**EPISTLES OF CHRIST**

**Clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart.**

**2 Corinthians 3:3 NKJV**

***Then the Lord answered me and said: "Write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it.***

**Oh! Let us see that Christ reads in our lives as He does in the books**

**Introductory Note:**

What the Lord wants to make out of us is a message about the one who has done a work of Grace in us.A story that readily comes to mind is one of a pastor who also was a geography teacher in a secondary school.He was very devoted to his work and committed to making impact in the lives of the students that come his way.He worked past his duty and salary. He would organise extra classes aside the normal school calendar,as early as 7am on school days and on Saturdays just to ensure that his students understand the concept of map reading which was always a source of headache.Most of the time the students do not even get to acknowledge let alone appreciate these commitment of his but he was never moved.I remember one of such day when he called for a 7am class only to meet just about 3 of 120 students.he was highly disappointed and offended that day.I even thought he was not going to show extra commitment towards us again but he still did.I always knew that ther must be something driving my teacher that I do not understand.By the time he would present his students for the waec,they were usually home and dry with the course.Over the years, an average of 60% of his candidates had A1 in Geography.This is where I am going.on the day we were to write the geography paper of the waec,one of the external invigilators happened to be a geography teacher also in a government secondary school.As the exams were going on,he took turn to inspect our work.He showed particular interest in checking through our answer scripts as we worked on,since it was his subject.He was amazed by the way we were ansering the questions.He sampled different peoples work.It was like he saw the wonders of his life that day or shall we call it a discovery.He was just singing the praises of our teacher.He called the attention of the other invigilators to it.In fact it was there it occurred to us the students that our teacher had done us a lot.We never knew how much he had done.We thought we knew but we realized it more.He made several complementaries.I remember him saying that posterity will forever remember wht this man had done for us.At a point,he could no longer hold it.He ordered for our teacher who would normally not come to the exam hall.As he came he looked at him graciously and blessed him from his heart.I am sure the invigilator took a lesson home that day.We also did.Such is the work of grace that the Lord wants to do in us.One that will tell the story of His saving Grace,and his transforming power to for his praise and glory.Matt5:16,1Pet 2:9.

\* A lot of God’s children have an understanding of God’s word and may even be able to recite it verbatim but lack an experiential knowledge of it. The plan of God for this dispensation is to write His word in our hearts by His Spirit that we may become letters of Christ that the world around us would see and read; that we will become ‘walking Bibles’, manifesting the life of Christ and serving as a manual of life for the world.

Consequential to this, we would not need to cajole one another in the body of Christ to know and pursue after God, for all will know the Lord from the least to the greatest.

\* *”And God said, let there be …,and there was…”*

The Word of God is and remains God’s changing power. Knowing this, that God’s creative (formative) power lies in His Word, we thus understand that, that which God wants to accomplish in us is not outside of the instrument of His word. The transforming power of God lies in His Word.

Psalms 19:

God’s word is able to conform us to that which God desires to make us-Epistles of Christ,thelikeness of God.In the word of Gos is the life of God.In Him(the word of God incarnate)was light and this light is the life of men.Tge word of God can get into our lives such that it forms the dictate of our speech,actions and meditations.Actually,it is only thenwe can express(live out0the life of Christ.The Bible can get into my life but only by beginning at my heart.There is power in the word of God but it works from within.To fully express the life of Christ,we must be willing to do away with the elements of worldliness and allow the word of God to dwell within us richly.(James ).This is very important in the sense that what you live out is the product of what fills your heart.(prov ).For instance,your expression of love is determined by the definition of love that youb have in your heart.If what has filled your heart is the definition of love that you have watched in movies,then you can expect that lust is what you will manifest.It is only when love is defined in your heart by the scriptures that you can live out the true love of Christ.The same thing applies to every other aspects of our lives.Therefore the word of God says;Let the word of God dwell in you richly.

\*Today…,refers to the now;that moment you hear and have the opportunity to act;while the time of life lasts,as often as you have the opportunity.

Scriptures is recommending exhortation of one another to us as often as there is an occasion and an oppurtunity for it .If the word of God is recommending exhorting one another this frequently,then it shows how deceitful sin must really be.Let no one underestimate the deceitfulness of sin but let everyone be aware of its luring.No one is above its deception.We are admonished to exhort one another to follow on to the Lord.we could as well exhort one another unto anto godliness,righteousness and prayer.This is why we must keep ourselves amongst the brethren.Let no temptation you are going through be known to you alone as much as you can.This that we have in this scripture is a biblical principle and we can not afford to live otherwise.We must keep in touch with one another(the brethren)and challenge one another to God.Hence fellowship meetings is paramount.It is no funfair nor just a routine.But a deliberate thing.An avenue to fellowship with one another and stirring one another up to growth into and intimacy with God.

*Hebrews 10:25 NKJV*

*not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.*

It is a spiritual accident to decide to live in isolation.

The deceitfulness of sin talks about its promise of pleasure.It suggests to you the power a man has to repent and the mercy he will always obtain,by which means the man is drawn into it.By frequent repetition of this ,the heart becomes hardened in it.This is one way sin deceives a man.

*Romans 6:1-2 NKJV*

*(1) What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?*

*(2) Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?*

erEvery sin is of a hardening nature particularly to one from whom the truth is not hidden.Each time you yield to temptation,a callousness is brought upon the heart and the conscience,trying to return it to a stubborn kind of the old covenant type of the heart that becomes difficult for God to walk with.

\*In the movies when a letter is written to another and is to be read, as the reader looks in to the paper as to be reading, a voice is played alongside, reading it out while the reader shows the act or the motion. The voice that reads alongside is usually that of the sender of the letter. Expressly, God will be speaking to the world around us through our lives. People will hear the voice of Jesus speak to them, calling them to God and instructing them to righteousness. All we will have to do is live on as epistles (doing the acts and the motion as in the movies) while God speaks volume to each one as it applies to each individual life taking. This is part of what God intends to achieve in our lives. However, God cannot achieve this in a life if that life does not fully submit to His will. God must be able to trust us that the same lives through which He has spoken to men will not at another instance or time send another message(of sin or unrighteousness)to people. He challenges us to be absolute messages of Christ.What we are talking about is not an arbitrary thing.It is what God will achieve through your life.For instance,someone could see you preach or do something and from there the Lord speaks to his heart and says “this is what you are supposed to be doing”.From there the individual might be reached by God and challenged to godliness without you even knowing it.By so doing you have won that brother.On some occasions when the lord perhaps wants to encourage you,He permits you to know about it.I have seen testimonies of someone who was in a backslidden state,on meeting an old friend who has followed on with the Lord and exchanging pleasantries, had a strong conviction by the Holy Spirit of his state.After leaving the brother,he could not but repent and return to the Lord.This brother didn’t have to ask if he was still “in Jesus”.The way he had lived his life when the backslidden brother was living around him was what the Holy Spirit used to reach out to him.This I tell you is the Holy Spirit and Him only.How that a man can carry so much presence of God that his meeting with sinners whether casual or not,short or long produces an encounters that turn people back to Jesus.Please don’t think for once that this is not a reality.I assure you irrespective of what you think of your state, that this and much more does God intend to make of us as He calls us to be His E pistles.Read and meditate on Luke19:1-10( cf john 14:12) in this light.

\*The word of God is likea lamp to li hten us into the life of Christ as we behold Him(learn of Him and His ways from the written word of God on a daily basis)If we follow His instructions in righteousness,it will conform us to the nature of Christ.It reveals to us our imperfections and misdoings.This is what the word of God is supposed to do.We are therefore not in any way worse for such discovery.To discover such imperfections in our lives is not the bad thing in itself .It is only when we let the imperfections remain after they hhave been revealed to us that we become the

worse. James 1:21-25 NKJV

(21) Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

(22) But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

(23) For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror;

(24) for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.

(25) But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty **and continues in it**, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the word, this one will be blessed in what he does.

Here the word of God is compared to a mirror which is normally beheld to look out for the inadequacies in our dressings.The intention is so that we can correct whatever is not in correct shape.The mirror reflects.In like manner the word of God gives us a reflection of thepicture of our lives but in the light of the life of Christ.The intention is so that we might change our ways and act in obedience.Why do you behold the word of God?The true believer learns gods word in order that he may do it not that he may merely know or teach.It is as we continue in this that we are changed into Christ image and thereby becoming his Epistle(readers of Christs life by our lives)

A forgetful hearer is one “who goeth his way”.He relaxes the attention after that the word of God has addressed an issue in his life that needs to be acted upon.When God opens our eyes to His word,He expects us to act immediately.To some other messages ,a way of showing that we are not just hearers is to ensure that we pray the word of God in,meditating on the message addressed until it is imprinted in our spirit.That way we allow the word of God to sink into our spirit.It is more like we are laying the matter into the hands of the Holy Spirit for the appropriate time in the future when it will need application.It is an act of a forgetful hearer rise to play,or fail to pray,or rise easing his mind of it,after the word of God has addressed matters in his life.

Omotoso Philip Owo-Oluwa

Bible Study secretary

Epistles of Christ Tenure ‘14

**Theme:** Epistles of Christ

**Topic:** Epistles of Christ

**Text:** 2Cor 3:1-18

**Memory verse***: clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart.2Cor 3:3(NKJV)*

**Introduction**

We have read (and are still reading) the life of Christ beautifully and eloquently written, but the best life of Christ is His living biography written or spelt out in the words and actions of His people. We live in a time and age when it is difficult marrying the profession of many and their life style; where there is a wide gap between what we claim, and who we really are. There is so much craze to manifest the miraculous acts of Christ while denying His person. We have ended up confusing the world by our conduct instead of being the light God intended us to be. Christ is calling our attention to manifest Him in His character, praise, splendour, love, grace, power and **the** **totality of His person**. God wants to write his law in our hearts by His spirit. His intent is to reach a world that cannot understand Him by reason of their hearts and dull ears.

