

WHO ARE WE IN CHRIST?

John 1:12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

John 1:13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

When we received Christ as Savior, each one of us assumed several new positions (each with their privileges and their responsibilities).

Over the next few weeks, we want to answer the question: Who are we IN Christ?

What does the Bible says we have changed to become?

I. First, **We are children in relationship.**

In our text, we find that every person who has received Christ became sons (or children) of God.

God is the Father. Christ is the only begotten Son.

And we have been adopted into the family.

Galatians 4:5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

Ephesians 1:5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

We have become His children by Adoption made possible through Christ's sacrifice on the Cross.

What a wonderful thought:

We (who were orphans w/o a family) have been adopted into the family of God.

What a privilege!

1 John 3:1 Behold, (take time to consider) what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

A. How do we become children of God?

Galatians 3:26 For ye are all the children of God **by faith in Christ Jesus**.

Check this verse in the other Bible versions.

There are not Mormon children of God AND Jehovah's Witness' children of God, AND Hindu children of God AND Moslem children of God AND good-works children of God. The Bible declares that **ONLY** those who have placed their faith in Christ **ARE** the children of God.

Ladies & Gentlemen, you are a select group.

B. But How do we KNOW that we are the children of God?

Romans 8:16 **The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:**

1 John 3:10 In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

First, the Holy Spirit in us assures us that we are the children of God.

Second, our actions confirm our sonship.

Notice that your behavior identifies whose child you belong to.

C. Now, examine our privileges as children of God:

1. God is our Father who we can run to w/every question and every hurt.

Galatians 4:6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

2. Jesus Christ is our Big Brother.

You know how when little brother gets in trouble, he runs to his Older Brother.

3. You can overcome the Devil & the world.

1 John 4:4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

Your sonship enables you to overcome your enemy.

How? Because, Christ who lives in you is more powerful than the Devil who lives in the world.

In other words, the Devil has a brown belt, BUT Christ has the black belt.

Therefore, NO problem. VICTORY.

4. A 4th privilege from our sonship is Guidance.

Romans 8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

Don't you guide your children?

Sure. Why? So they would succeed.

So they wouldn't fail or fall.

Likewise, God built into us as children of God the HS in residence to give us guidance for every decision we will ever face.

5. A 5th privilege of sonship is chastening.

Hebrews 12:5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:

Hebrews 12:6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

Hebrews 12:7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

(ie., that's unreasonable. Fathers are supposed to spank.)

Hebrews 12:8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

God loves us as sons so much that when we step out of line, He takes responsibility for us AND spansks and corrects us to steer us in the right direction again.

One Christian said, "I know someone who the Lord chastened." NO...We have all been chastened "whereof all are partakers..." Thank God that He doesn't just let us keep making mistakes w/o rebuke. Thank God that He doesn't listen to our whining (Don't spank me, Father.) like some of you do your children.

Proverbs 13:24 He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.

Proverbs 23:13 Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die.

Proverbs 23:14 Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell.

Parents, don't try to raise your children without the rod. If positive reinforcement was all there was, that's what God would have written.

AND we as children of God have the privilege of a Father who is involved in our rearing.

6. Finally, as children of God, we have the privilege of being an heir of God jointly w/Jesus.

Romans 8:17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

Galatians 4:7 Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

1 John 3:2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

What a great future of rewards and glory await those who are part of the family of God.
But remember, you must receive Christ to be in that family and qualify as an heir.

D. Sonship also has responsibilities.

1. 1st, Because we are sons, the Bible commands us to Imitate the father.

Ephesians 5:1 Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;

Our children imitate our attitudes and words and actions much more than we are sometimes willing to admit.

You can tell a Father's child by his resemblance.

What resemblance do you demonstrate to the Heavenly Holy Father? Patient; Longsuffering; loving; controlled; merciful; honest; dependable; etc.

You are commanded to copy HIM.

By the way, you can't do that if you don't know Him AND you can't know Him w/o spending time w/Him.

