II Corinthians 4:4) through his expertise in manipulating people through the lusts of the flesh and the desires of their minds. Paul graphically describes how this works in Ephesians 2:2-3 (NET) when he writes:

You formerly lived according to this world's present path, according to the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the ruler of the spirit that is now energizing



The battles and hardships which we all experience in our Christian lives are part of a greater war. Each believer must learn to how to “war a good warfare” (I Timothy 1:8 KJV).

the sons of disobedience, among whom all of us also formerly lived out our lives in the cravings of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath even as the rest.

(f) The Bible describes the battles and hardships which we all experience in our Christian lives as part of a greater war. Each believer must learn to how to “war a good warfare” (I Timothy 1:8 KJV) and “fight the good fight of faith” (I Timothy 6:12 KJV).

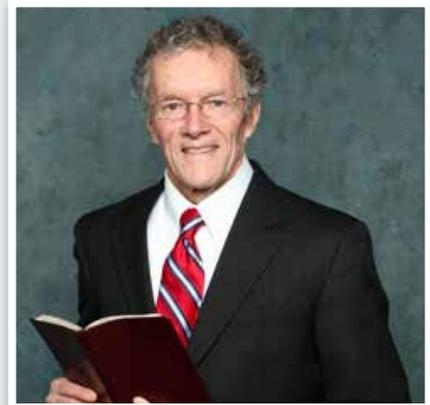
(g) In this fight, we cannot use only natural weapons or human strength; our enemies are supernatural. Ephesians 6:12-13 (NLT) says: “For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.”

(h) II Corinthians 10:4 (KJV) addresses this issue when it says: “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds).”

(i) Some of the spiritual weapons God has given us are: (1) The Word of God, (2) faith; (3) prayer; (4) the name of Jesus; (5) the blood of Christ; and (6) the power of the Holy Spirit. II Corinthians 10:4 (KJV) says that “the weapons of our warfare are... mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds,” meaning that they are powerful and effective in helping us to win spiritual victories.

(j) The more that we understand about spiritual warfare and learn how to use the powerful spiritual weapons God has given us, the better our lives will be.

QUESTIONS: Do you understand that Earth is a battleground and that a spiritual war is going on between God and the devil? Are you aware of the ways in which Satan is waging his war against God and His people? Do you understand how to protect yourself and survive the spiritual attacks which come upon you personally?



PASTOR DALE WALKER, CHAPLAIN

Greetings!

As a pastor serving Members of the New York State Legislature, it is my desire to make the life-changing truths of the Bible available to the Members in as many ways as possible. One way to accomplish this is through weekly Members’ Only Bible Studies.

Another way that I share the truths of God’s Word with Members of the Legislature throughout the year is through the Facebook page entitled “New York State Legislative Bible Study,” where I regularly post a “Scripture for the Day” to help you start your day with inspiring spiritual truth. If you hit the “Like” button on the top right of the Facebook page beside the word “Message,” these scriptures and quotations will appear on your Facebook wall whenever they are posted. The Scripture for the Day may also be sent by email to those who email me requesting it.

Rev. Walker is affiliated with
New Yorker’s Family Research Foundation.



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