**Study Points:**

* What is an epistle? A **detailed** write-up (letter) written by a known person, meant to provide instruction and **addressed** to a **recipient**
* Epistles of Christ:

...a striking likeness of Jesus Christ.Acts4:13

...evidences that Christ lives on. Acts11:36

* + - * + It is the program of God for the new covenant. Isa60:1-3
        + God’s ultimate purpose for the ministry gifts.Eph4:7-13(Amp)
        + You, be **My** epistle of commendation and recommendation. 2Cor3v.1, 2(NLT), Zech8:20-23, Mat 5:13-16.
* In the old covenant, the Instrument for writing was the finger of God and the media on which the writing was done were tablets of stones. All of these were shadows of things to come. Exo31:18, 32:15-16, Heb8:7-13, 10:1.
* In the new covenant, we are the epistles of Christ:
* …written; the instrument-the Holy Spirit.Eze36:26-27;Jhn14:25-26,16:7-15
* …clearly (without ambiguity).2Cor3:3a, Matt 5:16.
* the site of action-fleshy tables of our heart(*the regenerated spirit of man*) 2Cor3:15-18.
* Our responsibility
  + - the preparation of our hearts. 2Cor 3:16,Jam 1:21,Psa51:17
    - yielding to the Holy Spirit in every aspect .Heb3:13-15, Act7:51(NLT)
    - commitment towards beholding Christ from his word 2Cor3:18
* Diligent study. 1Tim4:15(MSG)
* Meditation. Col 3:16,Josh1:8
  + - Be doers of the word. Jam1:22-25,Act 1:1

**Conclusion**

Scripture reveals to us that God’s utmost desire for every of His child is to build us into epistles of Christ, so much the more that Christ descended and ascending, released the ministry gifts for the same purpose. Epistles of Christ, so the word of God says you are; then you show and make it obvious, by the way you live, that you are a message from Christ to **all** men. Therefore be opened to the Holy Spirit, that He may write His word on **every** aspect of your live.

******Topic**: **Deeper! Nearer! Closer! (Walking with God)-Part 1 Wednesday, 11th June, 2014**

**Text**: Gen. 5 Class: \_\_\_\_\_

**Memory Verse**:

*If you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures; then you will understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. Proverbs 2:4-5 NKJV*

**Introduction**: In a chapter that has been described as a death roll, the product of the fallen nature of man, full of “…and he died” as against the lie of the devil (Gen.3:4); we found a man whose end was an exception. In the same vein, Jesus in a man’s life exempts him from eternal death (Jn. 11:25). In this first part, we consider the genealogy of this man Enoch. May this study have a forever impact on us .Amen

**Study Points**:

* **There is treasure in the core of the rock.** Job 28:1-12(NLT).Psa.19:7-10.; Meditative study of the Scriptures provides a channel of accessing the light and live in God’s word. Scriptures becomes lively and there is better understanding. He who will eat the sweetened marrow of the chicken must first crack the bone. **Go to the miners then, thou sluggard in faith; consider their ways, and be wise.** Let their courage, perseverance, diligence, and constancy in seeking the wealth that perishes shame us out of slothfulness and faint-heartedness in labouring for the true riches. *How much better is it to get wisdom than gold!*
* **ALL Scriptures**…2Tim 3:16.The word of God has preserved every portion that we have in scriptures for a purpose. The extent to which you realize this truth will reflect in our attitude towards the search of the Scriptures particularly the seemingly uninteresting ones as we shall soon discover about the genealogy of this man Enoch. Mention your attitudes towards portions of scriptures like Gen.5, in time past.
* **The genealogy of Enoch the son of Jared**
* **The personality that matters** is usuallythe determinant of the lineage maintained 1Chron 2:1-3**.** All the other men mentioned in this chapter were all said to have lived and died. Enoch is the only one of whom it is said that he “walked”. What is the difference between living and walking? Walk with God makes the difference in a man’s life.
* **Enoch was privileged** so also were his contemporaries (discuss)**.**

Discover that Enoch lived with the first man on earth-Adam in his early years (Will require some calculations)? Try to imagine this family setting. What things would he have heard from Adam knowing that there was a practise of oral tradition at that time? Cf. Gen 4:16-24.

In what way would this have affected his walk with God? He however was deliberate in his quest for intimacy with God.

* **Maximizing what you have**. In our own context, in what way do you trivialize some of the privileges that you have as a member of the fellowship? Will you just pass through IVCU or allow IVCU to pass through you? The choice is yours.
* ***Methu-Selah***( man of the dart).Jud 14,15.

**May be** a pointer to a level of relationship with God even before the birth of sons and daughters (cf. Hos. 1:4-9, Isa.8:3-4), more so that he died in the year of the flood, possibly by it (Gen.5:25-29, 7:6).

Also gives an indication of the level of decadence in his generation cf. Gen.6:5 Enoch stood out in the midst of a perverse generation. Not so much different from ours, only that the devil has modernized his vices.

 Faith is not hereditary 1Chron 28:9(Amp) .Of the man who lived the longest - 969 year, no record of godliness is given, as in his father Enoch's case.

* …***Afte*r** he begat Methuselah… v22, he gave birth to sons and daughters. He yet walked with God. What translates to sons and daughters in your own case? Should they be enough reasons to hinder your walk with God? The life of Enoch leaves us with a challenge.

**Conclusion:** Why do you spend your money (resource) on that which is not food? Why not invest your life and time in seeking God rather than just living like a gentle wind passes without an impact? Study the word, it is your life (Deut.32:46, 47).The understanding of God’s nature and ways helps us walk with Him better. May the Lord cause your eyes to be opened, that you may consistently behold wondrous things out of the scriptures from this time forward. Will someone make this his prayer point?

**Topic**: **Deeper! Nearer! Closer! (Walking with God)-Part 2**

**Text**: Gen. 5:21-24, Heb. 11:5, 6

**Memory Verse**: *But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. Hebrews 11:6 NKJV*

**Introduction**: The man Enoch is one of such men in the Bible whose life is intriguing. Especially as we saw that comment made about him in Gen 5:24 “and he was not, for God took him “. However this unusual experience is equally as important as the way he lived to have experienced it. That which God will have us pay more attention to, is summed up in the description “Enoch walked with God”. As we study his life, taking a closer look at the practicality of the walk, we want to consider our lives in the light of God’s word trusting God that the instructions from His word will bring us deeper, nearer and closer in walk with God than ever before.

**Study Points**:

* Walk with God.

…moving side by side with God

…being in ***constant*** agreement with God.Amos3:3, Mat.16:24.Disobedience and self-willed disrupts the continuity of our walk with God.

…intimate fellowship and friendship. Isa 41:8, Gen.18:16-19, Jhn.15:14, 15.

…What pleases Him? Always interested in finding this out.Heb11:5b, Psa.119:107,128,148,164,165; 51:17.

* It was a **personal** walk *with God*. If all Enoch depended upon was company Christianity, he would not have survived being a Christian in his own time.Psa119:102.
* **By faith.** Heb.11:6a
* In **the practise of God’s presence**., Psa. 139:7, 8;
* He rewards Mal. 3:13-18;Gen.15:1,2;1Cor 15:19
* Diligence in seeking God. Heb. 11:6b, Hos.6:1-3, 10:12.
* Must believe that **“He is”…**not He was. Gen 39:9, Psa.119:168. Such a one must constantly bear in mind the presence of God; this, in effect will reflect in our actions? A life of intimacy entails that we consciously “hold” God in our consciousness all day long. How intimate are you with God? It is not far-fetched, it is marked by how many times you do away with His consciousness in the course of the day, when the only time you remember He is “there” is when you want to do the supposed spiritual things like observing our quiet time, coming to fellowship, etc.iHhhhghugy

**Conclusion:** Examine your life. What is your state with God now? **Is He really pleased with you?** (This is a life-long question that should be the most cherished by everyone who walks with God). Enoch had a testimony that he pleased God. What will God say of you? What has come on board between you and your God? Is He happy with your life right now? God will not walk with a man causing Him offense every day. Drop those things in your life that give Him displeasure. Come along pursuing intimacy with God, giving diligence in seeking Him, appropriating His presence everywhere by faith; then watch the weaknesses in you stripped away as His will unfold in your life.

**Theme:** Epistles of Christ 2Cor3:3 Wednesday 23rd April, 2014

**Topic**: “…Out of weakness were made strong…” **Class**……………….

**Text:** Heb. 11:32-40

**Memory verse:** *But Jesus looked at them and said to them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."*Matthew 19:26 NKJV

**Introduction**: Just as it can be very easy to enjoy the suspense and thrills in a drama, it is possible to read the narrative of Abraham on one level as an interesting human drama; but the account of a couple struggling to live through questions and disappointments also relates to God’s involvement in our history and journey in life. Despite misgivings and problems, doubts and delay, Abraham became strong in faith. Ours is not to make excuses for ourselves from Abraham’s wavering and inconsistencies and remain in our weaknesses. Abraham did not have the Bible but we do. His was among the beginning of God’s dealing with man but we have their experiences recorded for our admonishment. We can rise upon the shoulders of these ones when we are confronted with similar life ordeals. After those dealings if you had asked Abraham if God could do the impossible, he would have told you he could bet his life for it. As we journey through the life of Abraham, we trust God to bring rejuvenation to our faith.