Are you imitating the Heavenly Father?

2. We have the responsibility to grow & stabilize in the faith.

Ephesians 4:14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

God doesn't expect us to stay babes in Christ

He expects us to grow in faith AND NOT to be so susceptible to false teachings.

You need to get in this church and find out what you believe.

3. 3rd, when you walk like your family name.

Ephesians 5:8 For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:

Our family name is LIGHT.

You're not to have the reputation of darkness AND dark talk AND dark attitudes AND dark actions.

We are to be blameless. The world shouldn't be able to point a finger at us.

Light is cleanness, purity, etc.

4. Finally, our responsibility as sons is OBEDIENCE.

1 Peter 1:14 As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance:

A good Father demands obedience of his children.
You can't be a Christian island.
You can't be a silent witness.

You must get in the Bible and church and find out what pleases God the Father, AND Obey it.

Who are we?
WE ARE THE SONS OF GOD.
Children of God.

Let's walk like it.

Who are we?

II. We are also SAINTS !

The word "saint" does not refer to St Peter, St Jude, St John, etc.

Every believer is referred to AS a saint.

Acts 9:32 And it came to pass, as Peter passed throughout all quarters, he came down also to the **saints** which dwelt at Lydda.

Romans 15:25 But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the **saints**.

Romans 15:26 For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the **poor saints** which are at Jerusalem.

1 Corinthians 14:33 For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the **saints**.

Philippians 1:1 Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the **saints** in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:

The church is composed of ...saints, bishops (pastors) and deacons.

Who are the saints? the believers in the church

i.e., US

A. And the title, "saint", refers to our character.

"Saint" comes from the same root word as "sanctify". One is "hazios" and the other is "haziazo", both referring to being blameless, consecrated, and holy.

Believe it or not, you are a saint, set aside for God's purpose AND we ought to live up to our name.

Ephesians 5:3 But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh **saints**;

We are saints and we ought to bear the name and make our thoughts, actions, and words measure up to this holy title.

B. Also, notice that we are CALLED to be saints by God.

Romans 1:7 To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, **called to be saints**: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

God has called us to BE saints; not just called us saints. His plan for us is to live the life of a saint. **What an honor!**

C. Next, He has made us worthy & able to share the inheritance of the saints.

Colossians 1:12 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be **partakers of the inheritance of the saints** in light:

OH, we once walked in our own sin and selfishness with barely a thought of God. If something had happened to us in that state, we would have been partakers of Hell.

BUT since we have trusted Christ, we are in God's will---ie., we will share in the inheritance of the saints one day.

Q: Do we deserve it?

No. But Christ has made it possible.

D. God has also made us fellow-citizens with the saints.

Ephesians 2:19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but **fellowcitizens with the saints**, and of the household of God;

We are NOT illegal-alien or foreigners (outsiders) in God's economy. He has naturalized us. He has given us citizenship with the other saints with all the rights and privileges which pertain thereto.

And now, we too, look for a city whose builder and maker is God. That's where our citizenship is.

E. Finally, The Holy Spirit intercedes on our behalf since we are saints.

Romans 8:27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because **he maketh intercession for the saints** according to the will of God.

And the Holy Spirit teaches us the grace of intercessory prayer. That is praying for others.

We are **sans** in relationship AND We are **saints** in character.

III. Then, we are **DISCIPLES AT SCHOOL**.

A disciple is a pupil, a follower, a student---who is learning from a teacher.

Our teacher should be Christ.

Our textbook is the Bible.

A. Let's learn several things about disciples:

1. By definition, His Disciples follow Christ.

1 Peter 2:21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an **example, that ye should follow** his steps:

Not follow some other man. Not a cult.

Not a movement or denomination or church.

We are follow Christ.

We join those who are following Christ. We support them. We are loyal to them. BUT ONLY as long as they follow Christ.

2. Disciples are disciplined.

These two words come from the same root word.

