



*Evangelising the Cities of Africa
Through Word and Deed in
Partnership with the Church*

THE BALANCED CHRISTIAN LIFE

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THE BALANCED CHRISTIAN LIFE

A Series of Six Bible Study Outlines

prepared for Group Leaders

A wheel is a thing of balance. Distribute the weight of the wheel evenly about the axis and you will have smooth, efficient progress. And the wheel itself will be good for long service.

But let the balance be disturbed..... The smoothness goes; so does the efficient working; and the wheel is easily pulled off course. What's more, the stresses set up within the wheel itself will sooner or later cause it to break down.

The idea of likening the Christian life to a wheel was developed by a group in the USA called *The Navigators*, the parts of the wheel representing the essential elements of the Christian life. So long as balance is maintained between these elements, orderly, effective and stable spiritual growth will be enjoyed by the Christian.

Michael Cassidy has devised a series of six Bible study outlines based on this wheel, each study dealing with one part of it. If you are seeking to lead a group of new Christians into balanced spiritual growth, we commend this booklet to you.

Appreciation is expressed to the Navigators for permission to use the wheel outline in this set of studies.

AFRICAN ENTERPRISE

THE OBEDIENT CHRISTIAN IN ACTION



CLASS ONE

(The Hub)

Main Question: What is a Christian?

Main Point: Christ is the Centre of the Christian Life.

INTRODUCTION

- (i) As leader, see everyone knows everyone else.
- (ii) Open with a one or two sentence prayer.
- (iii) Hand out note paper to each person, preferably with the wheel outline already drawn in. Do this ahead of time, to save time. But don't write in the scriptures. Let them do that.
- (iv) Explain that the Christian life is like a wheel, and to run smoothly it needs not only the right centre or hub, but properly working spokes, and a truly round rim.
- (v) Say you are starting off with the Hub – which is Christ.
- (vi) Give the five scriptures for them to write in the hub:
 - 2 Corinthians 5:17
 - Galatians 2:20
 - 1 Peter 1:3-4
 - Ephesians 1:13-14
 - Colossians 2:6-7

(These speak of Christ and His indwelling Holy Spirit as the heart and centre of the Christian life.)

- (vii) Before looking them up, ask the question:

1. WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN?

- (i) Let people share their views.
- (ii) Don't laugh at any answer that seems stupid or funny.

Having heard the views, say "let's see what the Scriptures say". (Get each person to look in the **index** of their Bibles for the page number for 2 Corinthians. Then let them find Chapter 5. Follow the same the same procedure with other references.

2. DEFINITION OF A CHRISTIAN

- (i) A Christian is one who is – **in Christ**. (All look up 2 Cor. 5:17)
- (ii) A Christian is one who has Christ through the Holy Spirit – **in him, or in her**.

(All look up Gal. 2:20 – get different people to read the verse.)

- (iii) A Christian is one who has received forgiveness and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

(Read Acts 2:38)

3. HOW DOES A PERSON BECOME A CHRISTIAN?

- (i) **By believing**

(look up John 3:16)

Ask people what it means to *believe*.

(Remember, the Bible teaches faith is believing with the head **and** entrusting the life, as when one gets on a plane or gets married.)

- (ii) **By receiving**

(Look up John 1:12)

Ask people what they think receiving means.

(Think up some of your own illustrations ahead of time.) Share your experience. Get others to share theirs.

- (iii) **By appropriating and receiving Two Gospel Gifts**

- (a) The gift of Forgiveness. (This deals with the past.)

- (b) The Gift of the Holy Spirit. (This gives power for living in the present and facing the future.)

Read Acts 2:38 and Ephesians 1:13-14.

4. CONCLUSION

(i) Summarize everything.

(ii) **Assign home-work**

(a) Look up the other scriptures in the hub and answer the question: "What is the *result* of receiving and believing, noting especially 1 Peter 1:3-4 and Ephesians 1:13-14.

(b) **Memorize** 2 Corinthians 5:17. Suggest putting it on a little card and carrying it around during the week to memorize at odd moments.

