

## All Fall Short

by Tricia Berg

*For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. They are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Romans 3:23-24*

I can't help but point out in these dangerous days of "mega-church madness" that even though we don't do anything to save ourselves—even our faith is a GIFT (Eph. 2:8-9, but ALSO see Eph. 2:10), that does not mean that God has changed His mind and sin is now acceptable to Him. Ask Ananias and Sapphira if God didn't "see" their sin when He looked at them, but only the righteousness of Christ. (Acts 5) Their sin was lying to the Holy Spirit—no one forced them to donate anything, but they wanted the "credit" from the other disciples for giving all of the proceeds from their land while only giving part of it. (Peter wasn't "mean" to treat them as he did—he was only speaking forth what God said through His Spirit. God struck them—they weren't killed by Peter.)

God DOES see and care about the behavior and even thoughts and words of believers, whom He adopts as His own beloved children. (John 14:21, Rom. 8:27, Rev. 2:21-23) How many of us would want to adopt a child that we knew in advance that no matter how much love or discipline we gave them, they would NEVER obey us, and never show us love in return? What a sad thought that we expect GOD to delight in people who delight in SIN.

*Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. **In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.** And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? **"My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives."** It is for discipline that you have to endure. **God is treating you as sons.** For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left **without** discipline, in which all have participated, then you are **illegitimate** children and not sons. Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. **For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.** Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that*

*what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed. Strive for peace with everyone, and for the **holiness without which no one will see the Lord**. See to it that no one **fails to obtain the grace of God**; that no "root of bitterness" springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become **defiled**; that no one is **sexually immoral or unholy** like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal. For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears. Hebrews 12:3-17*

That we are "justified" means that He saved us from the penalty of death for our sins. He redeemed and purchased us with His blood. (Acts 20:28, Rom. 3:25, Eph. 1:7, Col. 1:19-23, 1John 1:7, Rev. 5:9, Heb. 9:22) When we received Him as our Savior and Lord, that was the beginning of our walk with Christ on the narrow path—BOTH the path and the journey end when we see Him face to face. (Matt. 7:13-14, Rom. 6:4) IF He lives IN us, there will be continual CHANGE (sometimes subtle and sometimes dramatic) from the inside out. (Rom. 12:1-2, Rom. 8:5-14, 2Pet. 1:5-12, Philip. 2:12-16) We are human works in progress—we slip and stumble, but we get back up again instead of living in the gutter, practicing evil instead of good. (Philip. 3:17-21, John 8:31-34, Col. 3:3-11, 1Thess. 5:22, 1Pet. 1:14-19, Jer. 4:22)

The Bible warns about false teachers in the end times telling people with itching ears what they like to hear—that they can have one foot in the world and one in heaven. They teach that grace is a license to satisfy the lusts of the flesh. People who insist that God does not expect repentance are deceived and deceiving. (2Tim. 3, Jude 1, Gal. 5:13-25, Rom. 13:11-14, Rom. 16:17-19, Luke 24:47) Some make up new rules, along with their own ways to make penance for breaking them—wanting to keep Jesus an "obedient child" forever. (1Tim. 4, Matt. 23:9, Mark 3:31-35, Luke 11:27-28, 2Cor. 5:16, Heb. 1, Col. 2:8-20, Heb. 9:25-28) False prophets have bad fruit, but the true children of God have His Spirit within them bearing good fruit. (Matt. 7:15-27, John 15:6, Heb. 6:4-12, Eph. 5:1-27, Matt. 18:1-10) Read your Bible so that you can recognize counterfeit teachings! (John 5:39-44, 1Tim. 4:11-16, 2Tim. 2:14-16, 1Cor. 1:10-13, 2Cor. 11:1-4, Gal. 1:6-9) It is "another gospel" if it relies on anything other than the Bible for authority, whether to add "rules" or to take them away (and this also applies to discounting or avoiding various sections of the Bible). (Rev. 22:18-19)

*I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who **cause divisions** and create obstacles **contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught**; avoid them. For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but **their own appetites**, and **by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of***

**the naive.** For your obedience is known to all, so that I rejoice over you, but I want you to be **wise as to what is good and innocent as to what is evil.** The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Romans 16:17-20

**If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness, he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions, and constant friction among people who are **depraved in mind and deprived of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain.** But godliness with contentment is great gain, for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many **senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction.** For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that **some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.** But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. **Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession** in the presence of many witnesses. 1 Timothy 6:3-12**

There is forgiveness and cleansing every single time we commit any sin and come to Jesus with it in repentance. (1John 1:5-2:6, 1John 3:4-10) Why would the apostles write under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that we should take care not to walk in such a way that He will be angry with us when He returns if that is an impossibility? (Heb. 10:39, 1John 2:28-29, 1Pet. 4:1-5, 1Pet. 4:17-19, Ezek. 9:4-11, Mal. 3:13-4:3) If He doesn't care whether or not we obey Him, then why all of the exhortations to do so? (For those who say much of this only applies to Israel, don't forget about the "one new man" and how we are "grafted in" to Israel. God doesn't hate their sin and love ours. (Eph. 2:14-15, Rom. 11) This doesn't mean we should live in fear every moment that God will disinherit us—it means that IF we LOVE Him, we will seek to please Him by OBEYING Him. (John 14, John 15, 1Cor. 2:9-10, Jam. 1:12-16, 1John 4:16-5:3) If we KNOW Him, then we'll accept that His words and promises are all true and that we can trust Him.

There are no additional "hoops" for believers to "jump through" to receive forgiveness than confessing (to God or another believer) and repenting, but if we expect to enter Jesus' glorious kingdom, then we won't make a habit of

soiling the pristine white garment He gave us and carelessly leaving it that way. (Rev. 3:4, Rev. 21:7-8, Rev. 22:14-15, 2Pet. 2, esp. v. 22) Jesus said the disciples were clean because of the Word (John 15:3, John 6:63), but they still needed to have their feet washed to be PART of Him. (John 13:1-18, esp. v. 8) Jesus cleansed the temple at the beginning of His earthly ministry, but He still needed to cleanse it again at the end. (John 2:13-17, Matt. 21:12-13) WE are the temple now. (1Cor. 3:16-17, Heb. 3:5-6, Matt. 13:41-43)

His ONE perfect sacrifice FINISHED the work, but each individual is not saved by it until they believe. (Heb. 9:25-28) His blood covers the sins of those abiding IN Him by wearing the garment He gave them, and allowing Him to wash them (Matt. 22:11-14, Mark 14:50-52, Rev. 16:15, Eph. 5:25-27, Rev. 19:7-8, Rev. 19:11-16, 1John 1:6-10). Don't forget Jesus is our High Priest. (Heb. 7) In the Old Covenant, God said no one should come before Him empty-handed. (Ex. 23:15) In the New Covenant, we bring Him a LIVING sacrifice of ourselves. (Rom. 12:1, John 4:23, John 8:31-36)

*As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, **you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.** For it stands in Scripture: "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame." So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone," and "A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense." They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do. But **you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.** 1 Peter 2:4-12*

If we are offended by the idea that repentance is expected of believers (of people who ARE SAVED, not as a way to save ourselves), we need to ask ourselves why? Did we get this from the Bible as a whole or from select snippets? Did we trust someone who is raking in a fortune and getting famous by tickling the ears of sinners who love the world? (2Tim. 4:1-5, John 12:25, 1John 2:15-17, Jam. 4:4, 1Thess. 2:3-12, Jude 1:16-19) Do we want to find

a way to excuse our sin rather than overcoming it? Are we ashamed of the parts of Jesus' message that the unsaved world doesn't like to hear and it's easier to just go along than rock the boat? (Mark 8:38, Matt. 5:10-19, 2Tim. 3:12-17)