**Study Points:**

* **It all began with a call**. The word of the Lord came unto Abram…**Gen 12:1-3**.The call was not without promises.
* **Gen 15:1-6.**Abram believed God, even God attested to it.
* **Gen16:1-2** .Howbeit that he who was said to have believed God did this? 2Pet 1:5, 6. How was Abram misled**?**
* **Voices as Sarah’s** usually abound in our journey of walk with God suggesting to us schemes other than what the Lord says to us (either in his written word or other ways). Heeding makes plan go awry.
* When we try to help God work out His will, *it is like a 3 year old helping His father paint the house*. It may bring us satisfaction seeing our hand in the process. At best, however, it will be messy. At worse, it will have to be done again. Such things as repeating a course also exist in the course of our walk with God.
* **Gen17:1, 2. Full** **13years of interrupted communion after the birth of Ishmael.** How could it have been so long?What could have come on board between you and your God that has denied you of *special appearances* of God as you used to have them? Can you make an attempt to look inwards and trace your way back to God again? He will welcome you in waiting hands.
* **Gen17:15-19** **Abram’s faith seems to falter**. Abram don’t give up on God yet. A child by birth He says, not through a surrogate.
* **A Change of Name**, in conjunction with the Lord’s promise. Imagine a scenario as this. Put yourself in Sarah’s shoes. Is this some sort of mockery Lord or what?
* **Gen 18:9-15.**The record of the Scriptures and of our own experiences in following the Lord tells us that He seems to love the word **“impossible**”.
* It was an impractical idea. **“Let’s be practical here”, “Let’s talk reality”.** We can be too practical, spending so much time and energy finding ways and reasons why something cannot be done rather than trusting the Lord.(1Cor 1:25)
* **When the promise lingers,** Rom 4:20, Psa. 62:11
* **Gen21:1-7**.How would Abraham have felt now that the promise is here now in relation to the occurrence in Gen16? Is there any lesson here?
* **From knowledge to faith**-we may know that God is powerful enough to change any life or change any situation but is something else altogether to expect such changes and to see Him do such again in our lives.
* **According to the time of life…** (God’s perfect timing).When a driver brakes a few seconds late, he crashes into another car. The God we trust never misses a deadline, His timing is always perfect. He works on His own time table not ours.

***…But afterwards***

* **Gen 22:1-10.Abraham’s faith confirmed.** In what ways was the command here a more severe test of Abraham’s faith in God? Where did Abraham expect to get the answers to the questions asked Him.cf Heb. 11:17-19.The experience of the birth of Isaac, without doubt, left Abraham with a lesson of life so that subsequently he believed God for an happening as the resurrection that he had never heard about (Rom 4:17).See how much God’s faithfulness in time past should give us a strong confidence for the future. Lam 3:21(NIV)

**Conclusion:** Despite Abraham’s faults and wavering, the New Testament writers held up the Patriarch as a genuine model of faith. Such is the case with the patriarchs of faith. They were victorious not because they were super humans. In, fact many of them started out in what can be described as very unspiritual states. ‘Out of weakness’ implies that they started in weakness, but they did not remain in that state. *It is for this reason we are certain that God’s intention to make us Christ epistles is not something above our head*. It is His intention for us and is exactly what He will achieve in our lives. Amen!

**Theme:** Epistles of Christ. 2Cor.3:3 Wednesday, 23 07 14 **Topic**: A Brand Plucked Out Of the Fire- 1

**Text**: Zech.3:1-7

**Memory Verse***: Then I heard a strong voice out of Heaven saying, Salvation and power are established! Kingdom of our God, authority of his Messiah! The Accuser of our brothers and sisters thrown out, who accused them day and night before God. They defeated him through the blood of the Lamb and the bold word of their witness. They weren't in love with themselves; they were willing to die for Christ. Rev.12:10-11 MSG*

**Introduction**: This expression (the topic) was used in the figurative sense to describe Joshua the high priest whose priesthood had hung aloof and became despicable during the captivity. The temple service ceased when the temple was destroyed and the ordinances of the temple were forgotten. The people of Israel had just been wonderfully (Ezr.1&4) delivered (“plucked out”) of captivity. Joshua was returned and the priesthood also returned in some measure but neither to its former glory nor ordinance (Ezr.3:12, 13). In this ordeal, or what can be described as a state of narrowness, the devil still deemed it fit to find an occasion to accuse him. This portion of the scriptures thus reveals deeply to us attributes of God and the devil (of God, an immeasurable grace and of the devil, cruel hatred) as well as God’s purpose in the salvation and the deliverances of His people. (For further background study, see Ezra 1, 2, 3, 4…).

**Study Points:**

* **The Relentless Accuser ,Zec.1 v 1b**

As we learn about the devil, his wickedness, cruelness and hatred, it reveals (unfolds) to us the manifold loving-kindness of God. Job 1:6-12.Have you wondered why the devil is so committed to this accusation “ministry”? The existence of man in God’s will and in the understanding of His purpose in creation is a constant source of sorrow and regret, a torn in the flesh, to the devil. His aim is to make useless men and women who are supposed to be the manifold wisdom of God.

Instead of lengthened argument, Jehovah silences Satan by the one verdict, namely, God’s choice! v.2b, 1Pet. 2:9, Rev.12:7-12, Heb.12:24.

It is very important that we are able to distinguish between the condemnation of the devil and the pricking (conviction) of the Holy Spirit.2Cor.7:10.

* **Oh! The wonder of Grace Divine.** Rom.8:31-39; Heb.4:14-16.

This miracle of grace which has been wrought for them, points beyond itself to an incomparably greater and better act of the sin-pardoning grace of God, which is still in the future, and now is. For while we were yet sinner, Christ identified with us and died for us .You are *the product of the Grace* of God, this you must always bear in mind. It is this love that constrains us and leaves us with nothing less than to love Him back by doing His will and keeping His commandments. John. 14:15.Thus it will be a wicked thing to do, the highest level of ingratitude, should any man count this Grace of God a premise for committing sins and causing Him displeasure. 2Cor.5:14-15.1John 5:18, Rom.6:15-23, Jud.1:4, Isa.26:7-10, Jer. 9:24, Rom.11:22.

The only thing that can cause a healthy growth of a child of God is if he lives in the obedience to the totality of God’s word. Heresy results from tilting towards a particular part of the scriptures (in which case the Scriptures is balanced in itself) and laying undue emphasis on it to the detriment of other parts of the scriptures.

* **The smoking flax, He will not quench** Isa.42:3

Herein, God’s acquittal of Jerusalem is not that He did not recognize her sin but that having punished her people for it with a seventy years' captivity, He, on the ground of His electing love delivered her from the fiery ordeal; and when once He has begun a deliverance, as in this case, He will perfect it Psa.89:30-35; If your situation is like a bruised reed, know for sure that He will not break you. Perhaps your state is like of smoking flax, you are an important concern (subject) in the ministry of Jesus. Bear in mind that He will not “quench” you but rather, cover you up and fan you to flame. Jesus loves you. He will guide till the day is dawn.Phi.1:6, 2Tim.1:12.

**Conclusion**: This study unveils to us the UNFAILING nature (His loving kindness) of our God. As daily challenges unfold, He expects us to trust Him and be certain that He will be true to His word. We know that no matter how persistent and cruel the devil’s accusations are, God is always miles ahead of him in LOVE and concern for us! We will continue later.

**Theme:** Epistles of Christ. 2Cor.3:3 Class………… **Topic**: A Brand Plucked Out Of the Fire-part 2

**Text**: Zech.3:1-7

**Memory Verse***: Colossians 1:10 NKJV… that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;*

**Introduction:** Every child of God is **“**A *Brand* *plucked out from the fire***”** A converted soul is a brand plucked out of the fire by a miracle of free grace. That is not the end in itself. As you see Him do all of these things, God has a purpose in mind.Zech.4:7.Having intervened on their behalf and having delivered them out of the dilemma they found themselves by His sovereign rule, in the wisdom of divine purpose (a similitude of our experience at salvation), the Lord makes His purpose known and as we see, it was a call unto responsibilities (for He says”… then, if you will walk in My ways”)

**Study Points:**

* **A brand**-even in your state, God sees you as a brand.Judg.6:11, 12; Rom.4:17, Gen.17:5 cf. 18:16-19. He does see you in the light of who He can make out of you. This also informs God’s dealings with or demands from a man just as we saw in the case of Abraham. Do you now realize why God has been requesting for some measures of living from you which perhaps is not general? It is important that we recognize this so that we can submit to God’s dealings.

There is a common destination God wants to take us all; it is to the height of the measure of Christ’s stature and it is all encompassing( in love, in wisdom, in power, in self-denial, in compassion, in humility and in constant fellowship with God, etc.).God’s dealings with every believer, irrespective of your state, are geared towards this ultimate purpose of God. This is who God sees of you. This is Who He wants to make out of you. ALLOW HIM!

* **“Plucked out***”* Ezr.4:1-6.The Lord saved us by His wonderful power and unbeatable wisdom cf. Exo.32:11b. Whether yours looks so ordinary, please know that it was a plucking out. Meditate on the dilemma that the human race found herself after the fall; the hopeless situation that the devil left us (Rom.3:23; Psa.115:16, Jhn1:14, 1Cor.2:6-8), then you will realize that it was indeed a plucking out*.*

What about the special deliverances God has granted you in time past? Remember from whence He has brought you. Are you wondering why God has been so merciful and faithful to you?