(iii) Close in a brief prayer.

(iv) Remind people of the time and place of the next meeting.

CLASS TWO

(The Word – i.e. Scriptures)

Main Question: Why Read the Bible?

Main Point: The Bible feeds us spiritually.

INTRODUCTION

- (i) Open with prayer.
- (ii) Ask how memorizing **2 Corinthians 5:17** went.
- (iii) Give scriptures for lower vertical spoke on the **Word** (i.e. the Scriptures.)
 - 1 Peter 2:2
 - Acts 17:11
 - 2 Timothy 3:15-17
 - Joshua 1:8

1. WHY READ THE BIBLE?

- (i) Ask for suggested **reasons**.
- (ii) Ask for people's **experience** with Bible-reading.
- (iii) Share your experience.
- (iv) Point out that in **1 Peter 2:2** we are told "As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby". (As infants need milk to survive and grow, so we as Christians need the milk of the scriptures.)

2. 2 TIMOTHY 3:15-17

- (i) Get people, via their Bible index, to find **Second Timothy**, then chapter 3: Verses 15-17.

Have someone read the passage.

- (ii) Study the passage, drawing out and grasping each point made – as follows.

3. **WHAT THE SCRIPTURES DO** (verse 15)

- (i) **Verse 15** – They ‘instruct’ . . . for salvation through *faith in* Christ Jesus.
- (ii) **Questions:**
 - (a) How do they instruct?
 - (b) What is salvation?
 - (c) What is faith? (remember last week)

4. **HOW THE SCRIPTURES CAME** (verse 16a)

Verse 16a – “All scripture is **inspired by God**” – literally “expired” or “breathed out”. Therefore they possess a unique and special authority. The exact **nature** of this authority is not as important for the moment as the fact that we should take the scriptures *seriously*, because they are God’s Word in a special way.

5. **WHERE THE SCRIPTURES HELP** (verse 16b)

- (i) **In Teaching** (i.e. They tell us **what** we should know) – about man – about God – about Christ – about conversion – about the Christian life – about life after death.
- (ii) **In Reproof** (i.e. They tell us **where** we should stop). Scripture contains God’s stop signs. Think of some. (e.g. Thou shalt not murder, covet, commit adultery, fornication, etc. Note: God’s stop signs are there to protect and promote our fun and happiness, not spoil them.)
- (iii) **In Correction** (i.e. They tell us **when** we should change.)
 - Like a compass, the Scriptures constantly re-set our direction.
 - Think of a plane, or ship without a compass.
 - One must look at the compass daily.
- (iv) **In Instruction in Righteousness** (i.e. They tell us **what** we should become.)

Scriptures show us the kind of person God wants us to be and how to work towards that.

6. **THE END RESULT** (verse 17)

- (i) The man of God becomes **complete** (or mature) – verse 17a.
- (ii) The man of God is **equipped** for every good work – verse 17b.

7. SUMMARY

Give a sheet of blank paper to each person. Have each one place his open hand on the paper and trace round the fingers. Then write in the headings and references as shown.



THE BIBLE

(Used by permission of the Navigators. Colorado Springs, Colorado)

8. CONCLUSION

- (i) Close in prayer.
- (ii) Assign homework – look up references in the fingers of the hand, and write them in.

Memorize 1 Peter 2:2.

CLASS THREE

(Prayer)

Main Question: How do we Pray?

Main Point: Talk to God daily.

INTRODUCTION

- (i) Open with prayer.
- (ii) **Ask** whether everyone wrote in the scriptures on the “hand”. Summarize the importance of Bible reading. Find out if anyone is without Bible study notes. If so, see the minister, chaplain, or master/mistress in charge and get notes ordered.
- (iii) **Ask** who could recite both 2 Corinthians 5:17 and 1 Peter 2:2. Stress the importance of memorizing.
- (iv) Give the Scriptures for the upper vertical spoke of “The Wheel”,
 - John 15:7
 - John 16:24
 - 1 John 1:9
 - Philippians 4:6-7

1. EXPERIENCES OF PRAYER (discussion)

- (i) What is prayer? (prayer is talking to God)
- (ii) Do people find it easy?
- (iii) How or when do you pray?
- (iv) Have you ever had answer to prayer?
- (v) Why pray? To help us develop our friendship with God (e.g. Humans need to communicate and talk if their friendships are to grow. Imagine, too, how a father would feel if his child never talked to him.)