God has offered the previously LOST Gentiles the opportunity to become His children by believing in His Son. (1Pet. 2:9-12, Rom. 11:11, Eph. 3:6, Col. 1:27-29) We Gentile (non-Jewish, sometimes referred to as "Greek") believers and Jews in this age who have not been "blinded" to the gospel (Rom. 11:25, Eph. 2:11-22) are purified by the blood of Jesus and zealous for good works. (Eph. 5:22-33, Col. 1:9-12, Heb. 13:16, Gal. 6:9-10, Titus 3:8, 3:14) We are supposed to understand what our purification cost Jesus and seek to remain holy with the help of His Spirit. (1Pet. 1:14-19) We are to produce fruit of that same Spirit and walk as He commanded, because He is both Savior AND Lord. (Matt. 3:10, Matt. 21:43, John 15:1-10, 2Tim. 2:19-26, Gal. 6:7-10)

*For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to **renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age**, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people **for his own possession who are zealous for good works**. Declare these things; exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you. Titus 2:11-15*

So the point is not to scare people who haven't done anything wrong (i.e. deliberately sinning and refusing to repent - Heb. 10:24-39, John 5:14, 1Cor. 15:33-34, 2Cor. 12:20-13:2), but to remind us all to stay awake and be ready when He returns. (1Thess. 5:5-11, Matt. 24:42-25:30, Rev. 16:15) What does it mean to keep watch? (Luke 21:34-36) The Bible gives us MUCH guidance, both a simplification to show how uncomplicated it is, and specific, practical examples. It's not a set of rules, but a way of life. (Acts 2:42-47, Acts 22:4-5, John 13:34-35, John 15:12-21, Eph. 4:11-32) If we actually LOVE God and WANT to please Him, in gratitude for the precious GIFT of our salvation, we will be thankful for His instructions and heed them. He hasn't left us on our own to guess what He desires of us. We can be GLAD that not only has He done this for us by having His will for us recorded and preserved, but His Spirit indwells us—we are TEMPLES of our great and glorious God—WOW!!! (John 14:15-17, Rom. 8:9-11, 1Cor. 3:16-17, 1John 3:24, 1John 4:13, Rom. 8:13-17) He empowers us to overcome this sick, dying world. What a miracle! I'm in awe of Him, aren't you? Let's show it by responding appropriately to all that He is and has done so that we'll be prepared for what He's going to do next. Amen?

For our mutual edification and reminder, I've compiled many of the Bible's guidelines for God's people to follow. I'm sure it's not complete, but it's a good start for each of us to use in examining our own lives for fruits of the Spirit, of true faith. (2Cor. 13:5) (These are not in particular order except for the first couple on the "do" list.) God knows we're weak and we all slip. He offers His strength and forgiveness, but warns us not to let sin harden our hearts against Him or there may come a day when we no longer hear His voice prompting us to return to Him. (Rom. 1:18-32, Heb. 3:7-13, Heb. 12:14-28, 1Thess. 5:19, Eph. 4:30) None of us knows when our last day on earth will come. Don't play games with God and with your eternal soul!

He keeps us safe from external dangers that would try to tear us from Him, but He gives us free will to remain in His love and abide in Jesus. (John 6:39, 10:27-30, Romans 8:35-39, 2Cor. 4:7-11, 16-18) If we sincerely desire to please God and hold fast to Him, we WILL receive the help we need from Him. (Rom. 14:4, Heb. 4:12-16) This is one of the reasons for continuing to gather together, so that we can help bear one another's burdens, hold one another accountable and watch out for each other. (Gal. 6:2) The adversary is seeking to destroy, but we put on the armor of faith and resist him so that he'll flee. (Eph. 6:11-20, Jam. 4:7-10) Part of that armor is SUBMITTING to God and accepting His help when we face temptation. He won't allow us to be tempted beyond our endurance.

*We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. **We must not put Christ to the test**, as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents, **nor grumble**, as some of them did and were destroyed by the Destroyer. Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come. Therefore **let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it. Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.** I speak as to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. Consider the people of Israel: are not those who eat the sacrifices participants in the altar? What do I imply then? That food offered to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons. **You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. Shall we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he? "All things are lawful," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful," but not all things build up.** 1 Corinthians 10:8-23*

I'm sure there must be many lists like this online of behaviors for the children of God to practice and those that should be avoided, but I find it more helpful to study it for myself. So now having done so, I will share my efforts with you:

Please note, this outline has been updated and expanded with examples of behaviors that contrast the desired ones. See my article "Our Conduct" [here](#).

DO:

(a/k/a the "royal law" and "law of liberty," - these are the "works" James speaks of that give evidence to the existence of SAVING faith as opposed to empty words of belief which are denied by failing to follow up on them. Jam. 1:22-27, Jam. 2:8, 2:14-26, Rom. 13:8-10, Titus 1:16)

- love God first, most, best, highest (Matt. 22:34-40, Mark 12:28-30, Luke 10:25-28, Matt. 10:37-39, Mark 12:28-34, Eph. 6:24) **instead of** putting ourselves first, pursuing wealth, things, the esteem of others and pleasure, idolizing celebrities, siding with loved ones against God, disobeying His instructions, disregarding what pleases Him. (2Cor. 5:9-10, 2Cor. 5:14-15, 2Tim. 2:4, 1Pet. 4:1-7)
- love our neighbor as ourselves and our brothers in the Lord (Matt. 22:34-40, Luke 10:29-37, Rom. 13:8-10, 1John 2:7-11, 1John 3:16-18, 1John 4:7-21, 1Pet. 4:7-9, Col. 3:12-14, Rom. 12:10, 1Cor. 13:4-7, 13, 2Cor. 13:11-12, Gal. 5:13-25, 1Thess. 4:9-12, 2Thess. 1:3, Eph. 4:32, Rom. 13:8-10, Rom. 15:7, Matt. 25:31-46, Heb. 13:1-3, 3John 1:9-10, 1Tim. 5:10) **instead of** putting ourselves first, caring only for our immediate family and friends but not sharing with the poor. (See "feed and clothe the needy.") (Rom. 15:1-2, 1Pet. 4:8-11)
- love even our enemies (Matt. 5:38-48, Luke 6:32-36, Rom. 12:20) **instead of** holding grudges and getting even (see "revenge" below). We are not responsible for how people treat us, but we ARE responsible for how we react to it. Our behavior reflects on our Father in heaven. (Matt. 5:16, 1Pet. 1:41-19, Lev. 19:16)
- share the gospel, make disciples (not "believers" - God does that) (Matt. 28:19-20, Rev. 22:17, Rom. 10:14-15, 1Cor. 1:17-31, 1Cor. 9:16-17, 1Cor. 15, 2Cor. 8:16-23, 2Cor. 10:15-18, 2Cor. 11:1-11, Gal. 1:6-12, Eph. 2-3, Phil. 1:15-18, 1Thess. 2, 1Tim. 5:17-18, 2Tim. 2:1-9, 2Tim. 4:1-5, Heb. 4, Jam. 1:21-27, Jam. 2:14-26, 1Pet. 1) **instead of** thinking "our job here is done" when we have presented the Gospel and a person has received it. If they REJECT the Gospel, THEN we move on (but pray for God to soften their heart). If they accept, they are now our brothers in the Lord, whom we help

with their needs, including how to follow Christ on the narrow road. The process of discipleship BEGINS at that point. (John 13:35, Matt. 7:13-14)

- speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15-32) with boldness, but also gentleness **instead of** telling people what they want to hear in order to seem “nice” and avoid being persecuted (which is salt that has lost its saltiness, or a lampstand hidden), or the opposite, beating people over the head with the Bible so that we cast stumbling blocks before them—possibly adding requirements that God did not specify, according to OUR preferences instead of the Bible. (2Tim. 4:1-4, Matt. 5:13-16, Acts 4:39-31, Eph. 6:18-20, Phil. 1:12-21, Matt. 10:26-33, Acts 5:29, Gal. 1:10, Phil. 1:27-30, 1Cor. 13:1-3, Acts 15:10, 15:19-20, Matt. 23:1-4) It’s only AFTER we are saved that God enables us to obey Him. (John 14:15-26, Titus 2:11-15, Phil. 2:12-16, Jam. 1:21)
- be baptized as an act of obedience to the command for believers **instead of** relying on infant “baptism” as “proof” that one is a “child of God.” It is the baptism of the Holy Spirit of the believer that saves and seals for redemption. (John 6:63, 2Cor. 1:21-22, Eph. 1:13-14, Eph. 4:30) The Bible does NOT say “be baptized so that you may believe.” We consciously accept the free gift of salvation and then obey Jesus’ command to be baptized in water, which is a joyful, memorable experience. (Matt. 28:19-20) We must be self-aware enough to understand what sin and its consequences are (circumcising our heart - Rom. 2:29), and to intend to turn from our unbelief and other sins. (Rom. 6) Those who are mentally incapable of understanding are not accountable for their sins. The penalty of death is for the actual transgressions, not for being born with the sinful nature. (Isa. 7:15-16, Rom. 5:12-13, Rom. 7:9)

*Now when they heard this **they were cut to the heart**, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” And Peter said to them, “**Repent and be baptized** every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your **sins**, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children [this refers to relationship, not age] and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.” And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation.” So **those who received his word were baptized**, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. Acts 2:37-41*

- observe the Lord's Supper in remembrance of Him, proclaiming His death and resurrection until He returns (Luke 22:14-20, 1Cor. 11:23-34, John 6:60-63) **instead of** neglecting to gather together (Heb. 10:24-25), instead

of thinking that Jesus is being sacrificed repeatedly in the bread and wine. (Heb. 9:24-28)

- study and KNOW the Bible—feed on the Word (Rom. 10:17, Col. 3:16, 1Tim. 1:3-11, 4:11-16, 2Tim. 2:14-19, 3:14-17, Eph. 4:11-16, Phil. 1:9-11, Col. 1:9-10, Heb. 5:11-14, Rom. 16:17-20, Titus 1:9-11, 2:1, 2John 1:9-11, 1Cor. 14:26, Psa. 119:105, Amos 8:11-12, Isa. 29:11-16) **instead of** wasting time consuming the worthless media this world has to offer, putting everything else before the word of God in priority so that there is “no time” left, or thinking we “know it all already” or that it’s “boring;” **instead of** just taking the word of others as to what it says, or going along with the flow—“blissfully unaware” that the “flow” is going AGAINST God. (Acts 17:11, Acts 20:29-31, 2Pet. 3:14-18, Matt. 7:13)
- pray TO GOD continually, from the heart for the genuine needs of ourselves and others (Heb. 1, Matt. 5:44, 9:37-38, Luke 18:1-8, 22:40, Rom. 8:26-27, Rom. 12:12, 2Cor. 1:11, Eph. 1:16, 6:16-20, Phil. 1:19, 4:4-9, Philem. 1:4-6, Col. 1:9-10, Col. 4:2-6, 1Thess. 5:16-18, 5:25, 2Thess. 1:11-12, 2Thess. 3:1-5, 2Tim. 2:1-4, 2:8, 2Tim. 1:3, Heb. 13:18-19, Jam. 5:13-20, 1John 5:16-17, Jude 1:20-21) **instead of** forgetting to pray at all, praying only when we need something, possibly only for ourselves, or praying “canned” prayers instead of using our own words. (Matt. 6:5-8, Mark 7:6-9)
- give thanks in all things (Rom. 14:6, 1Cor. 10:16, 2Cor. 2:14, 2Cor. 4:15, Eph. 1:16, 5:4, 5:20, Phil. 4:6, Col. 1:11-12, Col. 2:6-7, Col. 3:15-17, 1Thess. 5:16-18, 2Thess. 1:3, 2Thess. 2:13, 1Tim. 2:1-4, 2Tim. 1:3, Phil. 1:4-7, Heb. 13:15) **instead of** forgetting to be thankful at all (maybe even considering God’s answer to our prayers as a “coincidence”), or only being thankful IF we get our way.
- forgive (Matt. 6:14-15, Mark 11:25, Luke 6:37-38, Luke 7:36-50, Luke 17:3-4, John 20:23, 2Cor. 2:6-11, Eph. 4:32, Col. 3:12-13) **instead of** holding grudges, getting even (see “revenge” below), keeping lists of wrongs others have done against us (1Cor. 13:4-7), dwelling on the past instead of moving on. (Phil. 3:13-21)
- comfort one another (2Cor. 1:3-7, Rom. 12:15, Heb. 13:3, 10:32-34, Matt. 25:34-40, 1Cor. 12:26, Philem. 1:7) **instead of** being only concerned about our own problems. (Rom. 12:13, Heb. 13:2, 1Pet. 4:9)
- be humble (Matt. 11:29, 18:4, Matt. 23:5-12, Luke 14:7-11, Luke 18:9-14, Rom. 12:3, 12:16, Eph. 4:1-3, 5:21, Col. 3:12-13, Jam. 4:6-10, 1Pet. 3:8, 1Pet. 5:5-6) **instead of** exalting and promoting ourselves, being PROUD (1Cor. 1:25-31, 2Cor. 10:17, Gal. 6:14, 2Tim. 3:2-5), thinking we’re better than others for whatever reason. (Gal. 6:3-5)

