

Bible verses to build your life on

Jesus said: “... whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock...” ~ Matthew 7:24

A New Study for the New Year :)

You can find this on Facebook, here:

www.facebook.com/notes/snapshots-of-a-disciple/new-years-study-2012/304827512893721

And you can find this on our website, here:

www.incpu.org/New-year-study-2012.pdf

Good morning! I believe this year needs to be a year that we all - yes, every single one of us needs to examine where we are. I believe it is an incredibly important time for many in this country to regain or maintain a clear conscience, and growing in walking upright - conducting our lives more and more in ways that please God. :) That is the theme I see and that is what I plan to talk about here in this New Year's study.

Welcome, I'm a Bible student, and a growing follower of Jesus Christ! I'm also a street-evangelist and street-preacher. Not, however, like the wacky and pagan Westboro family, though! I'm just a follower of Christ who seeks daily to call people to repentance and genuine obedience to Jesus, the Christ (or Messiah), and to daily spiritual growth. And, since we're on the subject, I'm pretty sure there are serious shadow figures behind the Westboro family, because they sure do have a whole lot of money to be causing trouble and getting on the news. Real Christians don't get that much air time on TV - and that's not an accident - the big-money people work hard to keep it that way to cover their sins. So, some big global money people are involved with Westboro to try to make genuine, caring followers of Christ look foolish - but, this attempt to slander genuine followers of Christ is built on lies, slander and false accusations, so we need to expose it and keep proving them wrong :) ~ **“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.”** (Ephesians 5:11) That was just some intro thoughts! :)

Okay, back to the subject at hand - the new year. What should be our focus? Well, in this short Bible study - something I call a 'Snapshot of a Disciple', I'm planning to look in-depth at things that are actively hurting people that I know, and that you know. And, I'd like to talk about them openly and candidly. If a subject is too sensitive to you and/or you are already aware of it, I hope you'll skim past it to the next section, since I cover many subjects here. :) I pray that all the stuff you read here will inspire, challenge, and convict - if necessary. Please know - nothing I write here is meant to hurt or condemn you. I'm not trying to tear you down or discourage you. I only want to build you up in the Lord and to help you stand higher, closer to God, and make you/me more useful for His service! If you and I see an area that you need to improve in, then let's go for it! Make the improvement. If you think I can help - again, just ask :) - Steven.H3(at)gmail.com - ***you'll have to copy and paste that, and insert the @ symbol.*** :)

But, if I may, let me tell you a couple of key notes about me. I'm just like you - I too have broken God's law and deserve Hell forever, for lying, stealing, coveting, dishonoring my Dad and Madre, using God's Precious Name carelessly, and not putting Him first in all of my life all of the time. We've all broken God's laws, and deserve that punishment - not for our mistakes, but for our will-full rebellion. I too deserve to be separated from a holy God, who loves us but cannot let any rebels into His Kingdom. We're on the same page there, and I hope you see that. Now, where I'm possibly different from some of you is only in the detail that I don't have to pay for my rebellious choices forever, because Jesus paid my fine and I surrendered my life to Him. And, my life has not been the same since - and what an amazing change He continues to work in my life! If you don't genuinely know and follow Christ, please take a minute to do these few things:

In your own words:

- Ask for His forgiveness for your rebellion against Him
- Ask Him to teach you how not to do those things against Him anymore,
- Ask Him to teach you what it means to follow Him, despite the cost that will come, and the scoffing and mistreatment you'll receive for His Name,
- And tell Him in your words that you're giving Him your whole life to serve and follow Him.

If you just genuinely did that, or do it later, pick up a Bible and start reading in Matthew or John. If you didn't hold anything back from Him, you will find that you are now a part of His family and He will start to teach you how to be more like Him - but be warned, He uses pain to teach us - but that's ok, because He only deals with His children that way. He ignores (for the most part) Satan's children, but He pays especially close attention to and gives exceptional protection to His children, especially when they are growing in walking in His ways. So, if you have a new hunger for God's Word and you see God working in your life from now on, the Holy Spirit will confirm that you are indeed a follower of Christ and will continue teaching you. If that describes you - welcome to the family of God! (P.S. If this describes you, you're welcome to email me anytime, and I'll be glad to respond to you, as my work and life-schedule allow! :) ~ Just email me - you've got my email 2 paragraphs up :)

“But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy. Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of His return.” (1st Peter 2:9-12)

If, however, you find that nothing changes inside you, look carefully in your heart to see what you are holding back and consider if it's worth holding onto that sin or selfish desire all the way Hell... I pray that you'll surrender everything to Him. It's not an easy road (frankly, it's quite hard sometimes), but it's an amazing one, full of blessing and a growth in understanding and experiencing God's truth and presence! And you're relationship with Him and closeness to Him will continue growing, as you seek Him and spend quality time in His Word. :)