2. TYPES OF PRAYER (A-C-T-S)

- (i) Adoration: “Worship God” (Revelation 22:9)
“Come let us worship and bow down . . .” (Psalms 95:6)
Psalms and hymns help us worship.

- (ii) Confession:
 - We tell God what we've done wrong or left undone.
 - He promises to forgive us and cleanse us.

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to **forgive** us our sins and **cleanse** us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9)

- (iii) Thanksgiving:
 - We thank God for blessings.

"In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." (1 Thessalonians 5:18)

- (iv) Supplication:
 - (from Latin "supplico" = ask, implore, beseech)

God wants us to ask: "Ask and ye shall receive." (Matthew 7:7)

"Hitherto have you asked nothing in my name: Ask and you shall receive that your joy may be full." (John 16:24)

"If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will and it shall be done for you." (John 15:7)

**"More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of."
(Alfred Tennyson)**

Remember

There is no such thing as unanswered prayer. But there are three possible answers to prayer:

YES NO WAIT

3. TIPS FOR PRAYER

- (i) Be regular.

- (ii) Apart from "any-time, any-place" type of prayer, try to have a few minutes set **aside** each day for prayer with special concentration.

- (iii) Make a **list** of people and things to pray for. Don't try to pray for everybody and everything each day. Spread it over the week, or month.

4. CONCLUSION

- (i) Close in prayer – by asking each person to think of **one** word which summarizes his or her prayer – e.g. Faith – Courage – Mother – friend– work. Then go around the circle and let each person say their “one word” prayer. Leader closes with 2 or 3 sentences and/or the Grace.

- (ii) **Homework**
 - (a) Make a **Monday to Sunday** prayer list.
 - (b) **Memorize** John 16:24

CLASS FOUR

(Fellowship)

Main Question: Why is Fellowship important?

Main Point: We need each other.

INTRODUCTION

- (i) Open with prayer
- (ii) Report back on the making of a **daily prayer list**.
- (iii) Who can recite **John 16:24**?
- (iv) Encourage the group to pray for **each other** during the coming week.
- (v) Announce today's subject – Fellowship – and explain its meaning. (The Greek word for this was '**koinonia**' from the Greek adjective 'koinos', meaning "common" or "in common". **Koinonia** means "having life in common" – or "sharing life"). The idea is very rich. It implies a willingness to share not only Christ, but ourselves.

Note Paul in 1 Thessalonians 1:8

Leader, you must set the pace in this.

- (vi) Get folk to write in the scriptures for '**Fellowship**' in the right horizontal spoke of 'The Wheel'.

1. THE EXAMPLE OF THE EARLY CHURCH

- (i) Note what they taught: (leader reads and explains the verse). "Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another." (Hebrews 10:24-25)

It is a source of great encouragement to meet together. We share problems and blessings and 'stir up' each other to go forward.

- (ii) **Note what they did:** All look up **Acts 2:42**.

2. ACTS 2:42 – THE PRACTICE OF THE EARLY CHURCH

Individually and in groups they devoted themselves to:

(i) “The Apostles’ Teaching”

– What does it mean? Discuss it.

(They studied it. They followed it.)

– Where do we today find this teaching? (in the Scriptures)

Show that **‘teaching’** matters. We must understand our faith and what the Bible says. How can we obey its teachings if we don’t know what they are? How can we look after our new car properly if we don’t follow the guide book and instructions?

(ii) “Fellowship”

(a) They shared everything.