- gather together with believers, exhorting and encouraging one another (Heb. 10:24-25, 1Cor. 14:26) **instead of** staying away from gatherings of believers because they're imperfect (like us) or due to past hurts and offenses, etc. (False teachings/practices are valid reasons to leave a fellowship. The gathering of believers does NOT have to be in the form of a 501(c)(3) corporation, and probably shouldn't be, in a perfect world.)
- help feed and clothe the needy (Luke 12:32-34, 14:12-14, Mark 12:41-44, Rom. 12:13, Eph. 4:28, 1Tim. 6:17-19, Jam. 2:15-16, 1John 3:17-18) **instead of** being selfish and uncaring. Our blessings are from God and we are meant to share them for His glory (Jam. 1:17). Covetousness ( or envy or greed) is actually a form of idolatry, since such a person is not content with what God has given them, but wants to be in charge of their own "blessings." (Eph 5:5, Col. 3:5, Phil. 4:11-12, 1Tim. 6:6-12, 1Cor. 5:11, 1Cor. 6:9, Gal. 5:19-21)
- defend widows and orphans, seek justice (Jam. 1:27) **instead of** oppressing them or denying them justice, or looking the other way when others do so. (Isa. 1:12-20, Jer. 22:3, Luke 10:29-37)
- shine our light by doing good works (Matt. 5:13-16, Titus 2:14, 3:8, 3:14, Col. 1:9-12, Heb. 13:16, 2Tim. 2:20-21, John 15:8, Gal. 6:9-10) **instead of** hiding our light under a bushel, instead of accusing others who actually want to do God's will of being "self-righteous" because they make us feel guilty for indulging ourselves and blending in with the world. (Matt. 7:21-29)
- sing hymns and spiritual songs (Eph. 5:19, 1Cor. 14:26, Col. 3:16) **instead of** singing songs with inappropriate lyrics, or even songs that have been "cleaned up" or SEEM "clean," but were not originally made to honor the one true God—but perhaps a false god, whether money, fame or some other "idol," including false religions (an example would be the popular song "My Sweet Lord" by George Harrison, with Hindu Hare Krishna lyrics at the end). (Eph. 4:29, 5:4, Col. 3:8, Heb. 13:15) We believers are the Church 24/7/365.25, not merely a small portion of one day a week. His Spirit in us leads us to desire to know and to do His will. (Phil. 2:12-16, Rom. 12:1-2)
- exercise self-control, including over our bodies, words and attitudes (1Cor. 9:24-27, 1Cor. 6:12-20, 2Cor. 12:20, 1Pet. 4:7, Eph. 4:26-27, 31, Gal. 5:16-25, 1Thess. 4:1-8, Titus 2:1-6, 2:11-15, 1Tim. 2:8, 1Tim. 3:1-13, 2Tim. 1:7, Jam. 3:2, Matt. 15:18-20, 2Pet. 1:5-6) **instead of** having fits of temper, cursing and swearing, slandering and gossiping, lying, practicing sexual immorality of ANY kind, harboring ill will toward others, envying, coveting, plotting revenge, scheming, refusing to accept correction and repent, avoiding carrying our share of the work load, exerting undue control

over our fellow believers, rebelling against authority, etc. (See above paragraph and each of the topics mentioned in this comment.)

- remain faithful to our spouse until parted by death (except in cases of sexual immoral behavior by either party) (Matt. 19:3-9, Heb. 13:4, Mark 10:2-12, Eph. 5:22-33, Prov. 5:18-21, 1Cor. 6:9-20) **instead of** having affairs, seeking no-fault divorce because we aren't "in love" anymore/we "grew apart," or we don't like how our spouse is aging, we didn't "sign up" for anything except the good times, etc. (Matt. 5:27-32, Luke 16:18, Mal. 2:13-16, Mark 7:21-23)
- women submit to and respect their husbands (Eph. 5:22-24, 33, 1Pet. 3:5-6, Titus 2:4-5) **instead of** marching in women's rights rallies (sometimes with a docile husband in tow, often including the right to murder unborn babies and alter God's design and purpose for gender in the same rally), competing with them, going behind their backs, disparaging them to their friends and family (and even their own children), hounding them, arguing incessantly, etc. (Prov. 21:9, 25:24) A married couple is a team—the wife is to support her husband (and so she is called his "helper.") (Gen. 2:18, 1Cor. 11:8-9)
- men love and honor their wives (Eph. 5:25-33, 1Peter 3:7) **instead of** criticizing them for every little thing, demeaning them, complaining to their friends and family (and even their own children) about them, being unappreciative of their contribution to the household, being violent toward them, being overly controlling and demanding, looking at/lusting over other women, failing to provide for, protect and guide them in a godly way, etc. (Matt. 5:27-28, Jam. 1:19-21, Isa. 3:12)
- remain faithful to God forever, endure, persevere, hold fast (Matt. 10:22, 13:21, Matt. 24:12-13, Rom. 5:3-5, Rom. 13:8-10, Rom. 15:4-6, 1Cor. 15:1-2, 2Thess. 2:15, 2Tim. 1:13, 4:14, 6:18, 10:23, 1Tim. 6:11-12, 2Tim. 2:12, Heb. 10:32-39, Heb. 12:1-13, Jam. 1:2-4, 12, Jam. 5:10-11, 1Pet. 2:19-23, 2Pet. 1:5-11) **instead of** trampling the Son of God, profaning the blood of the covenant and outraging the Spirit of grace which sanctifies those who are saved. (Heb. 10:26-31) Instead of thinking that "a moment of [claimed] faith" saves a person, even if their heart is unchanged—even if they do not continue in that alleged faith to the end. (Col. 1:21-23, Heb. 3:5-6, Heb. 3:12-14, Rev. 2:7, 10-11, 25-28, Rev. 3:5, 11-12, 21, Rev. 17:14, Rev. 21:7-8)
- teach our children to respect God and follow Jesus (Luke 18:15-17, Prov. 22:6, Deut. 6:7, Matt. 18:5-10) **instead of** waiting until they are set in the wicked ways of the world and then "letting them decide" after the battle for their souls is already nearly lost (but thankfully, with God all things are

possible. Matt. 19:25-26) (Prov. 13:24, 22:15, 23:13-14, 29:15, 29:17, 30:11-17)

- support the work of the kingdom of God (Rom. 15:25-29, Rom. 12:13, 2Cor. 8:1-15, 24, 2Cor. 9, Gal. 6:6, Phil. 1:3-8, 4:10-19, Heb. 13:6, 1John 3:18, 1Tim. 6:17-19, Prov. 3:9-10) with the firstfruits of the increase we have received from God **instead of** putting everything else in life first and claiming not to have anything left to share, instead of being unappreciative of our blessings and failing to give credit where it is due. (Rom. 1:21, Eph. 5:4, 5:20, Col. 3:15-17, 1Thess. 5:18, Matt. 6:24, Psa. 37:25-26)
- use our God-given gifts of all kinds for His glory, which includes building up the Body of Christ (1Cor. 12-13, Eph. 4:1-16, 1Pet. 4:10-11, 1Cor. 3:10-17, 1Cor. 10:23-24, 14:12, 14:26, Jude 1:17-20) **instead of** being selfish with our blessings of all kinds or “burying our talent in the ground” or “hiding our mina in a kerchief” out of FEAR (whether of people or even of failing God—He knows what gifts He has provided us to work with). (Matt. 25:14-30, Luke 19:11-27)
- examine our own walk with God (2Cor. 13:5, Gal. 6:3-5) **instead of** worrying about everyone else except ourselves (Rom. 14), being envious of the “fun” that the unsaved have or of what they “get away with,” or thinking that God doesn’t “see” our sin. (Acts 5:1-11, Psa. 37, Psa. 73, Psa. 94:8-11, Zeph. 1:12, Mal. 2:17, Mal. 3:14-18, Isa. 29:15-16, 1Cor. 10:6-13, 1Pet. 4:17-18)
- obey authorities and honor those placed in such positions (Matt. 22:15-22, Rom. 13:1-7, 1Pet. 2:12-20, 1Tim. 3:1-13, 1Tim. 5:17-25, 1Pet. 5:1-5, Titus 1:5-16, Titus 2:1-10, Titus 3:1-2, Heb. 13:17, Jude 1:8) **instead of** being jealous, disrespecting, undermining or rebelling against them. (1Pet. 3:13, Rom. 13:3, Prov. 16:7)
- rebuke our brother in the Lord if they sin (but deal with our own sin first) (Matt. 18:15-35, Luke 17:3-4, Matt. 7:1-6, John 7:24, Rom. 2:1-10) **instead of** refusing to forgive (see above) or interpreting the golden rule as “you look the other way for me when I sin, and I will do the same for you when you sin.” Neither hypocrites nor unrepentant sinners glorify God. (John 15:8) It makes NO sense to the unsaved that Jesus had to die for OUR sin so that we could continue in it. (John 8:34-36, Rom. 6:15-23, 2Pet. 2:18-22)
- bring back sinners from straying (Gal. 6:1, Jam. 5:19-20, Jude 1:23) **instead of** reassuring them of their salvation, despite the lack of fruit of the Spirit. (Gal. 5:16-25, 1Cor. 5:5) Fruitless branches or branches with BAD

fruit will be cut off and burned. (John 15:1-10, Matt. 3:10-12, Matt. 12:33-35, Luke 6:42-49)