Either way, remember these 2 verse: **“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”**
(2nd Corinthians 5:17)

“But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is being perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.” (1st John 2:5-6)

If we are genuinely saved, we will not be perfect, but we will need to keep track that we are growing spiritually on a regular basis - **“Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all.”**
(1st Timothy 4:15)

Okay, now if we can, let's talk about a clear conscience. Do you have one? [a clear one, that is :)] Do I have one? It's not a question we can (or should) answer once and think we're done. It's an active process to keep it clear. As you know, we are barraged with all kinds of junk and sins being acted out, and all kinds of temptations - all around us. All of that can make our view very cloudy indeed! So, let's first talk about what our conscience is and how we can get a clear one! :)

Now, we do have to be aware and watch out for false-guilt, that is to say, beware of external rules that people try to place on your walk with God. Instead, just make sure that you're growing in keeping your heart right, and doing things to please Him. :)

Our conscience - what is it? Well for all of us, it's the little voice inside our heads (or hearts) that tells us *'Wait don't do that. You know that's wrong'*. Or it tells us: *'Hey, you need to do that, even though you don't want to.'* It doesn't teach us what's right or wrong - it's only an alarm bell and/or a prompter that repeats what we've been taught about right and wrong. It is faulty by nature, and we need to continue to educate ourselves (and our consciences) about right and wrong and updating / upgrading our standards - not lowering them, but constantly raising them. But, at the same time, not condemning those around us who don't live like we are growing to live.

There are several different stages our consciences can go through. Here are 7 that Pastor Charles Stanley mentioned - For the sake of space, I won't post the passages here, but you can look them up for yourself.

Pastor Stanley noted that there are 7 types of the conscience referenced in the Bible:

- 1> good conscience (Acts 23:1, 1st Timothy 1:5)
- 2> pure conscience (1st Timothy 3:9, 2nd Timothy 1:3)
- 3> blameless conscience (Hebrews 9:14)
- 4> weak conscience (Romans 14, 1st Corinthians 8:7, 12)
- 5> defiled conscience (Titus 1:15)
- 6> evil conscience (Hebrews 10:22)
- 7> seared conscience (1st Timothy 4:2)

You can find more of these sermon notes with links, here: www.incpu.org/conscience.pdf

Okay, that was a little about our conscience. What are indicators that help us identify where we're at? I'm glad you asked! 1st Corinthians 13 is full of ways to check how we're doing :) ~ Do you know how I know? Because I'm studying it and enjoying it a lot. Do you know why I'm studying it? Because I need it :D ~ but, studying God's absolutely amazing unconditional love and what that looks like is amazing, and revealing! If you'd like to see my notes on it so far, email me and I can send you a link. But, as you read 1st Corinthians 13, keep in mind that this is not love's definition. 1st Corinthians 13 is love -in-action. It's basically a word-picture, in word form :)

So, let's look at just a few tests to see how our consciences are doing :)

1st Corinthians 13 overview -

Vs 1 - Do we do great ministry things, and yet not care about those in our lives and those who we are talking with?

Vs 2 - Do we seek to understand lots of information, while forgetting the obedience of the heart, with the right motive, in humility and self-control?

Vs 3 - Do we give ourselves entirely to serving God and people, yet just go through the motions with a plastic smile?

Vs 4 - Do we suffer long, or have a quick temper? Are we intentionally kind to our close family and those we don't know - even those we don't like? Do we like to show off ourselves and our talents and our outward appearance? Do we parade ourselves outwardly because we are not building humble character inside?

Vs 5 - Are we rude? Have we forgotten the definition of the word 'rude'? Are we seeking our interests, or God's? Are we seeking our interests or paying attention also to tending the needs of those God has placed in our lives? Are we quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry? Do we entertain things that are evil? Have we forgotten how much around us is evil in God's sight?

Vs 6 - Do we gain pleasure from doing what we know is wrong? Have we lost the joy of doing what we know is right? Do we delight in lies or truth? Either answer, how can we learn to delight and embrace God's truth more - giving it first place in our lives?

... ~ you can continue from there... For the sake of space and time (and conviction), I'll stop there, for now. :)

As you can see there is much there that I too see need of improvement in my own life. But, let's not get discouraged or cry too much over it, though confession (and crying) is good at times :) Honest and humble heart-assessments are good for us. And we all need to remember, it's most often the times that we are thinking the best about ourselves that we are walking in pride and not doing as well as we think we're doing. But, it's the times that we are somber (yet joyful and grateful) before the Lord that we are typically the closest to Him. When we forget what humility looks like, we need to work hard to re-cultivate it in our lives. I need to. If you do too, let's grow together in it :)

Heavy stuff so far? For me too. But, are you with me? Do you agree in asking God to help us to grow in those areas? And, are you ready to look at a couple more? I'd like to look at a few more

subjects for this new year's study. I think a healthy assessment of where we're at is vital for us. So, if you are ready, let's look at a few more areas where Satan attacks us - trying to get us to fall and destroy us, or at very least - silence us.