Read verses 43-47 and see what they shared. Ask people in the group to “spot” what the early church shared

e.g. “All things” (vs. 44)

“Temple attendance”

“breaking of bread” (Communion)

“Food” (vs. 46)

“Worship and praise” (vs. 47)

“Favour with all the people” (vs. 47)

(b) Some questions.

What can we share?

How can our fellowship **deepen**?

How can we **show others** a different way of individual and community living? (e.g. kindness, lack of criticism, acceptance, concern for the lonely, or the underdog, or the persecuted. Remember there are two types of people those who make others feel **small** and those who make others feel **tall**. In the first century people said, ‘See how they love one another’. Now the world says ‘See how they hurt one another’. Let’s set that right).

(iii) “The Breaking of Bread”

(a) **Leader explains:** This was the beginning of the Communion service as we know it today. The broken **bread** symbolized Jesus’ body, broken for us on Calvary’s Tree. In the Communion we especially remember His death for us. The **cup** symbolizes His shed blood. “The life of the flesh is in the blood.” (Leviticus 17:11). When Jesus shed His blood, He shed His Life. “The Son of Man came . . . to give His **life** as a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:28).

The ransom in the first century was the sum of money paid to buy and release a slave. In the Communion, we remember that Jesus has purchased our release through His death on the Cross. In the Communion we also remember that Jesus has His hand on the ultimate outcome of history. “He will **come again** to judge the quick and the dead”, says the Creed. History is moving to its final climax when Jesus comes again. God has not lost control. And so “as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death *until he comes.*” (1 Corinthians 11:26). Regular attendance at Communion is therefore important.

(b) **A Suggestion:** Why not, next Sunday, have all the study group go to Communion together?

(iv) **“Prayer”**

(a) This is the fourth thing to which the early Christians devoted themselves. We talked of this in the last study. But that was more **individual** prayer. The early Christians majored on **prayer together**.

(b) We should pray together too. Think about doing so.

3. THE RESULT OF HOW THE EARLY CHRISTIANS LIVED

(i) People were added to the church daily. (See verse 47). Others found the Christians’ way of living so attractive and appealing, they wanted to be part of it. Every day others were therefore wanting to join up.

(ii) What about the Church today? What’s gone wrong? (discuss)

(iii) **Note:** You can’t solve the church’s problems and image all over the world. But you can solve it where you are – i.e. in your school, college community etc. Everyone is part of the problem, or part of the solution. Decide to be part of the solution. Someone once prayed: “Lord, revive your church, beginning with me.”

4. CONCLUSION

(i) **Homework:** Memorize Acts 2:42

(ii) Remind people to develop and use their prayer lists.

(iii) Close in prayer.

CLASS FIVE

(Witness)

Main Question: How do we witness to Christ?

Main Point: By what we are and say.

INTRODUCTION

- (i) Open with prayer.
- (ii) Reflect on any initiatives the group has taken or should be taking to deepen and maintain fellowship. (Be brief in this reflection). Remind people of the importance of caring for each other.
- (iii) Has everyone memorized Acts 2:42?
- (iv) Announce today's subject – **“Witness”** – and explain its meaning. A **Witness** is one who testifies about something he or she knows from first hand experience (e.g. as in a law-court). Once any of us professes to be a Christian we are immediately a witness in the eyes of the world, whether we know this or not. The question is whether we are good witnesses or bad witnesses, good advertisement for Him, or bad ones.
- (v) Get people to write in the Scriptures for witness in the right horizontal spoke of 'The Wheel'.

1. TO WHAT DO WE WITNESS?

- (i) All look up Acts 1:8. Someone read it.
- (ii) **We are to witness to ... ?** (“TO ME”, said Jesus) Yes, the witness is a pointer to Christ (not to a church or denomination, but to Christ).
- (iii) **Think out and discuss what this means.**
(e.g. We witness to His Deity, His Resurrection, His death on the Cross, His love, His forgiveness, His transforming power. What else?)