- correct opponents with gentleness so they may repent (2Tim. 2:23-26, Jude 1:22-23, 1Pet. 3:8-17, 2Pet. 3, Titus 3:1-2) **instead of** being a “gong,” telling them God hates both them and their sin, or just letting them go without even trying to reason with them. (1Cor. 13:1-7, John 3:16-18, Acts 14:1, 28:23-24, 2Pet. 3:15)
- trust God, rely on His strength (John 10:37-38, John 14:10-12, Col. 1:29, 1Cor. 1:4-9, 25:10, 2Cor. 12:9-10, Phil. 4:13, 1Thess. 3:11-13, Prov. 3:5-8, Mal. 4:1-3, Heb. 13:6) **instead of** putting our trust in ourselves or other people (including the government, courts and civil servants). (Psa. 147:10-11, Jam. 4:13-16, Prov. 21:31, 1Sam. 17:46-47, Psa. 26, Psa. 43:1)
- walk in the Spirit, live to God not ourselves (Eph. 6, 1Pet. 5:6-11) **instead of** indulging our old, sinful nature. (Col. 1:10, Col. 3:5-17, 1Cor. 10:6-13, 2Cor. 5:9, 5:14-15, Eph. 4:17-32, 2Tim. 2:4, 1John 3:21-24, 1Pet. 4:1-5, 1Pet. 1:13-19, 2Pet. 1:3-15)
- dress modestly (1Tim. 2:9-10) **instead of** dressing provocatively like the world around us, which does not know God or His ways, or by trying to impress others with our materialism (again, like the world). (1Pet. 3:3-4, Eph. 4:17-24)
- cover a woman’s head when praying or prophesying (1Cor. 11:1-16), **instead of** ignoring the passage altogether as a “custom” of that day (2Thess. 2:15) OR instead of covering ALL of the time despite the passage specifying certain times. It is my understanding through study that “because of the angels” and “symbol of authority” are indications that the prayer referred to is corporate (since we are to pray unceasingly in our spirit). (You should conduct your own study with the guidance of the Holy Spirit - 1John 2:27, John 14:26). The passage also includes a glimpse into God’s heart and intentions when it says that woman is the glory of man and her hair is her glory, and so it is a shame to cut or shave it off. The “symbol” is NOT the woman’s hair itself, nor is it her husband. It makes no sense to say that if a woman refuses to cover her hair then she should cut it off (in shame) if the covering IS her hair. The hierarchy of authority is the reason for the symbol, not the symbol itself (God->Jesus-> man->woman), just as the Father sent the Son, at whose request the Spirit was sent. (John 6:38-40, 10:25-30, 14:10, 14:16-21, 16:13-15, Eph. 5:22-33) This is not demeaning, but orderly; not of lesser value, but functioning as God wills.
- be content in all circumstances (Phil. 2:14-16, Phil. 4:4-13, 1Cor. 10:9-11, Jam. 5:7-9, Heb. 13:5, 17, 1Pet. 4:9, 1Tim. 6:6-10) **instead of**

complaining, coveting what others have, being greedy, trying to get what we "need" (i.e. want) by our own power. (Jam. 4:2-4, 1Cor. 10:9-10, Jude 1:16, Titus 2:7-8, Psa. 37:25-26, Prov. 30:7-9)

- resist temptation, pass tests and remain steadfast in trials of faith by trusting in God's mighty power and perfect ways (John 16:33, Matt. 19:29, Gal. 6:1, 1Cor. 9:24-27, 1Cor. 10:12-14, 1Pet. 1:6-9, 2Cor. 4:7-11, 16-18, Jam. 5:7-11, Rev. 21:7-8, Isa. 48:10, Luke 21:34-36, 1John 3:11-15, 2Thess. 2:4-12) **instead of** shrinking back due to fear of people or anything else. (Heb. 10:32-39, Acts 20:18-26, Rev. 2:10, Rev. 3:18-19)
- carry our cross, follow Jesus, fulfill our calling (Matt. 5:10-12, Matt. 10:37-42, Matt. 16:24-27, Mark 8:34-38, Luke 9:23-26, 1Tim. 6:12, 2Tim. 1:8-14, 2Tim. 2:1-10, 2Pet. 1:5-13, Phil. 1:7-30, Heb. 13:11-13, John 15:18-25, Heb. 10:26-31, 1John 1:5-2:6, 1John 2:28-29, 1John 3:1-10) **instead of** turning back, leaving the narrow, difficult road and traveling the broad, easy path. (Luke 9:57-62, Luke 13:23-30)

REFRAIN from:

- idolatry (loving or honoring anything or anyone above or in place of God) (Matt. 22:36-37, Mark 12:28-30, Luke 10:25-28, Matt. 10:37, Matt. 6:24, Luke 16:13, Rom. 1:28-32, 2Tim. 3:1-5, 1Cor. 5:9-13, 1Cor. 6:9-10, 1Cor. 10:19-22, Gal. 5:19-25, 1Pet. 4:1-5, Col. 3:5-10, Jam. 4:4-10, Rev. 21:8, 22:15, Isa. 42:8) **and instead**, be faithful, like He is in all of His ways. (Deu. 7:9-15, Psa. 100:5, Psa. 145:3, 1Chron. 16:34, 1Cor. 1:9, 2Thess. 3:3, 1John 1:9, Prov. 3:1-4)
- partaking of evil and deeds of darkness (Matt. 6:22-23, John 3:19-21, Rom. 1:28-32, 1Pet. 3:12, Psa. 37, Psa. 73, 2Tim. 3:1-5, 3John 1:11) **and instead**, abstain from and expose them. (1Thess. 5:22, Eph. 5:3-17, Rom. 12:9, 1Pet. 4:3-5, Luke 12:2-3)
- gossip (which might be true but is still forbidden), slander (untrue, spoken) and libel (untrue, written) (Jam. 1:26, Jam. 4:11-12, Matt. 15:18-20, Mark 7:21-23, Matt 15:19-20, Rom. 1:29-30, 2Cor. 12:20, Col. 3:5-10, Eph. 4:31, 1Tim. 3:11, 2Tim. 3:1-5, Titus 2:3-8, 3:1-3, 1Pet. 2:1, 3John 1:10) **and instead**, restrict our speech (and writings) to what edifies the hearer. (Matt. 12:36-37, Eph. 4:15-16, 29, 5:4, 2Cor. 6:7, Col. 4:6, 1Tim. 4:12)
- taking revenge (Matt. 5:38-41, Prov. 20:22, 2Tim. 3:1-5, Rom. 12:17-21, 2Thess. 2:5-10, Lev. 19:18) **and instead**, let God handle the defense of our character and take vengeance against anyone who harms us, but remain blameless in our own conduct at all times. (Prov. 20:22, Heb. 10:30-31, 1Pet. 3:15-16, 2Pet. 3:14-18, Titus 2:7-8, Phil. 2:14-16, Psa. 11, 18, 31,