"Discipline" in your life is "training to act in accordance with rules. Activity which improves skill."

- ▷ That's what church going is.
- ▷ That's what Daily Devotions is.
- ▷ That's what fasting is.
- ▷ That's what tithing & giving is.
- ▷ That's what taking membership is.
- ▷ That's what proper dress is.
- ▷ That's what commitment to a ministry in the church is.

Disciples develop discipline. They submit to it. Are YOU submitting to God's discipline in your life?

3. Disciples are those who....

continue in His Word.

John 8:31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, if ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;

Shame on us for our sporadic Bible reading. Shame on us for our spotty Bible study.

"Continue in my word" means to "STAY in, abide in, remain in, endure in the particular location of His Word."

You aren't acting like a disciple when you take a vacation from the word...when you quit reading and listening to the Word.

This is steadfastness. A disciple is steadfast in the Word.

4. Next, a disciple is one who....

...denies himself and bears his cross.

Matthew 16:24 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

Luke 14:27 And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, **cannot be my disciple.**

Luke 14:33 So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, **he cannot be my disciple.**

Someone says, "I don't mind serving Christ as long as it doesn't inconvenience me." or, "I'll be a disciple as long as I don't have to sacrifice anything." or, "Preacher, I'm excited to serve Christ. Just don't ask me to do anything." Don't ask me to bring anyone. Don't ask me to drive too far. Don't ask me to get involved."

NO. Christ said that you can't be His disciple w/o self-denial---sacrifice of your desires.

That's discipleship.

5. Finally, a disciple strives to be like His Lord.

Matthew 10:24 The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord.
Matthew 10:25-a It is enough for the **disciple** that he be **as his master**, and the servant as his lord. ...

Disciples have the drive in them to be like their Lord and master, Jesus Christ.

- ▷ They want to copy Him.
- ▷ They want to please Him.
- ▷ They study Him.

Are you like your Lord, Jesus Christ? You need to make your behavior, looks, thought's, attitudes, and words conform to His.

B. Now, How can others identify us?

1. Our badge of identification is **Love toward each other.**

John 13:35 **By this** shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye **have love one to another.**

We separatists can be known for our love & care for each other, too. In fact, if all the world sees is our separation, they won't realize whose disciples we are. They must see our love toward each other.

I want to commend this fellowship for your care and manifest love for each other.

2. Also, others can judge our discipleship by...
our MUCH fruitfulness.

John 15:8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear **much fruit**; so shall ye be my **disciples.**

We abide in HIM just as a branch abides in (is vitally connected to) a vine. The natural outcome will be that we branches will bear FRUIT.

This is clear evidence of our discipline....of our following Jesus, our master....of our continuing in the Word....of our self-denial and sacrifice....of our striving to be like our Lord. And others will see our fruit & know that we are His disciples.

C. Finally, Disciples are commanded to go and make disciples to others.

Matthew 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

Disciples make disciples.
We must reproduce ourselves.

How are you doing in Christ's school of Discipleship?

D. Others identify us as disciples by whom we follow and how we follow Him.

1 Thessalonians 1:5 For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.
1 Thessalonians 1:6 And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost:

We became followers of our leaders and of the Lord. The problem arises when we don't follow the Lord. Sometimes, we follow our own lusts. Other times, we follow only men. His disciples follow Him and His Word.

Wait a minute....Paul did say that they followed him (them), but always remember that our following our leaders must be in conjunction with following the Lord.

Folks can tell who we are following. How are YOU following Him? Your neighbors are watching you.

- ▷ They keep track of when your car leaves and heads toward church.
- ▷ They listen thru your open windows to your music and to what you say (& how you say it).
- ▷ They watch how you dress.
- ▷ They watch how you take care of your house.

You are a living advertisement of what your Lord is like. Can they tell who your Lord is?

We are supposed to follow Him:

1. By forsaking ALL.

Luke 5:11 And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him.

2. And we are follow Him FULLY.

Caleb had that kind of testimony.