2. WHERE DO WE WITNESS (Acts 1:8)

- (i) **In Jerusalem**
i.e. Where we are – at school, in our college, in our home area, in our current situation.

Think of ways of witness where we are.

What initiatives should we take to spread the Gospel?

What programmes should be planned?

What speakers might be invited?

(ii) **In Judaea**

i.e. the surrounding area.

Is there anything we should be doing beyond our immediate location?

What about people in other parts of the province, other schools, other colleges? There may or may not be anything which can or should be done now, but no harm in thinking and praying about it and finding God's leading.

(iii) **In Samaria**

The Samaritans were the people with whom the Jews had no dealings (John 4:9). Jesus said they were to witness to them and be concerned for them.

(a) Who are the people with whom we have no dealings?

(i) **Socially:** The outcast or misfit? The unhappy or persecuted?
In schools, Seniors? Juniors?

(ii) **Racially:** Whites? Blacks? Coloureds? Indians?

(iii) **Politically:** People of other parties or view-points.

(b) What initiatives can we take to reach or befriend those with whom we normally have no dealings?

(iv) **“And to the end of the Earth”**

Our obligations don't stop with our area or locality. Wesley said: “The world is my parish”. Jesus said: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations”. (Matthew 28:19)

Some questions for each person.

(a) Would I be willing to go anywhere God sends me?

Would I be willing to enter full-time Christian work?

Am I willing now at least to pray for other parts of the world?

- (b) Why not as a group think of a missionary project? Is there a group, an organisation, an individual we could pray for regularly and support financially in a modest way?

3. IN WHAT POWER DO WE WITNESS?

- (i) “You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.” (Acts 1:8a)
- (ii) **Remember Ephesians 1:13-14** in lesson one of the Wheel. “In Him you ... who ... have believed in Him were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.”
- (iii) At conversion we receive all of the Holy Spirit. The question now is whether He has all of us. Will we release Him to have His way in our lives? To flood us? To come upon us? As He does so, we find we have power and ability to share the message of Christ.
- (iv) If we feel nervous, we can claim Joshua 1:5. Look it up. This verse is in the sixth book of the Old Testament.

4. HOW DO WE WITNESS?

- (i) Look up **2 Corinthians 3:2-3**. (Second Corinthians is the eighth book of the New Testament. First come the Gospels, then Acts, Romans and Corinthians).
- (ii) **This verse says we are what?**
 (“letters from Christ known and read by all men”)
 - (a) **What does that mean?**
 - (b) What does the world read from our lives?
(That God is uncaring, indifferent, unloving, selfish, critical? – or loving, caring, compassionate? etc.)
- (iii) We witness thus by what we ARE and DO
 - (a) At Home. (Each Christian should pray regularly for his family and loved ones.)
 - (b) **In society** (i.e. day-to-day life)

- (c) **Amongst our friends**
- (d) **In the class-room; or office; or factory.**
- (e) **On the sports field.** (If Christ isn't taken into the scrum or on to the tennis court, we aren't making Him Lord of all departments of our lives).

5. CONCLUSION

(i) Homework

- (a) Challenge each person to try and witness by life and by lip, by work and by word in the coming week. Share Christ with at least one other person.
- (b) Memorise Acts 1:8.

(ii) Close in Prayer.

CLASS SIX

(Obedience)

Main Question: What is spiritual obedience?

Main Point: Obedience is following the commandments of Christ, and in consequence knowing the blessing and empowering of the Holy Spirit for life and service.

INTRODUCTION

- (i) Open with prayer.
- (ii) Ask whether anyone was able to witness to Christ last week. If so, let the person(s) tell of the experience – and the consequence, if any. Remind people to keep trying to be good witnesses for Christ.
- (iii) Has everyone memorised Acts 1:8?
- (iv) Announce the subject for this week – **OBEDIENCE to Jesus Christ**. Obedience is illustrated in the life of the Chinese student who said: “I am reading the Bible and behaving it.”
- v) Get people to write in the Scripture on the rim.