* **Is there not a cause?** Zech. 3:1-6;Luke 19:31**.** It should be noted for our lives that the fact that God granted us escapes from a sinful life (the mesh and bondage of sin) as well as imminent dangers are pointers to *His impending purpose* for our lives as well as happy presages for more dealings from Him. He is not yet through with your live. For the special privileges, abilities, endowment that you have; the reason that accident, sickness had not claimed your life, even when there were many you know that have gone by it, is because the Lord has need of you.
* **To be conformed to the Image of Christ. ”**Then, if you will walk in my ways…” Zech3v.7 .The purpose for the grace of God was revealed to him. Jer.29:11. Col.1:10

It is God’s expected end for us.Eph.4:13-15, Rom 8:29(cf.1Tim.2:1-4, 2Pet.3:9, Rom 4:16).It is a possibility in God. Aspire this at all time-the stature of Christ in its fullness-in both character and the anointing. Let your focus be reset on this goal (many believers don’t have this in focus anymore; we are beginning to chase after other things that are not the ultimate in God’s heart). Don’t lose sight of it, nurture this into reality by making efforts on a daily basis. Let all that you do be geared towards this longing. If this is your utmost pursuit it will be obvious in your response to life.

**Conclusion**: Zion is calling you to where God is; where all that you are respond to who He is. Go and convert this to life. Don’t be a forgetful hearer.

**Theme:** Epistles of Christ (2Cor 3:3) Wednesdays, 10th&17th September, 2015

**Topic:** Consider Jesus: This Nevertheless-kind of Jesus’ Life. Class: …………

**Text**: Matthew 17:24-27 NKJV

**Memory Verse**: 2 Corinthians 5:15 NKJV.

And He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.

**Introduction**:

I could not talk to you as matured because you are still babes; that was apostle Pauls comment to a particular church; The Lord calls us to be His Epistles; it is a call to stature and maturity. Can He begin to speak to you as mature?

Jesus lived with the disciples, taught them and showed them a pattern of lifestyle; the way to live. The followers of Jesus continued in this way of life even after the ascension of Jesus in so much that they were called CHRIST-IAN(like Christ).Christianity is not a mere confession nor a belonging, it is a lifestyle, and one that is patterned according to that of our Lord Jesus Christ”(2Cor 5:15NLT). In this passage, Jesus anticipated Peter and having seen that he by himself agreed that He was not supposed to pay tax, took that occasion to teach them this Nevertheless-kind of life. It is no cowardice nor foolishness but Christ-like to refuse to insist on rights even when we can. We see our Lord say a nevertheless here. Such thing is no longer common.

**Study Points:**

* Though I can…; though I have…; though I am…v.26, Gen 12:5 cf. 13:9, Exo.30:13-15.Mal 3:1,Jhn 2:16,Heb 3:6.
* *Nevertheless…*
* Lest my good be spoken of as evil. Rom.14:13-16
* For the sake of peace Gen13:1-13,Matt 17:27
* Lest I cause my brother to stumble.1Cor.8:1-13

***Does it mean anything to you that Christ died for that one also? 1Jhn3:16***

* That the work of God might not be hindered 1Cor.9:11-15.

This does not talk about declining from our duty or issues of our faith in matters that entails compromising our faith/righteousness for fear of giving offence for it is better to offend men than God. (Matt.15:12, 13) but we must deny ourselves in that which is our secular interest (1Cor 8:**8**, 9, 13) for the above reasons that the word of God has shown us.

* It always seems you are losing but it is the blessed way. It may look like you are a fool but actually you are the wise. Matt.19:29.Psa 19:7-11.

Such living opens door for God’s divine intervention and supernatural providence in one’s life (*access to the heaven’s ATM*. Matt.17:27b).

Life testimonies have shown that when you let go of something based on this pattern of life (in obedience to the way of Christ), such experience is like casting your bread upon the waters for it will always come back to you. Mark 8:35

**Conclusion**: This kind of life entails self-denial (self-effacement) which is a necessary requirement for anyone who wants to follow Christ Matt.16:24.This actually is the hallmark and summary of what love entails. For Christ demonstrated His love for us by laying down His life for us so that we also should ‘lay down’ our lives for the brethren.1Jhn.3:16.Choose the way of the Lord, for the way of the Lord is the way of Wisdom.

**Village Outreach Bible Study**

**Topic**: One Thing Is Needful! (The Story of Mary and Martha) 10th&11th October, 2014.

**Text**: Luke 10:38-42 Class………………….

**Memory Verse**: John 15:4-5 NKJV

(4) Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.

(5) I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

**Introduction**: And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen. John 21:25 NKJV .Every Gospel writer, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, had to pick and choose from many incidents and sayings in Jesus' life and decide just what to include and what to exclude. Luke is no exception. So when Luke decided to include six or seven sentences about a couple of sisters named Mary and Martha, we need to ask: Why? What point is the Holy Spirit trying to pass across?

**Study Points:**

* Martha received Him into **her** house …**Rev 3:20,Jhn 14:23**

Jesus loves this family (what we term a family friend). John 11:5.This place was a breath of fresh air to Jesus who had no place

* **“Martha, Martha…”** A call of warmth-.

This divine quality endears our hearts to our Lord Jesus. See also Jerusalem (Luk.13:34), Peter (Luk.22:31), and even later with the pre-Apostle Paul (Act. 9:4).In this outreach we must realize the Lord is calling out our names, each one ,in an endearing tone. He tells you,” **one thing is needful in your life** “Can you hear His voice? **Heb3:7.**

* **Oh that I may see as He sees…**

*Breathe on me, Breath of God; fill me with life anew, that I may love what thou dost love,*

*And do what thou wouldst do*.

When you think about it, that response is the one you wouldn't really expect Jesus to make. Who would you have expected Him to take side with? Consider the following

Luk. 9:59-60, Luk.9:61-62, Luk. 8:21

His responses though cross-cultural or against norm sometimes is because God does not see as man sees. May the heavenly mindset dominate our lives in Jesus’ name. This is paramount if we are going to please Him and walk with Him intimately. It’s not only a function of prayer but giving ourselves to the word of God thereby renewing our minds.**Col.1:10**

* **Chastisement- the Hallmark of Sonship**…**Heb. 12:5&6**

How do you think **Jesus’ reply** would have landed on Martha? Do you know how that feels? Martha must have felt justified in coming to Jesus with her complaint because she was being hospitable and was demonstrating loving service.

Sometimes the truth (chastening) can be bitter **2Cor. 7:8-12**, but it is the hallmark of sonship. This is no condemnation at all. If the Lord chastises you, it is because He loves you. He desires that your godly sorrow leads you to repentance. Do not despise the chastening of the Lord.

* **Jesus -the good Shepherd**. **Jhn.10:14,27**

Observe that Jesus did not try to get emotional about it (play sentiment) as to hide the truth from her, after all t’was because of Jesus, the Special visitor, she was doing (the run-around) the cooking she was doing. The same way He will not fail to do the same to us at this time even though we have come on an outreach.

**Food for thought**: If you were in Jesus’ shoe, will you not hide the truth from Martha lest you lose an ‘exclusive meal’? Which shepherd are you? One who will hide the truth from others because of sentiment or personal gains? Which sheep are you? One who despises reproof? **2Tim.4:1-5, 2Tim.3:16.**

* **Really, is anything wrong in serving**?
* First, hospitality was a huge deal in this culture. In Jesus's culture (and most others), fixing meals is considered part of a woman's responsibility. Lev.19:33-34. The word "strangers" doesn't necessarily mean that they are strange; it normally applied to travellers and aliens, people we don't know. If they were to love strangers, they certainly were to love each other: Be hospitable to one another without complaint. 1 Pet. 4:9 .So Martha was working hard to be hospitable to Jesus. Biblically, she is doing what the Lord told His people to do. She is being hospitable.
* Jesus commended that on an occasion and even scolded Simon for failure to do the same.**Mat.8:14-15; Luk. 7:36-50, Mat.10:40-42**.So sisters and brothers in the kitchen, don’t be discouraged, you have your reward.
* **What then was wrong?**
* **The service trap**- Cumbered with much serving *at the expense of the one thing that was needful.* Having a false sense of fulfilment and/or pleasing God by much service at the expense of fellowship.Try this experiment--ask people about themselves, and they immediately tell you this: What they do. Why do we do this? It’s because **we attach our worth to our work**. This is not God’s absolute standard of approval.

Martha started working as a way to show Jesus that she was sincere about her love for Him. That is not how it ended up. You may have started serving the Lord with great intentions, but if you have fallen into the service trap, I’m happy to report that there’s a way out--it’s coming back to the feet of Jesus. Beware of the “service trap”.

* **Distracted by much serving (many dishes, many things)**… What has been distracting you and keeping you away from the One thing that is needful? **1Jhn1:6;Jam. 4:4.**
* **Priorities**, Mat.6:33,Luk.10:41&42

We must separate **the wants from the needs**...**the minors from the major**! **‘temporal’ and ‘eternal**.’ You should not just live for anything as it comes. Evaluate your engagements with a sense of priority .Place lesser importance on things with no eternal value attached. Eternal are the things which start now and endure even after death. But being at the feet of Jesus fills every thought of our eternity in heaven. Can you now see from the perspective Jesus was seeing from. Oh! That we may see things from the perspective of Christ; that I may see as Christ sees-to see things from the heavenly (eternity) point of view!