Next question - how are you and I doing in controlling ourselves?

> If we drink - are we controlling it, or is it controlling us? Btw, I don't drink at all, but I don't condemn those who do. I only try to caution them to protect them from pain. Drunkenness is a sin, drinking may or may not be - depending on the active definition there. If God is convicting you on it - ask Him to help you change whatever you see there :) ~ **"That the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience; the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things-- that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, [to be] discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed. Likewise, exhort the young men to be sober-minded, in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you."** (Titus 2:2-8)

> Men and brethren, do you have a covenant with God concerning your eyes? Do you constantly fight and mentally flee from the perverse and revealing images of ladies all around us? If not, why not? It's destroying you and those around you. You need to get that corrected. And remember, when you and I lust, God considers it as horrible as committing physical adultery. He considers it no different, we shouldn't either. ~ But, with that said, if you are trapped by lust, there is a way out. I too am constantly barraged with the sewage of our culture, yet, because I have made a covenant with God, I work to flee and/or block it from my mind as quickly as possible. It's a strong rule with me, because I know that is possibly the fastest way to become both spiritually useless in prayer and ministry, and the quickest way to get in a lot of trouble with God. If you are not walking upright in it, please - get that right now - between you and God. :) To the guys who, like me actively work to stand in this area - THANK YOU! May God keep teaching us, leading us, growing us, and using us! :)

"Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body." (1st Corinthians 6:18)

"Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart." (2nd Timothy 2:22)

> Ladies and sisters, are you growing in understanding how the world wants to manipulate you to become a seductress? Do you work to fight it? If so, thank you, and please keep growing in your understanding about that. If you are not aware of this and/or not growing in protecting us guys, please start (or start again) today. Your help is invaluable to us. From the bottom of my heart - thank you :) **"I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting; In like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works."** (1st Timothy 2:8-10)

> Brothers and sisters, and friends - what do we listen to and/or watch? Do we try to find the good in the perverse entertainment of this world? Or are we growing in casting Satan's lies and avenues out of our lives - friends and entertainment included? Please remember that we cannot abhor what God says is perverse, wrong and evil in His sight and entertain ourselves with it. We are either embracing evil or running from it - there's no middle ground. And, please also remember that if we are laughing at a sin, we are not leaving it behind. **"Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good."** (Romans 12:9)

> Are you being faithful to be diligent at work or have you gotten sloppy? Some days, for all of us, it's the hardest thing to be diligent to the smallest detail, but it's important - for you and me. **"Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men."** (Colossians 3:22-23) ~ Those who are genuinely in Christ are His bondservants (bondslaves). :)

"His Lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord.'" (Matthew 25:21)

> Are you living to collect trinkets and pleasures here, or consistently focused on using the stuff God gives you here to reach people with God's Word for eternity?

"Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth." (Colossian 3:2)

"Do not lay up [hoard] for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

(Matthew 6:18-21)

> Do we see spiritual progress inside us compared to last year? What about last month?

"Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you."

(1st Timothy 4:15-16)

> Are we spending more time in God's Word than we were a week, month, 3 months, 6 months or 1 year ago? If not, then you - like me, need to work on that, right? I know me personally, I need to make time for it, and because it's important to me, I'm very glad to - and I'm asking for God's wisdom how to do so. I've been finding that most often I only have the strength to walk and grow in His ways, when I'm spending quality time in His Word daily. I'm sure you'll find the same :)

"This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success." (Joshua 1:8)

Conclusion section:

So, are you all right? How'd you do in that double-check? Do you see some big areas that need growth and improvement? Yeah, me too.

So, what do we do? Give up? No! We stand higher, right? That's what Galatians 6 says too: **“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.”** (Galatians 6:7-9) - That's a life-passage for me, though I can't always quote it when I want to. I need to review it more! :) But, the truths here are powerful and rich! And it ends with a promise that we can (and I believe must) hold to :)

Okay, so with that said, why did I write this Bible study? To inflict pain in your and my consciences? Not really :P ~ So, why did I write this? As I said at the beginning, I wrote this because I wanted to inspire everyone of my brothers and sisters in Christ, and even my friends to raise their standards. So, your next question is, probably - ok, that's good, but now what?

This is my reasoning and conclusion. Brethren and friends, we are living in a country that has slid so far downhill - morally, spiritually, and physically. How did we get in such a bad shape, when they had a genuine revival just decades ago? We, as a country slid, because we - those of us in the body of Christ also slid. We let go of things that we once held dear and knew to be true. But, even more, the previous 2 generations have more blame on their hands.