1. WHY OBEY CHRIST?

- (i) He expects it. (See Luke 6:46). To call Him Lord is to yield our wills to Him for practical obedience in daily life to what He tells us. Otherwise we cannot say He is our Lord.
- (ii) Obedience proves our love for Him. (See John 14:21). He who loves Christ obeys Him. There is no other proof of our love. (Vs. 21 a).
- (iii) Only obedience opens the way to the full blessing and empowering of the Holy Spirit. (Carefully note John 14:15-17) – “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor, to be with you for ever, even the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him; you know him, for he dwells with you, and will be in you.”

2. WHAT DO WE OBEY?

(i) **“My Commandments”** (John 14:21)

Note He is not talking of suggestions or ideas, or options, but commandments.

(ii) **The Ten Commandments** (See Exodus 20:1-17)

(iii) **Note especially:** John 13: 34,35: “A new commandment I give unto you that you love one another, even as I have loved you. By this shall men know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another.”

What does it mean to love one another?

i.e. How does the “loving person” behave? What does he or she do or not do? (Check with 1 Cor. 13 if need be.)

(iv) What are some of His other commandments?

Take the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew – Chapters 5-8.

(a) **“Be reconciled”** (5:24)

Are we reconciled to all round us?

(b) **“You shall not commit adultery”** (5:27)

Are we pure and are we committed to Christian standards of morality?

What are the implications of this for our romantic relationships? In our marriages?

(c) **“Do not swear”** (5:34)

What is our language like?

(d) **“Do not be anxious about your life”** (6:25)

What things make us anxious?

(e) **“Judge not that you be not judged”** (7:1)

(There are scores of other commandments. These are only a small sample. Are we obeying these and all the other commandments of Jesus?)

- (iv) Discuss what obedience means in the context of job, home, school or college in which you find yourself.

For example: What does obedience to Christ involve –

- (a) In the classroom? Office? Or Factory? Kitchen?
- (b) In the dormitory? Residence? Home? Hospital Ward?
- (c) On the sports field? In our recreation?
- (d) In relationship with a boss? A teacher? A spouse? Child?
- (e) In relationship with our fellows? Colleagues? Friends?
(This of course ties in with witness which we spoke of in the last lesson.)

3. WHAT ARE THE RESULTS OF OBEDIENCE

- (i) See Luke 6:47-49. Life has a **foundation**.
- (ii) **See John 14:21 b.** God **manifests** Himself or makes Himself better known to the obedient person.
- (iii) **Acts 5:29-32.** The Holy Spirit is poured out more and more on the obedient person. Remember again the principle of John 14:15-17.

4. CONCLUSION

- (i) Think about next steps and initiatives now that this series of studies is over. What does the group want to do? Do we need to consult anyone for counsel or advice on this? What about launching an ongoing home group? Or starting in on an Alpha Course?
- (ii) Make some clear decisions about future steps.
- (iii) Have a brief time of free and open prayer, praise and thanksgiving in which any or all may participate.
- (iv) Leader closes when and as he/she sees fit.

ADDITIONAL STUDY

The Over-Arching Truth of Assurance

One of the most critically important truths to understand is the doctrine and experience of **assurance**. In a sense this relates to study one of the wheel – on Christ as the hub or centre of life. In another sense this truth overarches all the other studies because it affects the whole Christian life. Thus our **obedience** is more meaningful when we are assured that some small act of failure or disobedience will not lose us our salvation. Our **prayer** life takes on new joy when it springs from an assured heart.

Our **Scripture reading** contributes to deepening our assurance and conviction. Our **fellowship** is more relaxed and happy if we recognise that we are a band of brothers and sisters accepted by God and therefore capable of accepting each other in deeper ways. Likewise our **witness** will be much more dynamic when born from a settled and assured relationship with Christ. So the doctrine of assurance is key and we therefore give it special attention.

Most people in the early days of their conversion are assailed by doubt in some way or another. Temptations rattle them. Perhaps some old besetting sin trips them up again. They have moral tumbles or persecution. They need to have some kind of anchor, some assurance that the step they have taken is real and something which will last. Problems can come very soon after the new Christian has responded to Christ.