* **…**But **ONE THING** is needful, ***what is that one thing***?
* **Your life** before your service. **Rom. 12:1&2(NLT), Mat.7:21-23.**
* **Your obedience** before your offering.**Mat.5:23&24;Heb. 10:5-7**
* **Sitting at the master’s feet**- Even though it cuts across the grain of societal expectations, even though it means neglecting her regular duties, Mary (probably) has correctly discerned that listening to Jesus and learning His ways is more important than anything else she can choose and no one can rip this precious spiritual food away from her. Listening to what Jesus is teaching is the highest way to show Him honour, and preferable to any human way we seek to honour Him. The one thing that Jesus seeks above all else is that you **spend time with Him**, "sitting at His feet," as it were. That needs to come first; before all these other things. Jesus is not necessarily suggesting anything is wrong with the love that motivates Martha's service as we have seen. Her service is a good thing. Indeed, from the rest of Jesus’ teaching, we would conclude that a willingness to serve is one aspect of what is essential. But serving is not the MOST ESSENTIAL thing.
* The **Divine Principle of Discipleship**-**Mar. 3:13&14.Jhn.15:4, 5** "Sitting at His feet" (a call to discipleship). This is what discipleship means.‘Sitting at one’s feet’ is a Hebraism for "discipleship"cf.Act. 22:3, Luk.8:35

Of the early disciples, He called them that they may be with Him and that He might send them forth...This is the pattern, sequence, order; our LORD had laid down and is what must inform our lives of service. If we don’t do it **according to pattern** we will not have the result the father desires of us. Many people lose vitality and effectiveness to doing too many things as to neglecting that source of Divine Strength. It is when we approach service of whatever form and in whichever capacity this way that it will add to us rather than reduce us.

* **A servant is not greater than his Master**. **Phi2:5,Mar. 1:35,6:46,Luk4:42,22:39** The Lord is not asking us to do what He didn’t.The Minimum is a secluded time of communion with God (Quiet Time)**Psa. 5:3**. You can never outgrow this. Even Jesus needed it. He knew how to quickly retreat to His place of strength and this He did very consistently. I don’t know how many of us had done service up to the extent that our LORD Jesus did, yet He consistently maintained fellowship with the father. Have you neglected your place of the source of true relevance? When was the last time you had a personal fellowship with God that was so warming and refreshing? Or there is no time.
* **Learning of Jesus through His word**.

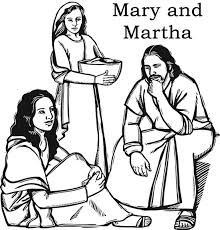
Sitting at the feet of our Lord, learning from His Word, may be furthered by the insight of teachers and discipleship meetings, but **ultimately** we sit at Master’s feet when we personally **read and meditate** on the Word of God.

* **2 Tim. 3:16** God is its ultimate author. The Bible provides information that is not available anywhere else. The Bible is **divine self-disclosure**. In it the mind of God is revealed on many matters. With knowledge of Scripture, we do not have to rely on secondhand information or bare speculation to learn who God is and what He values. In the Bible, God reveals Himself
* **Acts 2:41-42.** **Continually devoting**" means: "to be earnest toward, to be constantly diligent, to adhere closely, to be devoted to." Bible study is not something that 21 st century believers really devote ourselves to. Unlike us, the believers in the early church placed a high priority on the study of God's Word: What percentage of Christians that you know would you say are devoted to Scripture? Can you call you attitude towards the study of the word of God as devoted? I would dare say that most of the things that Christians believe about God they have heard from others and not discovered themselves from the Word of God.

It was obvious in the lives of the apostles who were not even students of the Torah (Jewish scriptures) that they knew the scriptures as they severally made reference to the Old Testament and correlated the fulfilment of certain prophecies with the life of Jesus. What is wrong with us? Why do we spend so little time in God's Word? If we want to experience the apostolic move of the spirit and even more, then we have to live the apostolic life of sitting down at the master’s feet**.** If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

* **Col. 3:16**,

"**Let** the word **of Christ** richly dwell within you"

 "**Dwell**"--means: "to live in," or "to be at home." Paul calls upon believers to let the Word take up residence and **be at home** in their lives (**localize it**). We should live in the Word of God like we live in our homes. We are familiar with our home where all the closets are, where we have items stored even if PHCN interrupts power supply. We must thoroughly acquaint ourselves with the Word. The Word should become so familiar to us that we know it like we know our homes. The idea is to let the Word of God dwell inside and live at home in our lives. The Word of God needs to inhabit us. This is requires more than just an occasional reading of the Bible.

**"Richly"** "abundantly, applying it, using it constantly, at all times and in all circumstances. “The truths of Scripture should permeate every aspect of the believer's life and govern every thought, word, and deed. Believers, we need more than a casual acquaintance with the Bible. God's word is to dwell in us abundantly--it is to saturate us. It must become part of our very being, transforming the way we think and act. To use an illustration from the area of computer technology, it must be the program always running that controls everything else. Everything depends on it. The Word of Christ is to abundantly dwell in us, because it is the only source of truth we have about God.

**Charles Spurgeon** writes: If other forms of knowledge are useful, they are like the planets; but the knowledge of God as revealed in Christ Jesus is as the sun. Let this always be the center of your system of knowledge, and let all the rest that you know move in subordination and subjection to that first and best form of knowledge.

**John Quincy Adams**, sixth president of the United States, said, "For years I have read my Bible through once a year. I read it every morning, as the very best way to begin the day."

**Woodrow Wilson** said, "I am sorry for the men who do not read the Bible every day. I wonder why they deprive themselves of the strength and of the pleasure."

He is our Creator and Redeemer. If we are going to live a life of purpose, we must know who He is and what He expects from us. The only place that we can get that information is from the Word of God**. Believers are living lives of frustration and discontentment. The only cure is for God's people to spend time with their Lord**. After all God has done for you, is it too much to ask that you spend time with Him listening to His voice? Oh that we may know the depth of presence that comes with fellowshipping with God in His word

In spite of all our religious activities, for many of us the Bible is a side issue. But Jesus said it was the "one essential thing." We will never know real joy if we only have a 5 minute God (5 minute devotions, 5 minute prayers, only attend fellowship services on Sunday 2pm). Christians must be people of the Book. We must spend time sitting at the feet of Jesus--we are all called to be His disciples!

**Conclusion:** By contrasting Martha and Mary, as though each Christian should make a choice to either be a worker like Martha or a disciple like Mary, we miss the point. The final truth of this story of Mary and Martha is **not** that Mary is right and Martha is wrong. In fact, Mary would be wrong to not get up and start to work for the Lord; for true discipleship (learning at the master’s feet), will lead us to work for God and *in a way that is pleasing (acceptable) to Him.* It is a danger, even for those of us who love Christ that we become so concerned with doing things for Him that we begin to neglect hearing Him. Never allow your service for Christ to crowd out your communion with Him! The moment our works become more important to us than, our fellowship with Him (as well as efforts to learn more of Him), we will be turning true spiritual priorities on their head. May the Holy Spirit keep resounding this in our spirit in Jesus’ name.One thing is needful!

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**BIBLE STUDY** 15th October, 2014

**Theme**: Epistles of Christ.2Cor 3:3

**PRACTICAL DISCUSSION**

**Anonymous**: Heaven can bear me witness that it all started with a good intention, no ulterior motive. I just wanted to help Sister Kate get well in her academics and spiritual growth. I think I prayed about it and got the go ahead. I began to get closer to her and started to commit myself to her. As a result, we became very close friends and I mean really close. We read together almost every time; called her every now and then to encourage her and share scriptures with her. Some of the calls went like:

Me: Hello, dear. Hope you have rested

Kate: Not very well, only a little.

Me: Where are you now?

Kate: In my hall (Queens).I am on my bed.

Me: What are you doing?

Kate: Nothing really, I don’t really think I want to sleep again joo.

Me: Please sleep, at least, for my sake.

Kate: Okay, okay, no problem, I will try to catch some sleep now.

Me: So, expect me in front of your hall by 10pm (to go to KDL from there).I won’t allow you to sleep like yesterday. Promise me you won’t sleep.

Kate: Promise.

Me: Bye…

Kate: Bye

I would walk her back from class and even from church to her hostel before going to my room. I became her confidant; one she was willing to talk to freely even about the so-called personal ‘stuff’. Whenever she went home, she brought me packages. I have visited her home on 2 occasions.

At first, I was beginning to see changes in her. She was coming to fellowship regularly. She was such that would do whatever I wanted out of the respect in which she held me. I was initially relating to her from that capacity. However, as time went on, things began to go haywire. Often time she told me that she liked me but she strongly added “but not any special like”. I was beginning to give her special treatment relative to other sister friends. I think it was obvious to people around but no one could fault my actions because I was her unit leader so they thought I was probably ‘discipling’ her. I realized that I became so attached to her. I had a strong feeling for her; strong attraction that drew me towards her that I could not control. Sometimes it compelled me to call her even when there was no need. I always felt like wanting to see her, be around her, etc. and I could not help it.

Down within me I knew something was wrong but my mind was too clouded by this emotion that I do not want to consider what was wrong. May be I should confess that a part of me was enjoying the whole thing. But then, I was still praying, having my quiet time, going to fellowship and leading unit meetings, seeing ‘rhema’. In short, I was doing fine in the Lord. In fact, I remember that on some occasions, after ‘tdb’ in KDL, we just walked down to Chapel and prayed together. If I would not deceive you, my prayers on those days were packaged and pretentious (I am the type that prays vigorously). I remember that once as we held hands in prayers, I felt strong emotions passed between us that we almost kissed ourselves.