Numbers 14:24 But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it.

Christians who follow Him fully are going to go somewhere. Why? Because they are going with the ONE who is going somewhere

Let's let the world know whose disciple we are.

Who are we?

- ▷ SONS, in relationship
- ▷ SAINTS in character
- ▷ DISCIPLES in school

IV. We are also.....

SOLDIERS IN A BATTLE

Being a son is a blessing & comfort.

Being a saint is noble.

Being a disciple is simply following Him.

BUT being a soldier doesn't sound like fun.

Being a soldier is dangerous. It involves training. It entails fighting. It depends on following orders.

A. As soldiers, we are called to fight.

1 Timothy 1:18 This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare;

1 Timothy 6:12 **Fight the good fight of faith**, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

4 things about soldiers:

1. Soldiers are not only called to be on "stand-by", but are involved in "active duty."

2 Timothy 2:3 Thou therefore **endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.**

2. Soldiers are fixed on their goal.

That is they don't let themselves become involved in the world around them. They have a purpose for being where they are and that is to take orders from their Captain.

2 Timothy 2:4 No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

3. Soldiers wear a uniform.

Ephesians 6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

Ephesians 6:11 **Put on the whole armour of God,** that ye may be able to **stand against** the wiles of the **devil.**

Ephesians 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Ephesians 6:13 Wherefore **take unto you the whole armour of God,** that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Ephesians 6:14 Stand therefore, having your **loins girt about with truth,** and having on the **breastplate of righteousness;**

Ephesians 6:15 And your **feet shod** with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

Ephesians 6:16 Above all, taking the **shield of faith,** wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

Ephesians 6:17 And take the **helmet of salvation,** and the **sword** of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

Ephesians 6:18 **Praying** always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

Can it be any more clear as to why so many Christians are being defeated? It's because they will NOT obey the Captain's orders to put on the WHOLE armour of God.

- ▷ They pray, but they won't live righteously.
- ▷ They study the Bible, but they won't take the Gospel with their feet.
- ▷ They live righteously, but they won't trust God for help thru the tough moments of life.

We can't pick and choose which parts of the armour we want to wear. The Captain said put it ALL on.

And He said that you won't be able to stand against the devil with it ALL.

Also, This uniform is incompatible with the works of darkness.

Romans 13:11 And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.

Romans 13:12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore **cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour** of light.

Fellows, what's it like to try on a T-shirt when you already have a suit and tie on? You say, "That's silly. You don't put a T-shirt on OVER a suit. You take the suit off in order put the T-shirt on."

That's right. AND you don't try to fit the armour on OVER the works of darkness. The implication here is that you must take off the works of darkness (like you would a coat), so that the armour of God will fit.

Boy are we dumb soldiers, sometimes. (Or, maybe we aren't soldiers at all. Maybe we haven't really enlisted in His army yet.)

Christians are SOLDIERS.

....called to fight.

....fixed on the goal of the Captain.

....wearing the soldier's uniform.

4. AND bearing the WEAPON, & skilled in it.

Ephesians 6:17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the **sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:**

Hebrews 4:12 For the **word of God** is quick, and powerful, and **sharper than any twoedged sword**, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

One thing that clearly identifies soldiers is their packing of THE Christian WEAPON. They carry it. They spread it. They practice on it. They study it. They learn it. They teach it.

The Bible is our SWORD.

By the way, our weapons are not carnal, but with them, we are able to tear down and dismantle the strongholds of Satan in our lives.

2 Corinthians 10:4 (For the **weapons of our warfare are not carnal**, but **mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;**)

2 Corinthians 10:5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

So, we are soldiers.

B. We are fighting because there are enemies to our faith & to our Lord (& to our souls).

1. Satan is our arch enemy.

Matthew 13:39 **The enemy that sowed them is the devil;** the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.

2. Our lusts in us are enemies to our soul.

James 4:1 From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, **even of your lusts that war** in your members?