37, 64, 91, 94, Psa. 7:1, 34:19, 43:1, 71:1-5, 72:4, 141:8-10, 142:5-7, 143:9-12, Luke 12:11-12, Prov. 18:10, Nah. 1:1-9, Zech. 3:11-15)

- suing brothers in the Lord (1Cor. 6:1-8) **and instead**, be willing to suffer financial loss rather than bring shame to the household of God. (Luke 12:13-34, 1Pet. 2:11-12, Col. 3:5, Titus 2:7-8, Phil. 2:14-16)
- foolishness, coarse language and crude jokes (Eph. 4:29-32, 5:4, Mark 7:21-23, Rom. 1:29-30, Col. 3:5-10, 2Tim. 3:1-5, Jam. 3:2-12), knowing that our behavior always reflects on our Father in heaven, **and instead**, glorify God through graceful speech, give Him praise, singing psalms, exhort one another to run the good race, fight the good fight, do good works, and remain steadfast. (Psa. 37:30, Eph. 5:18-21, Col. 3:12-17, Jam. 5:13, Phil. 4:8-9, Heb. 10:23-25, 32-39, 1Cor. 9:24-27, 1Tim. 6:11-12, Heb. 12, Jam. 1:12-16, 5:10-11, 2Pet. 1:5-15)
- sexual immorality (any sexual intimacy outside of marriage of a man and woman), which defiles God's temple because believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 13:11-14, 1Cor. 5:9-13, 1Cor. 6:9-20, 1Cor. 7:2, 1Cor. 10:8, Eph. 5:3-12, Mark 7:21-23, 2Cor. 12:21, Col. 3:5-10, 2Tim. 3:1-5, Gal. 5:19-25, 1Pet. 4:1-5, Matt. 15:18-20, Acts 15:20, 28-29, 1Thess. 4:1-8, 1Tim. 1:8-10, Heb. 12:14-17, Jude 1, Rev. 2:14, 2:20-23, Rev. 21:8, 22:15) **and instead**, restrict intimate relations to those between a man and woman who are married. (Matt. 19:4-6, Heb. 13:4, Gen. 2:24-25)
- drunkenness (Matt. 24:48-51, Rom. 13:13, Titus 2:3, Prov. 20:1, 1Cor. 6:9-10, 1Cor. 11:20-22, Gal. 5:19-25, 1Thess. 5:5-8, 1Tim. 3:3, 8, 1Pet. 4:1-5) **and instead**, be filled with the Holy Spirit. (Eph. 5:18-21, Acts 13:52)
- lying/dishonesty (Col. 3:5-10, 1Cor. 5:9-13, 1Cor. 6:9-10, Matt. 15:18-20, 1Tim. 1:8-10, Rev. 21:8, 22:15, Jam. 3:2-12) **and instead**, remain truthful at all times—how will people believe our testimony of God's goodness if we are liars? (Eph. 4:25, Prov. 30:8, Jam. 5:12, Lev. 19:11-12, Ezek. 39:7)
- sorcery, necromancy, acting as or consulting mediums or psychics (Gal. 5:16-25, Rev. 21:8, 22:15, Ex. 22:18, Lev. 19:26, 19:31, 20:6, 20:27, Deu. 18:10-11, Isa. 8:19, 1Chron. 10:13, 2Kings 21:6). **Instead of** seeking knowledge or anything else through pagan practices, we must trust in God and wait for Him. We need to hold to the traditions for the Church as detailed in the New Testament, not according to men's ways (or false religions), even if longstanding and accepted. (1Cor. 10:21-22, 2Thess. 2:15, Col. 2:16-23, 1Tim. 4, 2Tim. 1:13-14, 1Tim. 1:8-11, 1Tim. 6:3-5, Titus 1:9, 2:1, 2Pet. 3:14-18)
- coveting (desiring what others have, being discontented with what God has provided, greed, gluttony, envy, jealousy) (Matt. 6:24, Eph. 5:3, 1Tim. 6:6-

10, 17-19, Phil. 4:11-12, Jam. 5:1-6, Heb. 13:5, 2Tim. 3:1-5, Jude 1:11, 16, Rom. 13:8-10, 1Cor. 5:9-13, 1Cor. 6:9-10, 1Cor. 10:10, Gal. 5:19-25, 1Tim. 3:3, Titus 1:7, Jam. 4:1-3, Col. 3:5-10, Jam. 3:13-18) **and instead**, be grateful for our blessings, giving thanks for them to God. (See "give thanks" above.)

- stealing (Eph. 4:28, Mark 7:21-23, Rom. 13:8-10, 1Cor. 6:9-10, Matt. 15:18-20, Prov. 30:7-9) **and instead**, restore anything we have taken (and more), be content with what we have, and work for what we need, if we are physically able. (Luke 19:8-9, 2Thess. 3:6-15, also see coveting.)
- murder (Mark 7:21-23, Rom. 13:8-10, Jam. 4:1-3, Matt. 15:18-20, 1Tim. 1:8-10, Rev. 21:8, 22:15) **and instead**, love our neighbor as ourselves, and even show kindness to our enemies. (Lev. 19:18, Mark 12:28-34, Matt. 5:43-48, Rom. 12:19-21, Rom. 13:8-14, Gal. 5:13-15, Jam. 2:8-26)
- idleness (2Thess. 3:6-15, 1Tim. 5:3-16, 1Thess. 4:11-12) **and instead**, work in order to have something to share with others (if able). (Eph. 4:28, Prov. 18:9, Heb. 13:16, Gal. 6:6-10, 1Tim. 6:17-19)
- fits of temper (Jam. 1:19-21, 2Cor. 12:20, Gal. 5:19-21, 1Tim. 2:8, 1Tim. 3:1-13, Eph. 4:26-27, 31) **and instead**, rely on the Holy Spirit for help controlling ourselves. (Gal. 5:22-24, Rom. 8:13-18, Rom. 6:4, 2Cor. 5:17)
- pride in any form of anything (except knowing the Lord and what He has done for us), seeking our own glory (Luke 20:45-47, Mark 7:21-23, Rom. 1:29-30, 2Cor. 12:20, Mal. 4:1-3, 2Tim. 3:1-5, Jude 1:16, Gal. 5:19-26, Titus 1:7, Prov. 27:2) **and instead**, acknowledge that all blessings come from Him as the designer, maker and owner of everything, including us; and give Him the glory for all He is, Has done and is going to do. (1Cor. 4:6-8, Rev. 3:15-17, Psa. 19, 24, 50, 95, 100, 104, 118, 147, Psa. 69:30, 105:1-5, 1Chron. 16:8-13, 23-36, Heb. 13:15)
- taking credit or giving it to another for what God has done (Rom. 1:18-21, Heb. 12:25-29, Isa. 42:8, 48:11) **and instead**, (see above).
- loving the world and its ways (Jam. 4:4-10, 1John 2:15-17) **and instead**, recognize the error of its fallen ways and separate from it as God intends for His called-out children. (2Cor. 6:14-7:1, 1Cor. 15:33-34, Rev. 18:4-5, John 15:19, Eph. 4:17, 1Thess. 4:3-8, 2Pet. 2:12, 2Pet. 4:3-5)
- being wise in our own eyes or that of the world, but being foolish in God's sight (Rom. 12:16, Isa. 5:21) **and instead**, seek the wisdom from above, recognizing that those living in darkness are not wise and cannot understand spiritual things or accept God's higher ways. They do NOT know the way to eternal life. (Psa. 37:30, Isa. 55:8-9, Jam. 3:13-18, Eph. 1:17, Col. 1:9, 28,