You see, I also knew something was wrong because there was this fear that always came when some messages were preached along that line but often time, I emboldened my heart and tried to encourage myself that the message was not for me, that after all I was not fornicating with anyone. After one of such messages was preached in service, we greeted but I discovered that her attitude was cold towards me but she soon got over it.

As the relationship progressed, I just realized that we were already relating like we were going to get married, as in some of our discussions, we indirectly talked about a future home. I once had a dream along that line so I considered that maybe God was working something out. My friend, at a time warned me about this but I turned a deaf ear.

It became more serious and I was losing all -round. I was reducing spiritually. It was also not without an effect on my academics as I could not do without thinking about her in the next moment. The problem then started after I started to notice some strange things about her responsiveness towards me. I suspected that she was no longer picking my calls on purpose. She was avoiding me. Every little wrong she did broke my heart even those that would never have moved me if any other female friend did. Each time I saw her talking freely with another brother, I felt this sense of jealousy so bad that I was wondering if I was still a brother. As I preached in the unit meetings, she was giving a face like “liar! What is he saying?” This destabilized me most of the time. Right now, she does not even attend unit meetings anymore. I thought I wanted to help her but haven’t I gotten her worse and myself worst? I already lost my respect before her but that is not the major problem. The height of it now is that though I now realized that I have been entangled all along and I want to be free but I can’t help myself. My friend counselled me to stay away from her but even after deciding to; I end up calling her myself. As I am talking to you, I have lost so much weight, not to fasting but to this useless burden. I have been failing my tests. As for prayers, it appears as if my prayers aren’t going anywhere. I need help, please brethren what can I do? Honestly, I had good intentions at first. Where did I get it wrong?

**Discussion:**

* Nobody is immuned against falling into Anonymous’ trap.**1 Cor.10:13**. This we must recognize. No matter how unmoved(unaffected) you may think yourself to be in matters like this, remember, you are still susceptible, it is only a matter of time once you let of your guard and deny some fundamental realities about human, then you give the devil an inch. Believe you me, he will go miles **1Cor.10:8&9, Mat.4:6&7.** There are some checks that need to govern the relationship between the opposite sex and spiritual brothers and sisters are not excluded. There is a how-far that is too far. Beware lest overconfidence destroys you.**1Cor.10:12**
* As, a child of God, the devil knows the right bait to give you. He knows that you will not agree to a boyfriend or girlfriend relationships as in the manner of the world.**Heb.12:1**. However he can help you repackage it that you will find yourself in such realationship.**2Cor.2:11**.It is unfortunate that so-called believers now even date.**Pro.3:5&6**.Marriages hold so many future eventualities and possibilities that cannot be predicted, the very reason one cannot afford to go one’s way. Rather one must depend absolutely on God (who sees the now and the future) and His leading, acknowledging ones insufficiency in this matter.
* There is this hollow deep inside in every man that needs to be filled with love. Many of us try to substitute it with some emotional forms of human relationships especially when we get to the adolescent age. It is not in such occasion (of lust and passion) that God brings us life partners. This is also why some marriages don’t work. He first satisfies us by Himself before anybody comes into the picture. Get busy seeking God, pursue intimacy with the Holy Spirit and you will know that He is a friend that sticks closer than a brother. Ask the Lord to satisfy you with His love and you will never be in need of any other that cannot. When the love of God saturates a man heart, when a man is filled with the fullness of God, when he is consumed by the pursuit of God, every single lust will disappear. There is a period to be single; a moment when you are not attached to anyone, not even by emotion. It is a period to ‘sit down’ and discover the essence of life, to get God **Lam.3:27&28(Amp), Ecc.3:1, 9, 10&11a**.There is a time when God says bearing the yoke of singleness is good for you. At the right time the companion will come.**Gen2:7, 15:20**.Are you really single? Lord, reveal Yourself to me, how satisfying You are, for nothing can satisfy except the Holy Spirit; He is the best companion.**Rom.5:5**
* **If you are already in Anonymous’ shoes**, pray that the Lord helps you out of this web. It is a cage where potential generals of God are wasted. Once this comes their way, they will continue to waste in it and fail to concentrate on God and on the dealings He desires to take them through for that period. It is also very disastrous that the foundation of an important and sensitive relationship as marriage is made that way. Frankly speaking, withdraw communication (1Pet.2:11) and the whole thing will die out with time. Let nobody tell you that it is not possible to withdraw communication at that heat of emotion. It is possible. However, be pre-informed that there will be a hurt that you need to bear. Be accountable to a matured brother/sister. Through it all, don’t respond to the prompting to want to communicate, if you do, you return to square one. When it seem difficult, call on Him, He is just right there.
* Deal with that lust in your heart at the level of the desire. Don’t pamper it lest it destroys you.**Jam.1:12-15**.What you will not eat, why try smelling it? Abstain! **2Tim2:22** Flee! Run for your life.**1The.5:22**.
* Anonymous is also advised to step down from the responsibility as unit leader with a full explanation to the leadership pending the time he will have recovered from the experience. This is for his good, Sister Kate’s good and for the good of those precious souls in the unit. This will mean a great deal of sincerity.
* *…there was this fear that always came when some messages were preached along that line* **1Jhn.4:18** *but often time, I emboldened my heart and tried to encourage myself that the message was not for me, that after all*.**Isa.66:2b,Heb.12:5&6**
* *…we indirectly talked about a future home. I once had a dream along that line so I considered that maybe God was working something out.***Ecc.5:3a**
* *Please sleep, at least, for my sake; so, expect me in front of your hall by 10pm (to go to KDL from there).I won’t allow you to sleep like yesterday. Promise me you won’t sleep***.** The phone conversation raises a red flag. The relationship has already lost its essence. The discussion portrayed that something was fishing. When relationship is **Rom.12:9**
* *…I became her confidant; one she was willing to talk to freely even about the so-called personal ‘stuff’.*

Kate could have been handed over to a fellow sister in the fellowship, to whom Kate can be entrusted. If there is no such sister who can be in that position and a brother needs to come in, then a matured sister should be carried along and updated about every bit of what transpires. If the brother is sincere and if his sole motive is that he desires growth for the sister, no selfish interest attached, he should be willing to do this. This will serve as a great check in the relationship. Many individuals who committed themselves to the opposite sex all in the name of a purpose which might be sincere and honourable originally have come out bruised or battered because they were careless about it. Take heed!

**Ibadan Varsity Christian Union (IVCU-NIFES)**

**All-House Retreat’s Bible Study, Epistles of Christ Tenure (2Cor.3:3) 31st Oct-2nd Nov, 2014**

**Topic**: Keeping a Good Conscience

**Memory Verse**: 1 Timothy 1:19 NKJV

Having faith and a good conscie nce, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck,

**Introduction**: The conscience acts as a moral arbiter which convicts or excuses us of sin and is a common part of all humanity saved or unsaved. The conscience is one way that God speaks to us and God's voice is heard most clearly when the conscience is undefiled and pure. Oh that there might be an awakening of every deadened conscience by the mercies of God in Jesus name.

**Study Points**:

* **The doorway or the voice of the Spirit**- To the believer it goes beyond just the conscience.Rom.9:1

The conscience is a very sensitive instrument within you that was created so that you could always know what is right and what is wrong and download spiritual truth from Heaven. The conscience is made to dwell in the light and will lead you towards that Light.

* **The Inner Witness in the knowledge of God’s will.**Rom.2:15.

Give examples in the Acts of the Apostles where someone was led by the inner witness. What is your own personal experience?

If you are truly born again, your conscience should scream every time you attempt a sin (or react in joy to a good deed) and as you grow, it even disallows several indulgences which may not be considered sin. Share your own experience. Matt22:18, Mrk2:8, Luk. 5:22, 2Sam 5:12, Act14:9.It is a sudden realization of an inner definite ‘knowing’ of a fact, the truth about a situation or a person or, a go-ahead signal or a restrain at the junction of making decisions. Usually, you cannot explain beyond the fact that you just know. It is also referred to as ‘intuition’, ‘inward witness’ or ‘spiritual perception’. It is not a vague feeling, human reasoning, mental calculation or deep thinking. No leading of the Holy Spirit will lead one to act contrary to God’s word. 1John 5:7

* **Keeping a Good Conscience. Acts 24:16**
* **Readiness to obey** Jhn.7:17, Jhn.14:12. We cannot be both receptive to God and also deliberately disobedient to the commandments of Jesus Christ. When God clearly speaks to us in our conscience we must obey that prompting. (Of course if we feel prompted to do something doubtful, foolish or sinful, that is not our conscience speaking but rather our flesh or even the Devil). When God tells us to refrain from sin, we should stop right there and then. And when God tells us to let go of rage, or to apologize, or to show kindness to another we should immediately carry out that prompting of the Holy Spirit bearing witness in our conscience.
* **Purity of heart** **Mat.5:8.** If we really want to have close fellowship with God the Holy Spirit, we must put away those things which harden our heart and defile our conscience. These include: rage, bitterness, aggression, hatred, foul language, gossip, and speaking evil of one another (**Eph. 4:30-32)**
* **Living in honesty and integrity** Heb.13:18. You must seek to live a spotless and blameless life in all holiness and love of the truth. God's forgiveness and grace will be available to you as you do this. God wants you to be holy as He is holy (**1Peter 1:16**) and the Holy Spirit will lovingly coach you as you accept the challenge of fully living in the light (**John 14:26, 1 John 2:20, 27**)
* **The Conscience and the Word of God**
  + - The conscience can grow and be edified. That is, a weak conscience can grow and be made strong 1Cor.8:7.
    - The weak conscience is a poor guide and weak voice. The implication of this is that the Believer with this conscience cannot fully please God because the weak conscience is defective in God’s will
    - Therefore, we should exercise ourselves to have a conscience void of offense Acts 24:16; renew it with God’s word Col.3:10(AMP); 1:9-10; and edify it by praying with the conscience 1Cor.14:4; Jude 20;
* **The matter of the conscience is the matter of the faith**.1Tim1:19(NLT, GNB), 1Tim 4:1-3.
* **Moral apathy is not a valid Christian option** (is not the way out of refusing to yield to the Holy Spirit).1Jhn 3:10-12.1Jhn.3:7(NIV), 2.Tim.2:19.