1 Peter 2:11 Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from **fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;**

3. Those who are friends with the world, are enemies to our souls. Why? Because they will try to persuade you that serving YOUR Captain is foolish. Their Captain (Satan) is more lenient.

James 4:4 Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the **friendship of the world is enmity with God?** whosoever therefore will be a **friend of the world is the enemy of God.**

C. Notice also that we are fighting IN VICTORY thru Christ.

Romans 8:37 Nay, in all these things **we are more than conquerors** through **him** that loved us.

D. Finally, our standing in the battle will one day be worth it all.

Paul, at the end of his life, wrote:

2 Timothy 4:7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:
2 Timothy 4:8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a **crown** of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

Hey, Soldier... Are you really enlisted in Christ's army? Are you sure you are saved? And if you are, are you armed and in uniform, ready to fight? Or, are you AWOL?

We need Christians to realize that they are soldiers.

Everyone sing:

"Onward Christian Soldiers
Marching as to war.
With the Cross of Jesus
Going on before."

We are **sons**in relationship.
saints.....in character.
disciples.....in learning and following.
soldiers.....in battle.

V. We are **SERVANTS** in Obedience.

A. By NATURE, we are the servants of sin.

John 8:34 Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the **servant** of sin.

And ALL have sinned, so all are servants of sin.

But we have been saved to serve GOD.

1 Thessalonians 1:9 For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye **turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God;**

So, we have a new master (as Xns).

B. Examine with me the servant's POSITION.

1. The **servant** is the highest position available.

Matthew 20:27 And whosoever will be **chief among you, let him be your servant:**

Matthew 23:11 But he that is **greatest among you shall be your servant.**

Mark 9:35 And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, **If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all.**

▷ Do you sense that God wants to use you?

▷ Do you have a desire to be a minister?

Then concentrate on being a servant. "Minister" means "servant." Only those who serve qualify for positions and promotions. And our service must extend to everyone...."servant of all."

2. Although this is the highest position, IT IS NOT above Jesus Christ.

John 13:16 Verily, verily, I say unto you, **The servant is not greater than his lord;** neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.

So the servant position is the highest among men, but never to be considered above Christ.

C. Let's examine... **the QUALITIES** of a servant of the Lord.

1. The servant is **obedient**.

Matthew 8:8 The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.

Matthew 8:9 For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and **I say** to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and **to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.**

Romans 6:16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, **his servants ye are to whom ye obey**; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

Whoever you obey, you are his servant...(whether it be sin or God.) God gives us commands in His Word. He teaches us how to live and behave. As Christian servants, it is our responsibility to obey.

The problem we see today is that everybody wants the God of provision & protection & comfort, but folks bail-out when it comes to obeying those difficult commands of Scripture.

But true servants OBEY. In fact, that is what identifies them. That is what distinguishes them from FAKES.

2. Servants also are **single-minded**.

Matthew 6:24 **No man can serve two masters**: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Romans 6:6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that **henceforth we should not serve sin.**

Ephesians 6:5 Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, **in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ**;

Ephesians 6:6 Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;

Ephesians 6:7 With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:

On earth, you can't be employed by one boss and courting another and give that first boss everything he needs.

Your loyalties will be divided.

You will become a straddler, schizophrenic.

And you can't try to serve two masters in the spiritual realm either. Either, you will sell-out to God and serve him, OR, you will sell-out to selfishness and sin and serve them and God is not served. There is no middle ground in service.

And if we are missing anything in our lives, it is a singleness of service. We are living for ourselves and then throw in a little time & money for the church & God once in a while.

God is not fooled. Serve w/singleness of heart.

3. Servants are **forgiving**.

Matthew 18:32 Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, **O thou wicked servant**, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me:

Matthew 18:33 Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee?

Ladies & Gentlemen, We have been forgiven of ALL of our sins. And We're quick to boast that we are servants of God.

But are we as quick to forgive one another? Good servants have a forgiving spirit. Those who refuse to forgive others are called "wicked servants."

