

# Encouragement

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I would like to thank my two girls and my son in law for all of their help. Rachel, Rusty and Lana

[Chapter 1](#) *There Is a Difference between a Christian and a Saint* The book of Psalms tells us a "saint" is one who sings praises to the Lord, gives thanks, and is preserved by the Lord—a true follower of Jesus Christ. The worst enemy of a saint is a Christian. This is a bold statement, but it's true. I have seen it over and over again. Let's take the workplace for an example. When a saint is around a Christian, the saint works very hard at his job—not to please the employer, but to please the Lord. The saint is a model employee because he is trying to be a reflection of Christ every moment of every day. The Christian coworker sees how the saint is working and acting. The Christian knows that he is in error in his behavior because he sees the saint's conduct. This often makes the Christian turn against the saint. It's quite ironic, and unfortunately I've seen it many times. A Christian is still living in the world or may even have just one foot in the world. But this isn't how the Lord instructs His followers to be. He wants our actions to glorify Him, as we claim to others we believe in Him. How are cursing, listening to and telling dirty jokes, lying, being selfish, deceiving, name-calling, getting drunk, and premarital sex glorifying the Lord? I often hear, "Oh, the Lord understands." Does He really? According to Scripture, God does not understand. In fact He tells us over and over again that these people are condemned because their lives have not changed to be reflections of Christ. They do not bear good fruit. They go against the Ten Commandments and refuse to repent. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. (Matthew 7:16-17) Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves,

nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. (1 Corinthians 6:9-10)

Idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. (Galatians 5:20-21) These verses are straight from the Lord! Whoever says that the Lord understands his sinful life does not know God or His commandments. This person, whether he means to or not, is glorifying Satan with his actions. The Lord wants us to be pure and holy; He wants us to serve Him and not ourselves and the world. We are to love Him more than the air that we breathe, more than the next heartbeat. So how do you make the transition to being the saint that the Lord takes pride in? You can start by praying without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17). This is a great way to get closer to the Lord. People see this verse and overlook it, though, because they think it's impossible. It isn't. If you ask the Holy Spirit to help you train yourself to pray constantly, to stay in constant communication with the Lord, after a couple of weeks it will be as natural as breathing. You'll also find yourself much closer to the Lord. You want to change your perception and how you see things. You want to develop what I call "spiritual eyes," eyes that the Lord would see the world from. Pray and ask the Holy Spirit for His help to close your worldly eyes and look out of "spiritual eyes." You will see everything differently. It will change your life completely! When you look around a room, you'll be able to see what is really going on spiritually. Dirty jokes, slander—it all takes on a new meaning. Being able to constantly see like this takes practice, but with the help of the Holy Spirit, you can perfect it. You'll never go back to looking through worldly eyes again. The Lord will surely use you more. Remember, we are not of this world. So it's only reasonable that we don't see and perceive things the way nonbelievers do. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. (John 15:19) Does the world hate you? Do people talk about you negatively because of the way you live your life for the Lord? Then praise the Lord! You are living this verse. The Lord will be glorified by you and you will be used greatly by Him. Being very different from nonbelievers is hard, and any bit of encouragement helps. Of course there are many sources of encouragement in the Bible. One verse I find particularly helpful comes from Philippians.

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself. (Philippians 3:20-21) I volunteer in a nursing home by giving "spiritual support" to patients. I have patients who tell me that they just want to go home. I tell them, "So do I." Along with others, I bring them those passages from Philippians that state our home is with Christ Jesus in heaven. When He's ready for us, He will bring us home to be with Him. What a glorious day that will be! A saint is to live his life as if running a race, with Jesus our Lord at the finish line. We hunger to hear the words from our Lord at the end of the race: "Come, you blessed of My Father; inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matthew 25:34). I have had people say to me that it's easy for me to see things differently and not be worldly, because I'm "elected." But I assure you that the Lord gave *all* of us the choice—the free will—to go down any road that we want! I have chosen the road to serve the almighty God, and you can too. Don't use your weakness and desire for worldliness to justify not following the Lord. Look to Scripture and see how the Lord will accept *anyone*! "I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently will find me" (Proverbs 8:17). This includes you!

Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. (Matthew 7:7-8) In these verses, Jesus says "everyone." Not some elected people, but everyone! You have to pray; you have to repent. Note the word "repent" doesn't mean that you ask forgiveness for your sins and the next day do it all over again. "Repent" means to ask for forgiveness of your sins with all of your heart and never—yes, I said never—go back to your sins again. You may say that you believe in the Lord and love Him with all of your heart. But the Lord

finds words cheap. You must prove your love for the Lord like Jesus did. Pray and read the Scripture every day. This can take great effort, but take heart in the fact that you're being obedient. Before reading the word of God, ask the Holy Spirit to help you, and He will. "The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things" (John 14:26). Lean on the Holy Spirit to give you understanding. Let Him help you. Don't just read the words. You must live what you read. If you prove to the Lord that you aren't just all talk, that you really want to change and live for Him, He will gladly open up the door. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me" (Revelation 3:20). Just the fact that you are reading this book tells me that the Lord is trying to get your attention—He is knocking. It's up to you. You can say, as the prophets have in the past and as the Lord's saints do now, "*Here I am, Lord!*"

Then the Angel of God spoke to me in a dream, saying, "Jacob." And I said, "Here I am." (Genesis 31:11)

So when the Lord saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, "Moses, Moses!"

And he said, "Here I am." (Exodus 3:4)

Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and to him the Lord said in a vision, "Ananias."

And he said, "Here I am, Lord." (Acts 9:10) Acts 8:26-31 also shows us how the Lord still speaks to us today. We just have to be right with the Lord and ready and hungry enough to listen. Maybe He's not calling you in a vision; maybe He's sending His Holy Spirit to get your attention. As with Ananias, you have to say: "*Here I am, Lord.*" Learn from Saul, who kept refusing to open the door that the Lord was knocking on.

And he said, "Who are You Lord?" Then the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads." (Acts 9:5) Is He saying this to you? Are you persecuting the Lord with your sinful life by ignoring the knocking at the door? Is He telling you it is hard for you to kick against the goads? Let me explain what this means. The goad is a long stick with a pin or a pointed spike attached. The farmer used the goad to make his cattle or oxen move. In this verse, the goad means "against the Lord." So the Lord is telling Saul that he is only hurting himself by kicking against the Lord. Are you kicking against the goad by constantly ignoring the sound of the Lord knocking on your door? Here are a couple verses of encouragement that I like:

I sought the Lord and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. (Psalm 34:4) It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man. (Psalm 118:8) The bottom line is, whom do you serve? God or Satan? Do you live to please the Lord with everything you do and say, or do you live in the world? There isn't any in-between. The person who proclaims to be a Christian has to be aware of this. A Christian's biggest fear is to reach the afterlife only to have the Lord say to him, "I never knew you."

Many will say to Me in that day, "Lord, Lord have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name and done many wonders in Your name?" And then I will declare to them, "I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness." (Matthew 7:22-23)

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This book is about opening the eyes of the Lord's children. Is there a difference between a Christian and a saint? Some people want to serve the Lord but don't know how. Prayer is very important to having a close relationship with the Lord, as well as worship and fasting. Is your faith really up to par? We will discuss spiritual warfare, what it is, and how to combat the evil one. We will touch on what we really know about Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and God the Father. Some servants don't realize that they have backslidden. Is the church you're going to scriptural, or going down the

wrong road? This book is for encouragement for all of Gods children.

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