The Way out-Gal 5:16&17, 24;

* The doctrine of the Eternal security (once saved forever saved)-what do you know about it.
* Are Jesus’ teaching before his death and resurrection relevant to a New Testament believer?Mat.28:18-20

Consider the contents of the great commission

* Many claim to believe that the Bible is God’s infallible word. But they choose what they want to believe in it and reject what they don’t want to. They depend on what their fallible minds tell them, and not on what God’s Word teaches clearly. Thereby they show their arrogance and their pride. Approach with simplicity.
* **Matthew 6:14, 15:** “If you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.” Jesus was very accurate with His words. The fact that He used “heavenly Father” here indicates that He was talking to God’s children and not to unbelievers. In fact, the whole Sermon on the Mount (of which these verses are a part) was meant for God’s children. Jesus used the great debt to ty pify how much we also are forgiven at salvation. Here Jesus tells God’s children that they will not be forgiven if they do not forgive others. What will happen to this “saved” person, if he dies in that state – unforgiven by God, because he did not forgive others? Can he enter into God’s presence with unforgiven sin? Can he receive forgiveness of sins after he has died?? There is NO forgiveness of sins beyond the grave. So he will be eternally lost. Even though He was once “saved”, he lost his salvation. Jesus made this crystal clear in the parable in **Matthew 18:23-35**. There we see that the entire debt that the king forgave his slave was placed back on the slave’s head and he was also put in prison – just because he did not forgive his fellow-slave. Jesus concluded the parable saying, “My heavenly Father will do the same to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart" (v.35). This teaches clearly that ALL the sins that our heavenly Father once forgave us will be placed back upon us, if we do not forgive even one person. And if we die in that state, we will be unforgiven and therefore, eternally lost. You may think that you just believe it but that afterall you don’t joke with sin, Everyone who takes sin lightly is thereby despising the crucifixion of Christ and in a sense crucifying Christ afresh. As long as a person has that attitude to sin, he cannot be brought to repentance. If he remains in that state, he will be lost eternally. But there is hope for him if he decides to take sin seriously and repent
* **Romans 8:12, 13**: Adam faced the same; the second Adam was not left out. *"Brethren......if you are living according to the flesh, you WILL die.”* This warning is for “*brethren”* – believers. The Holy Spirit tells believers here (in no uncertain terms) that they will CERTAINLY die spiritually, if they live according to the flesh – even if they were once “*made* *alive*”. Yet many preachers tell believers that they will NEVER die spiritually.  God warned Adam in Gen.2:17, that if he disobeyed God, he would “surely *die"* (just as it is written in *Rom.8:13*). But Satan said, *"You surely will not die"* Gen.3:4 – just like many preachers are telling believers today. Who was right in Eden – God or Satan? Who do you think is right today – God or these false teachers?
* **Gal.5:16-26**.Here Paul says He had always forewarned the believers in Galatia whom he was addressing, that those who engage in the deeds of the flesh, (though believers) will not inherit the kingdom of God. So he warns again and admonishes to walk in the Spirit so that one will not fulfill the deeds of the flesh.
* **1Cor 10**:**12.**Here Paul warns, using the prototype of the journey of the children of Israel to the promise land to describe the sojourn of the believer here on earth; they were all baptized to Moses (the similitude of our salvation) but with many of them, God was not pleased because they tempted God, gave heed unto immorality and idolatry for which they were destroyed and prevented from entering the Promised Land, yet God promised the elders of Israel in Egypt that He would bring them out of Egypt; and that He would bring them into Canaan **(Exod.3:17**) but only the first of those two promises was fulfilled in the lives of those elders. He therefore warns the New Testament believer not to give in, to temptation. He warns **the believer** not to assume that he stands **lest he falls**. He is not just admonishing the believer on this,this is what he himself does (as he shared in **1Cor.9:27**), though being an apostle that has gotten so deep in God. He didn’t say, so that I don’t lose my reward, but he said so that I myself may not be a cast-away. So he was aware of the possibility of not making it. The one who wrote this epistle lest we forget was the one commissioned by God to preach the Gospel to the gentiles; a bedrock of the faith, one who had revelations that even the first-hand apostles said was difficult for them to understand.Act.9:15&16,Rom.1:1-6;1Tim.1:12-17;**2Pet.3:14-18**.About this faith, He is not ignorant.
* **2 Peter 2:18-22.**Hear what Peter (Gal.2:8; Jhn.21:15-17) also says.
* **Rev.3:5**. "He who overcomes will be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life" These are the words that Jesus spoke to an elder (messenger) of a church and to all the believers in that church. Jesus never makes any empty threats. Read this warning of Christ’s, with an open mind and ask yourself, “Can a person’s name be erased from the book of life? D oes the Lord always speak the truth?” Jesus knows more about the book of life than any of us do. We are not to use logic here, but simply accept the words of Jesus as they are. He is speaking to us in human terms here, so that we can beware of this danger of our names bring erased from the book of life. It is written about the final judgment: “If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire” (Rev.20:15). Hear what is said about the testimony of this Revelation.Rev.1:1-4, 22:6-8.
* Sin is sin, unrighteousness is unrighteousness before God. It does not matter who commits it.1Jhn.3: That it is a believer that commits sin does not make it less sinful. There is nothing like ,“in Jesus ,no sin is sin”, in this context.2Tim.2
* However, for a believer, there is the provision of the blood of Jesus to restitute any sin; this provision is harnessed **when a man CONFESSES and REPENTS** of it.1Jhn 1:8-10. In fact saying that a believer cannot sin, we make God a liar and we imply that there was no point making the provision of the blood and that it was a useless, needless idea. This is another aspect to the Grace of God.
* Should a believer think that he can continue to commit sins while ‘repenting’ of it, he or she is walking in darkness and cannot have fellowship with the father. Once a believer disobeys wilfully, (this is possible because at salvation, Christ did not remove our free will. It is why a saved believer can still choose to sin), he grieves the Holy Spirit. That is why a correct child of God cannot feel okay in such state. His state is comparable to a system formally in an ideal state but is now disturbed. That sin has to be restituted for that disturbed state to go back to normal. Failure to do so, grieves the Holy Spirit. When one continues this way, gentle as the Holy Spirit is, He is being *quieted (permit my lack of words, sent into redundancy, relegated)*. My spirit shall no longer strive with man… (Gen.6:3a). This Holy Spirit is the seal of Promise in us, our Guidance on this journey in a strange land, more than our compass. He is everything to the believer. Once He is not there for you, you are finished. So the believer is strongly warned…**DO NOT GRIEVE THE HOLY SPIRIT… (Eph.4:30).**He is the source of strength and defence in a believer. Such a believer can be said to be ‘co-living’ with the Holy Spirit, (may be In the initial stage )just as a disagreeing couple can be living together and even sleeping together on the same bed but may not be in talking terms. This state is actually very dangerous for a believer for instance it can open door for opportunistic infections to set in(since the source of strength has been ‘disarmed’).An example of such opportunist is the spirit of doubt that gradually invades and gets one to begin to doubt issues about the fundamentals of the faith. At this phase, the believer is almost gone ,if not totally gone.Heb.3:1-3.The extent to which this state in a believer cause the believer to lose his salvation is not covered by doctrine but Scripture tells us that it does happen.
* **Kenneth E. Hagin shared this in Seven Fundamental Principles for Spiritual Growth**

STEP ONE: Learn to forget.

Forget even the blessings of God that are behind, because if you live on past blessings, then you are living on stale manna. If you're satisfied with what happened in the past, you are not reaching toward the future…..There is another side of "learning to forget" that is important: You must learn to forget your past mistakes, failures, and sins. As long as Satan can keep them before you, he holds you in a position where you will not develop spiritually and your prayers and faith will not work. All of us have failed. We're not proud of it. We're not advertising it. All of us have failed more often than we would like to admit. As you grow spiritually and then look back at the times you thought you were doing well, you will discover you weren't doing as well as you thought. I found this out about pastoring. As I left a church, often I thought I had done a good job; in some cases, even a superb job. But a year or two later, with a little more growth and maturity, I almost hid my fac e so people wouldn't see me blushing, I was so embarrassed. I found out I had come up short and had even sinned when I didn't realize it. We confess those sins we know about, but sins we don't know about.' or are ignorant about are perpetually cleansed by the blood of Jesus.

ISAIAH 43:25

25 I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.

The writer of the Book of Hebrews makes a similar statement in the eighth chapter: "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more" (v.. 12).

That's the cure for sin-consciousness—the Word of God. Halle-lujah, He's forgotten it! No wonder the Bible says, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:16).

**John wrote First John to the Church, not to the world**. He said, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

Thank God for that! That doesn't belong to the sinner. That's not a confession the sinner has to make. (A sinner couldn't remember everything he has done wrong, because his whole life is wrong.) No, John wrote that to Christians.