God has extended to us a great amount of mercy and He hates it when we can't extend a little ourselves.

So servants are: obedient, single-minded, forgiving

And...

4. Servants are **faithful**.

Matthew 25:21 His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and **faithful servant**: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

"Faithful" means ...

"true to" or "loyal to" or "consistent in".

God's servants are faithful to Him, His Word, and His Church.

Who are WE? We are servants.

5. Servants are **ambitious**.

Matthew 25:26 His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strowed:

Christ used strong language to describe this servant. He called him wicked & slothful

Slothful, lazy servants are WICKED in God's eyes.

So, we learn that we (as servants) must be ambitious.

If you were a master or a boss, what type of people would like to have working for you?

AMBITIOUS, HONEST people. Right? And so does God. AND they must be ambitious about HIS concerns.

The Judgment Seat of Christ will reveal whether we were ambitious about His Work OR our prosperity, security, & comfort.

You still have breath. If your ambition has been blurred or misplaced, you need to change it today.

6. Servants are also **humble**.

Luke 15:19 And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

Acts 20:19 **Serving the Lord with all humility of mind**, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews:

Philippians 2:7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

There's no need to overrate yourself.
Realize that being a servant is a privilege.
Thank God for the opportunity to serve the King.

7. His servants are **bold**.

Acts 4:29 And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word,

Oh, they don't exhibit a boldness toward God or their God-given authorities. But their boldness is to speak the Word of God.

8. Servants have a **servant's attitude**.

Romans 1:9 For God is my witness, **whom I serve with my spirit** in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers;

Romans 7:6 But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should **serve** in newness of **spirit**, and not in the oldness of the letter.

Being a servant is not all in the doing.
It is also in the attitude.

9. Servants are **alert to others' needs**.

Galatians 5:13 For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

I watch for this in a church. This servant's heart is best manifested toward attendance, giving, fulfilled responsibilities in the church, and helping others.

10. Servants are **alert to their master's return**.

Matthew 24:48 But and if that **evil servant** shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming;
Matthew 24:49 And shall begin to smite his fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken;
Matthew 24:50 The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of,

We must behave in such a way that we anticipate our master's return at any moment. We dare not think that we can treat others any way that we want to because He won't be here today.
Some abuse their responsibility that way.
We dare not.
We must anticipate His return.

11. Servants are gentle, not striving.

2 Timothy 2:24 And the **servant of the Lord** must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient,

Should we be a door-mat? NO
Should we be weak? NO
But, our demeanor (as servants of God) ought to be gentle.
We should be so quick to pick a fight or fuss.

Beware: It doesn't mean that we never fight.
There are some causes that are worth fighting over.
God commanded his men to war about some things.
Jesus was gentle, but I sure would like to see Him cleanse that Temple of the moneychangers with that whip.

But our over-all demeanor ought to be gentle.

I hate it when everything and everyone is in an uproar.
I hate it when 2 brethren are fussing.
Servants must not strive.

Servants are obedient, single-minded, forgiving, faithful, ambitious, humble, bold, alert to others' needs, alert to their master's return, have a servant's attitude, are gentle, AND.....

12. Servants fear God.

Hebrews 12:28 Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may **serve God** acceptably **with reverence and godly fear**:

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom because although you fall, you will bounce back when you have the fear of the Lord.
So, servants have that healthy Fear of the Lord.

D. Finally, as we conclude this section on servants. What should the servant's expectations be?

1. First, from his peers,
he should expect persecution.

John 15:20 Remember the word that I said unto you, **The servant** is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.

John 16:2 They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.

In persecuting you, they will think that they are obeying God & doing Him a favor.

Don't get your expectation too high from the area you minister to.
e.g. Stephen preached, and they stoned him to death.
e.g. Paul preached & they beat him & ran him out of town.
e.g. Christ preached & they crucified him.

Our purpose as servants is NOT to be liked or accepted (although that is nice).