1. Assurance is based on God's word and not on man's feelings.

A person may say, "You know last week I said 'yes' to Jesus Christ and I responded to Him. But I don't **feel** different."

Be quite clear that assurance depends not on man's feelings but on God's word. Take Revelation 3:20. It says that Jesus stands at the door and knocks. If anyone hears His voice and opens the door He says He **will** come in. That is His promise. Many people don't have any kind of dramatic emotional experience, so be prepared for that. Some people do. Praise God. The point a new Christian must understand is that his conversion is an act of the will followed by a resting in the sure promise of God's word, as in Revelation 3:20.

Look at 1 John 5 vs. 11-13. "These things I've written to you," John says, "that you may **know** that you **have** (present tense) eternal life." A glorious

promise of assurance. Queen Victoria always doubted her salvation until an Anglican minister pointed her to this Scripture. **John 6:37** is another great Scripture where Jesus promises: “He who comes to me I will in no wise cast out.

So, you see, we must trust God and His word, not our own subjective emotions. In fact, however elated one’s emotions may be, one can’t live in that realm all the time. Take marriage. One may feel wildly ecstatic at first. But marriage is a relationship which has to be lived out at the ordinary everyday level of life. That is true also in the spiritual realm. Most of our spiritual life is lived out on the plains rather than the mountain tops.

2. Assurance is based on God’s character regardless of man’s weakness.

Romans 8:38-39. Notice that nothing can separate us from the love of Christ. Our young inquirer needs to know this and have the assurance. And that assurance of the love of God over the Christian’s life is based on the character and the commitment of God. Indeed the cross is the measure of God’s commitment to man. God the Father is committed to His child and nothing in all creation can disrupt or alter that divine commitment which is integral to God’s character.

3. Assurance is based on God’s forgiveness and not on man’s performance.

1 John 1:9 says, “if we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” It is a fact that the Christian is going to fall at times. He’s going to sin, he’s going to fail. He needs to understand the principle of “spiritual rebound”. Paul says “I am knocked down but I am not knocked out.” He rebounded, he came back. So keep this very clearly in your mind.

4. Assurance is God’s adoption of us into the family, rather than our worthiness for family membership.

In Galatians 4:5 it says God has adopted us into the family. We are redeemed for adoption. If your little children are naughty, whatever else you may do, whether spanking, or chastening, or whatever, you don’t eject them from the family. Why not? Because they are family members. They are your children. Paul says God has adopted us into the family so we can say Abba, Father. That’s the Hebrew word for Daddy! It speaks of intimate relationship. The Christian is safe within this wonderful family of God. Romans 8:1 says, “Therefore there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus.” The

assurance that there is **no condemnation** (Romans 8:1) because we are adopted into the family (Gal. 4:5) is wonderful indeed.

5. Assurance is based more on the Father's transaction with the Son than the convert's transaction with either the Father or the Son.

What do I mean? Listen to John chapter 10:27-30. Jesus says, "My sheep hear my voice and I know them, and they follow me; I give them eternal life and they shall never perish. No one shall snatch them out of my hands. **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. I and the Father are one." Do you see what a wonderful thing is being said here? Jesus said, "My Father has given them to me." As we respond in Christian commitment, Jesus says the Father gives us to the Son. There is a transaction in the heavenly realm between the Father and the Son. "My Father has given them to me." So I belong to Christ in a special way because I've been given to Him by the Father, who drew me to Him in the first place. (See John 6:44). Not only that, but "No one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand." You see, we fall and stumble and fail. But the Father's hand comes down to take hold of ours. Thus if we have a little persecution or some problem comes along, or we have a moral tumble or we get depressed, and we then let go of the Father's hand, **He holds** on. He does not let go. John Calvin called that the perseverance of the saints, by which he meant that those who authentically belonged to Christ would persevere because they were held by the Father's hand.