How did we fall? What got us to fall to this level? I see 3 things:

1> We, as a people, have forgotten the definitions of God's Word - within God's Word. We've instead picked up the Webster's dictionary with it's consistently changing definitions - to define God's Word. God hasn't changed, we have just forgotten His definitions, even softening them so we can do what we want to do - that we know is still wrong. How do we remedy this? Make it a conscious and consistent effort to diligently read and study God's Word ourselves - daily. You and me both :) ~ Are you in? Good. :)

2> We, as a people, have not been diligent to flee and abhor evil - we've become too comfortable with it, because we've listened to and embraced the devil's lies that 'it's really not that bad...'. But, it is. And we need to once again go back to becoming a people separate to God and set apart from the world and their lavish entertainment and greedy fight for their pleasures, treasures and desires. We need to once again get honest about right and wrong, and re-learning to graciously call sin 'sin', and righteousness 'righteousness'.

3> We, as a people, have fallen for and fallen to the lies of the devil that we cannot or should not speak up. It doesn't really matter whatever reason we stopped speaking up - whatever it is, it's wrong! :) Now, how do we remedy this? We must go through each area of our life and do clean-up. Calling sin in our lives 'sin'. Pointing out sin in this world as 'sin'. Sin is dangerous - it destroys lives, and for those who don't repent of their rebellion against God, it destroys them forever in Hell.

The result: And, because we, as a people, are used to doing things we know are wrong, we carry the burden of a bothered, guilty or seared conscience, and therefore cannot strongly stand on the

Word of God, as we need to. Another consequence of this is that God does not hear our prayers, because we are conducting our lives in ways that we know are wrong, but are ignoring it - as though it doesn't matter. But, that's not mistakes, that's keeping ourselves willfully ignorant, and God knows the difference. And it's because so many in this country don't walk upright themselves so they can stand up to wicked people to protect the vulnerable ones - the babies, the elderly, the widowers and widows, and the orphans. Not to mention the addicted, the abused, and those who have been violated by evil or rebellious people. All of these people need the life-giving truth of Jesus Christ and His love through you and me - for those who are followers of Christ. But, we cannot speak up when we're hiding sin. And we cannot pray effectively when we're hiding sin. The only way forward and the only way to pick where we left off is start with a cleaning and cleansing of our hearts, lives, and lifestyles. Be diligent and decisive toward what's right and against evil - you will not regret it in the long run. :)

The solution: This is time to stand up, grow more, and speak up. By God's grace, I'm committing myself to do this. What about you? Are you in? I pray you say yes. This road will not be easy, and you and I both know that God will be busy cleaning house and that means us learning through pains and consequences, but that's all right - it's healthy! Remember that there is no such thing as luck or chance, because this is God's world. We may not know why something happens, but we can ask Him what we are supposed to learn through it. So, are you in? Good.

Dear Heavenly Father,

We need You. As a nation, we need You. As a church - the body of Christ, we need You. As one of the family of genuine believers around the globe, I know we need You. We see evil all around. We see our country (the US) and many others all around the globe being pulled to the ground. But, even more, we see how this culture we live in, and in our hearts, we have forgotten Your ways, Your definitions, Your teachings, and Your Word. Lord, we have many in our country who teach a few things correctly, but walk as enemies of the cross of Jesus Christ. We have others who do not know Jesus and yet parade themselves as 'pastors' and 'Bible teachers', and even 'evangelists'. Please keep exposing the liars, and please keep raising up many who will grow intentionally in exposing what is evil - calling it evil and calling for repentance and a return back to Your Word. And, please keep raising up many in this country to study and teach Your ways. Please continue to speak to those who don't know You - showing them that they aren't in Your family, yet. And please keep helping us, who are in Your family, to be growing ourselves, and patient with - though challenging and inspiring our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. I - with my family, are asking You to do a genuine revival in the hearts and lives of many across this great country and all around the globe. Do a genuine revival in our heart. Do a genuine revival in the hearts of those around us. Please continue to expose the fake free-masonry and other fake revivals, and helping people to leave those behind, turn to You, and come back to You.

In Jesus' precious and holy Name I pray, we pray. Amen ~

If this was a blessing to you and you want to share it so that others might grow along with us, it's free to share. :) ~ let's keep growing in hunger for God's Word, humble obedience to Him,

learning to hate evil and cling to what's right, and to share His Word and the life-giving Gospel of Jesus Christ with as many of the people God brings across our paths. And, may this year be a year of spiritual blessing, as tough as it may be, so that we all may find ourselves closer to Him, more in tune with Him, and more able to serve Jesus Christ next year. ~ I'm praying for each of you. You're prayers are appreciated as well :) ~ till next time, this is your growing brother/friend, a servant/life-slave of Jesus, SH