Rom. 11:33-36, 1Cor. 1:18-31, 1Cor. 2:14, 1Cor. 3:18-20, Col. 2:23, 3:16, 4:5, Jam. 1:5-8, Mark 7:20-22, Matt. 7:24-27, Matt. 25:1-13, 2Tim. 3:6-9, Col. 2:23, John 14:6, 1John 3:24)

- taking the Lord's name in vain (for no purpose or even worse yet, for a profane purpose) (Ex. 20:7, Psa. 139:20, Jude 1:14-19, Prov. 30:7-9) **and instead**, be mindful that God is holy and so is His name, which not only identifies Him, but describes His eternal, perfect nature. (Luke 1:49, Rev. 15:4, Lev. 22:32, Psa. 103:1-5, Isa. 47:4, 57:15, Ezek. 39:7)
- fearing men, worrying (Matt. 6:25-34, Phil. 4:6-7, Heb. 13:6, Gal. 1:10, 1Thess. 2:3-8, Matt. 10:24-28, Col. 3:23-24, John 15:18-25) **and instead**, trust and obey God in all things. (Prov. 3:5-8, 6:3, Psa. 127:1, Phil. 4:6-7, also see "trust God" above.)
- making oaths (let our word be good without "swearing" by anything) (Matt. 5:33-37, Jam. 5:12) **and instead**, speak plainly and keep our word. (Col. 3:9-10, Lev. 19:11, Eph. 4:25, Zech. 8:16, Ecc. 5:4-5, Psa. 119:57)
- judging our brothers in the Lord for the way they serve God or exercise matters not dealing with sin but with personal choice (Rom. 14, Gal. 5:15, Jam. 4:11-12, 1Cor. 4:5) **and instead**, build one another up in the Lord, appreciate and support one another in our various works given to us by God to do. (Rom. 12:3-8, 11, 1Cor. 12:12-27, Col. 3:23-25, Eph. 2:10, Titus 2:14, 3:8, 3:14, John 15:8, Matt. 5:16)
- associating with people who lead us astray (2John 1:7-11, 1Cor. 5:9-13) **and instead**, realize that the company we keep can either help us grow in the Lord, or draw us away from Him. (1Cor. 15:33-34, Matt. 10:34-49, 2Cor. 6:14-7:1)
- casting stumbling blocks before anyone to cause them to sin, approving of sin (Rom. 1:32, 1Thess. 4:1-8, Rom. 14:13-23) **and instead**, stand firm in the truth, in love, and help others escape the snare of the devil. (Jude 1:17-23, 1Cor. 10:12-13, Gal. 6:1, Jam. 5:19-20)
- causing dissension, division, strife (1Cor. 1:10-13, 1Tim. 6:3-5, Gal. 5:19-25, 1Tim. 3:3, Jam. 3:2-12, Lev. 19:16) **and instead**, live in peaceful harmony as much as possible (without disobeying God). (Rom. 12:18, Acts 2:47, 1Tim. 4:12, 1Tim. 3:10-17, Jam. 3:13-18, 1Pet. 1:14-19, 1Pet. 2:11-12, 3:14-18)
- giving gifts or donations in order to get recognition, pursuing honor for ourselves (Matt. 6:1-6, Mark 12:38-44, Luke 20:45-47) **and instead**, give in secret, storing treasure in heaven. (Luke 6:32-36, Matt. 6:19-21, 19:21, Luke 12:32-34, Matt. 10:40-42, 1Tim. 6:18-19 )

- showing partiality based on wealth or position (Jam. 2:1-13, 3:17, Matt. 22:16, Mark 12:14, Luke 10:21, Acts 10:34-35, Rom. 6:2-11, Gal 2:6, 3:28, Eph. 6:9, Col. 3:11, 3:25, 1Tim. 5:20-21, Jude 1:16) **and instead**, be fair and just no matter whether someone is rich or poor, famous or “ordinary,” like us or different, young or old, male or female, Jew or Greek. (Rom. 2:6-11, 10:12, Ex. 23:1-9, Ex. 22:21-24, Deu. 24:17-22, 27:16-19, Lev. 19:13-18, 32-37, Psa. 37:30, 94:6-7, Isa. 1:15-17, 23, 10:1-4, Jer. 5:26-31, Ezek. 22:7, 22:29-31, Zech. 7:8-14, Amos 8:4-6)
- worshiping by rote, ritual and traditions of men (Matt. 15:7-9, Mark 7:8, John 4:23-24, Rom. 7:6, 8:2, Gal. 3:2, 2Cor. 3:2-18, Matt. 5:8) **and instead**, worship in spirit and truth, offering our bodies (including our entire lives) as living, holy sacrifices. (Rom. 12:1-2, 1Cor. 6:18-20, 1Cor. 3:16-17)
- entering controversies and vain arguments, being contentious (2Tim. 2:14, 23-26, 1Tim. 6:3-5, 2Cor. 13:11, 2Cor. 12:20, Phil. 4:5, Titus 3:1-2, 9-10, Titus 1:7, Heb. 12:14, Jam. 3:2-12, 4:1-4, Matt. 5:9, Rom. 12:18) **and instead**, correct opponents with gentleness, hoping that they will come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved; and submit to God when it comes to differences regarding the understanding of sound doctrine (also see “sorcery” above). (Jude 1:22-23, 2Tim. 2:23-26)
- listening to false teachers (2Cor. 4:1-5, 11:13-15, 2Thess. 2:15, 1Tim. 1:3-11, 1Tim. 4, 1Tim. 6:3-21, 2Tim. 1:13-14, 2Tim. 2:14-26, 2Pet. 3, Titus 1:9-16, Titus 2, Heb. 13:7-9,) **and instead**, recognize them by their fruits. (2Cor. 11:13-15, Acts 20:28-31, 2Tim. 3:1-4:5, Jude 1:3-23, Matt. 7:15-29, Matt. 12:33-35, Luke 6:39-39, Matt. 3:7-12, Rom. 6:20-23, Gal. 5:19-21, Rom. 7:4-6, John 15:1-10, Eph. 5:9, Phil. 1:11, Col. 1:10, Heb. 12:11, Jam. 3:13-18)
- drinking blood or eating meat that has been strangled (Acts 15:20, 28-29, 21:25), because the life is in the blood, and the shedding of the blood makes atonement for sins. (Lev. 17:11, Heb. 9:22-28, 1John 1:7-9, Rev. 5:9-10) The part about strangling is not clarified, but there is a connection in that it kills by stopping circulation. Common sense tells us that animals for food should be both raised and slaughtered humanely.
- eating meat that we KNOW was sacrificed to an idol (for the sake of those who think that such things have power) (1Cor. 10:23-33, Acts 15:20, 28-29) **and instead**, abstain from eating anything that might cause our weaker brother in the Lord to stumble by giving the appearance that we are honoring a god that doesn’t exist. (1Cor. 8, 1Cor. 10:19-22)
- covering a man’s head while praying or prophesying (1Cor. 11:1-16), **instead of** going along with traditions of men where male believers (often

specifically those in leadership) in some faiths wear something on their head. In the same passage, Paul also indicates that men should cut their hair rather than growing it long like women. Most interpret it these days as customs of those days that we may safely ignore. For myself, I feel that although it's far from the most important issue, once we choose to disregard one passage, then it becomes easier to do the same with the next one we dislike and so on. The reason given is NOT "custom"—that is the reason that no one should argue about Paul's instructions given by his authority from God. (2Thess. 2:15, 2Cor. 10:8, 13:10, 1Thess. 4:2, 8—Paul says so if he is stating his preference. 1Cor. 7:6, 10, 2Cor. 8:8) The reason given is that Jesus is the head of man, who is God's glory, and also "because of the angels" (who are presumably observing our gatherings to worship). (Also see "covering a woman's head" above.)