When we put these Scriptures together, they say **that when we confess our sins, He not only cleanses us from all unrighteousness and forgives us, but He will not remember our sins. He does not want us to sin, but if we do, we have an Advocate—a lawyer—with the Father to plead our case**:

1 JOHN 2:1,2

1My little children, these things write unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins \* the whole world.

Here, John is talking **about "our sins" as well as the sins of "the whole world,"** and he is saying that Jesus is the atonement for all of them.

Much of the teaching we have in the church world as a whole doesn't really come from the Bible; it comes from **old German theology**. **It is not scripturally (or New Testament) correct**. For example, the church world is divided into **Calvinists and Armenians**. Baptists, Presbyterians, and others take the Calvinist position. On the other side are the Methodists, Pentecostals, Holiness, and other groups. But **neither side is New Testament correct**.

In **Old School Calvinism** they used to teach (and some still hold to it), **"What is to be, will be."** Baptists used to preach that. Then Calvinism got watered down into what we call **New School Calvinism** **or eternal security ("Once saved always saved").**

Armenian theology says, "If you 'get up on the wrong side of the bed' and speak sharply to your wife, you're lost and you've got to get saved all over again." Well, of course, that's not true, either.

The truth of the matter is that if it were not for the Scriptures I just presented, none of us would be saved. None of us is perfect. All of us have had to take advantage of First John 1:9 or First John 2:1, 2 for forgiveness. But none of us wanted to do wrong.

**If a fellow wants to do wrong in his heart (not his flesh)—and makes a practice of doing wrong—he never really was born again. He does not have the nature of God in his spirit. If he had been born again, he would want to do right.**

Forget what the Lord has forgotten. Forget what is behind. If you think about it, it will hinder your spiritual progress. It will keep your faith and prayers from working. Often it will keep you from receiving healing for your body.

* The blood of Jesus is the powerful spiritual agent which scrubs us clean from sin as we admit, confess and repent (or turn away from) our sins. This cleansing power of Christ’s blood is accessed (or harnessed) through faith (which is believing and acting on the finished work of Christ) James 2:22,24. Jesus removes the guilt and penalty of sin, We need to thoroughly cleanse our lives with the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ; consciously ridding ourselves of all sin **Heb. 9:14** *how much more shall the blood of Christ (who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God) purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*
* **An attempt to begin to divide an epistle into fragments** (as it has been done for 1st John) saying that as aspect(Chapter 1 )was written to genotics while the other (of the same epistle!) was written to believers , is **an attempt to downplay the necessity of confessing ones sin and repentance**. You hear stuffs like, “you don’t need to confess any sin. Christ has paid it all; even for the sins you have not committed”. See also James 4:.Methods is being devised from the kingdom of darkness to manipulate the scriptures to suit once saved forever saved. In the same vein it has been taught that all that all that Jesus taught, commanded, instructed, before his death and resurrection are not for the new testament believer, this is not far- fetched also because **once Jesus’ teachings are validated, it will be obvious that they are in outright opposite to what this doctrine upholds**. Again Jesus’ stay here on earth to show us the way of the kingdom can never be a waste. **He by himself instructed the disciples after his resurrection to teach all men (believers) to do and observe according to all that he had commanded** them.
* Jesus taught that the way to the kingdom of Heaven is narrow and strait and that only a few are treading the path.Mat.7:but the doctrine portrays many are treading the path, as long as one has made confession for Jesus, he or she is forever saved.
* Jesus taught that there is a need to endure to the end as it is only those who endure to the end who will be saved. The doctrine says once you are saved you are forever saved
* Jesus clearly declared that if any man was willing to follow Him, He will need to deny Himself on a daily basis, carry the cross that follows, and follow him. Jesus did not fail to declare this to the rich young ruler even though scriptures say He loved him. Self-denial and cross-bearing are necessary victuals for anyone who is ready to follow Christ and they are fundamental part of the Gospels. Jesus also says it is a matter of choice .Take these away from the gospel, then it is an incomplete Gospel. If it is an incomplete Gospel, then it is no Gospel at all. For His death signifies the deadness of a believer to the passions and lust of this world (Gal.5:24) and His resurrection; rising unto newness of life, as explained by Paul the Apostle in Rom.8:1-End.

Far be it that the author and finisher of our faith be doubted**. Let God be true and let men remain liars.** If it were not to be for the seal upon the scriptures which God in His wisdom has inspired (Rev.22:18&19), pervert men would have opted to removing certain portions of the scriptures away and perhaps adding to some. Consider the 1st Epistle by John and observe the following:

* Scriptures in the original manuscript was written in a continuum in paragraphs just like every other letter that we write and was later graduated into chapters and verses for easy referencing. So it could not have been reasonable for a man to write in the same epistle and say that a portion should be read by unbelievers and the other to by believers.
* Consider the epistle and you will see the flow between chapter 1 and 2.These things I write to you that that you sin not. What things? The afore discussion that if truly they (believer) want to have fellowship with the father, they cannot continue to walk in darkness (that they sin not).However, if any one sins…
* Any doctrine/message that condoles or simplifies or trivializes sin (that does not make a big issue out of); does not encourage brokenness by the conviction of the Holy Spirit through the conscience; one that emboldens the conscience in iniquity will make a shipwreck of one’s faith. The once saved forever saved doctrine holds that one cannot lose ones salvation by committing sin but it, in itself can cause a man to lose his salvation as we have studied.2Tim.2: Anyone that trivializes sin is antichrist. God cannot and can never behold iniquity. The Grace of God does not reduce His standard of Holiness nor does it condole sins (Heb.12:14, 2Tim.2,) rather it provides a solution to it. Mat1:21
* It is the end time syndrome and has already been prophesied. So unfortunate that this doctrine that was ill thought of in the time past is now gaining tolerance. It all points to a simple truth; the end is hear.**2Tim 4:1-5**
* **John 10:27-29**: “My sheep **hear My voice**, and I know them, and **they follow Me**; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and **no one will snatch them out of My hand**. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. When considering the promise in these verses, we must remember that there are **some conditions mentioned** here for the promise to be fulfilled: they hear His voice and follow Him. Most Christians do not look at the conditions! Thus they believe a false teaching. The promise of eternal security is given here ONLY to those who follow Jesus until the end. You cannot encash a cheque if it is not in your name; and you cannot claim a promise if you do not fulfil the conditions.
* One of the last promises in the epistles is that the Lord *“is* ***ABLE to keep us from falling****”* **(**[**Jude 24**](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Jude%2024)**)*.*** This is true - the Lord is certainly *able* to keep us from falling. But if we do *not* yield ourselves *completely* to Him, He will *not* be able to keep us from falling - for He never forces His will on anyone. **He is able to do this** when you keep yourself within the confinement of God’s love. (Earlier verse, Jud.21).
* **As believers, our relationship with Christ is compared to that of a betrothed virgin, awaiting her wedding** *(*[**2 Cor.11:2**](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/2%20Cor.11.2)**;** [**Rev.19:7**](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Rev.19.7)**, Mat.25:1-13***).* In the next verse **(**[**2 Cor.11:3**](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/2%20Cor.11.3)*),* Paul says that he fears that Satan will deceive us and draw us away from simple devotion to Christ, even as Satan deceived Eve. Eve was in paradise and was deceived by Satan – and was driven out of paradise by God. Today, we who are *“engaged”* to Christ are headed for paradise. But if we allow Satan to deceive us, we will never enter paradise. If the bride plays the harlot with the world and with sin, her Bridegroom will to marry her. If you love the Lord, you will keep yourself pure for Him **(1Jhn.3:1-3)**, even when you find other believers around you playing the harlot with the world and with sin. Jesus warned us that in the last days, *"****most people's love will grow cold****.*(**This sentence obviously refers to believers for they are the only ones who *love* the Lord**). *But the one who endures to the end will be saved."* **(**[**Matt.24:11-13**](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Matt.24.11-13)**).** If you are following Jesus, you certainly have eternal security. He is truly the author of Eternal salvation. But if you are not following Him, then you are deceiving yourself if you believe that you are eternally secure

**Conclusion**: The conscience in a believer is more than a moral arbiter; it is the voice of the Holy Spirit .Keeping a good conscience is important to a believer. Christians can ignore their conscience, 'putting it away', and thus ending up in moral disaster so that they make a shipwreck of their faith. The conscience can be hijacked by the 'doctrines of demons' and become seared and unresponsive to moral truth and the convictions of the Holy Spirit. The conscience can become defiled and impure so that every thought and every value is disgusting. This leads to hypocrisy and deception and ultimately shipwreck of the faith as the word of God has shown us. The conscience can become defiled and impure so that every thought and every value is disgusting. True intimacy with God and man comes about as we choose to live in the Light!

These are matters of extreme importance, because they affect our eternal destiny. So we cannot afford to blindly believe what men teach us and thus be deceived. We must believe the word of God, which is the only light we have in this dark world. **Whatever interpretation you may put on any other verse in the New Testament, it cannot cancel out the truths stated clearly in the above verses**. Wrong doctrines as it has been prophesied will unfortunately sweep some off but you have the responsibility to take heed to yourself. He that hath an ear let him hear.

Acknowledgement: The following materials have been of help for this study:

1. Eternal Security – For All Who Follow Jesus - by Zac Poonen
2. Seven Fundamental Principles for Spiritual Growth-by Kenneth E. Hagin
3. The Awakening of the Conscience -by John Edmiston