- exercising our freedom in such a way that causes a weaker brother to stumble (1Cor. 8) **and instead**, be willing to give up some of our freedoms for the sake of our weaker brother whose conscience convicts him of sin despite his freedom in Christ. (1Cor. 10:23-33) (This is NOT permission to be sexually immoral or to deliberately do any other activity that dishonors God. We are set free FROM sin, not TO sin. Matt. 18:6-9, 1Thess. 4:1-8, 1John 1:5-2:6, 2:28-29, 1John 3:1-10, Rom. 13:11-14)

The above guidelines are for believers who are following Christ to observe. They are meant to be obeyed out of LOVE, gratitude and respect. They are NOT meant to put us back "under the law" with legalism and self-righteousness. We don't save ourselves—we obey because we are saved. Each person should test their own heart to see how much of themselves they are willing to give to God. The more we know Him, the more we will love and trust Him so that the same things that please Him will please us, and we will be motivated to do His will, for His glory. The rewards are GREAT. Take a look at Rev. 2-3, Rev. 20:4-6, Rev. 21:7-8, 22:14-15, Col. 3:23-25, 1Cor. 2:9, Heb. 10:35-39, 1Cor. 3:11-15, 2John 1:8, Jam. 1:12, 2:5, 1Cor. 9:24-27, 1John 3, 2Tim. 4:6-8, 2Tim. 2:3-7, Heb. 6:11-12, Heb. 12, Matt. 25:14-46, Luke 19:11-27.

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There's a song by Love & The Outcome called "Heart Like You" that summarizes very nicely what the personal attitude of believers should be. (I can't give a blanket endorsement to this husband and wife duo, Chris Rademaker and Jodi King, since I don't know anything about them or their musical ministry, but there is so much Scripture packed into the lyrics of this particular song.)

A Heart Like You

Bible passages

Burn bright  
In my life  
Burn away the things I hold tight  
Give me  
Eyes to see  
Your Kingdom the way You want it to be

John 13:34-35  
John 15:9-17  
John 8:12  
Matt. 25:1-13  
John 3:3-5  
Rev. 12:11  
Luke 14:33

What can be worth more than You?  
What do I have I wouldn't lose?  
If it means You and I  
Look more alike  
That's what I chose

Matt. 10:37-39  
Philip. 3:8-17  
Rom. 8:29  
Philip. 2:17  
John 14:6

CHORUS

I give up the world to find my soul  
Pour out my life, give You control  
I just want to be what You want me to be  
I just want a heart that's true  
A heart like You  
I just want a heart like You

Matt. 22:16  
1Cor. 12:4-11  
1John 2:1-11  
1Cor. 6:11  
Heb. 10:19-23  
John 4:13-14  
1John 2:15-17  
1Pet. 2:21-25  
Eph. 2:4-5  
1John 4:7

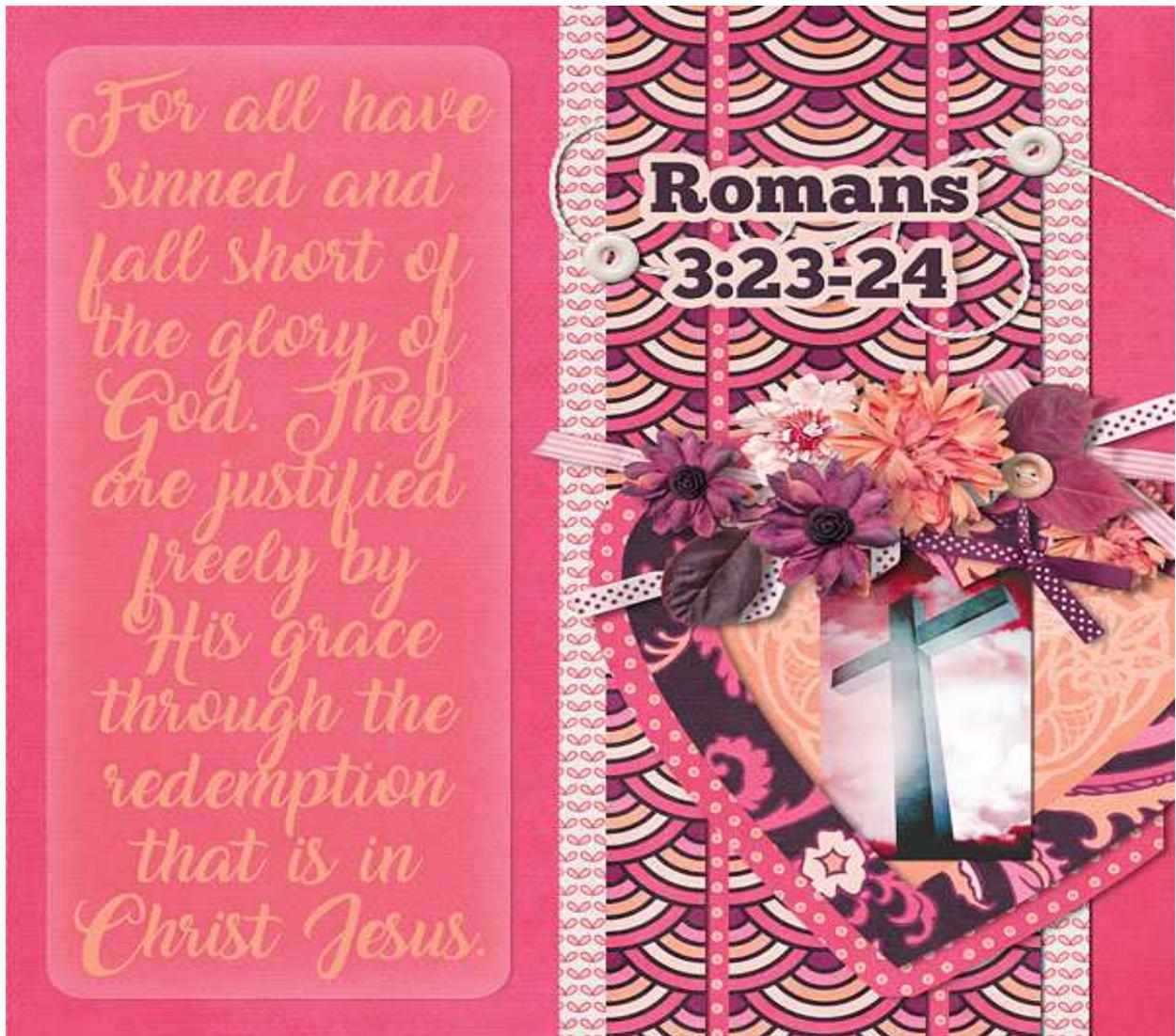
As Your ways  
Take shape  
All my guilt and shame start to fade  
And Your love  
Takes their place  
I become a well of Your grace, Your grace

CHORUS

I don't mind the price it costs  
I will count all I have as loss  
When this fades away, what's true remains  
What can be worth more than You?  
What do I have I wouldn't lose?

CHORUS

I just want a heart like You  
I just want a heart like You



kit by KimB (Feb. 2013 Color Challenge participation gift)