Our purpose is to be an example, show the love of Christ, & declare the truth w/o watering it down.

And some won't appreciate it & persecution will _____ come. What can the servant of Christ expect?

2. From His Master, he can expect:
a. Intercession in his behalf

Matthew 8:6 And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.

And we know that our Master is at the right hand of God today and ever lives to make intercession for us.

That means that as our Great High Priest, He is pleading our case to the Majesty

b. Our Master will provide our needs.

Luke 15:17 And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!

The prodigal knew that his father took care of his servants really well.

How much better does God take care of His servants?

INTERCESSION.....PROVISION.....

c. AND the servant can expect to receive rewards from his Master.

Colossians 4:1 **Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal**; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.

God would not have commanded earthly masters to do this if He didn't treat His servants the same way. He even identifies Himself as the "Master in heaven."

3. Finally, we can expect accountability at the judgment one day.

Matthew 18:23 Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants.

There are two possibilities on that day:

2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be **good or bad**.

There might be rewards or loss.

a. REWARDS for faithful servants

1) One reward will be authority.

Matthew 25:21 His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

2) Another reward will be honor.

John 12:26 If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.

3) The third reward will be that we will be with Him.

WOW.

b. But the other possibility is loss.

1 Corinthians 3:15 If any man's work shall be burned, **he shall suffer loss**: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

WE are servants in obedience.

Let's be faithful to our responsibilities.

So, we are **sons**in relationship.

saints.....in character.

disciples.....in learning & following.

soldiers.....in battle.

servants.....in obedience.

VI. Then we are **SHEEP IN A FLOCK.**

A. **Who are the Sheep?**

Psalm 79:13 So we thy people and sheep of thy pasture will give thee thanks for ever: we will show forth thy praise to all generations.

1. We Christians are His sheep.
Not every person on the earth is a sheep.
Not every member of every church is a sheep

Only those who are HIS, are His sheep.
That means that you must be born again.
Otherwise, you are not of His sheep.

2. Also, we see that Christ sent believers out
(as sheep among wolves)
to witness to a lost world.

Matthew 10:16 Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.

This is good instruction to the Mt. Zion A.N.T.S.
Don't think that everything will go perfect as you knock on doors.
* OH, Christ will be with us.
* We will accomplish His will.
* We are being obedient.
**BUT, we will face wolves. Be wise/harmless

Some in our community are waiting for us to lead them TO Christ.
Others are waiting for us to discourage us, mock us, criticize us, reject us, etc. like wolves.
Be prepared.
Let Christ guide your attitude as you go.

3. The Church is referred to as
a "flock" (of sheep).

Acts 20:28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the **flock**, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.
Acts 20:29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the **flock**.

The Church is the body of believers and referred to as a "flock", each person being a sheep.

4. Finally, the sheep are those who have been bought with the blood of Christ. That's us!

B. **What are the dangers the sheep face?**

1. Going astray
This is our greatest danger as sheep.
"Prone to wander--Lord, I feel it.
Prone to leave the God I love."

Isaiah 53:6 **All we like sheep have gone astray;** we have turned every one **to his own way;** and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Every one of us have gone astray.
We are all prone to turn to our own way.
Sheep seem to have that natural tendency to wander away. And it is so easy.

- a. Get your feelings hurt.
 - b. Not being recognized; being passedover
 - c. Imagining OR facing rejection
 - d. slipping into sin
 - e. being distracted with other activities
 - f. misplacing your priorities
 - g. becoming lazy
 - h. developing a bad attitude/critical spirit
- AND **BOOM**, you're soon away from the flock

Beware of going astray!

2. A 2nd danger to sheep is the false shepherd

Isaiah 56:10 His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber.

Jeremiah 50:6 My people hath been lost sheep: their **shepherds** have caused them to go astray, they have turned them away on the mountains: they have gone from mountain to hill, they have forgotten their restingplace.

Here, we learn that False shepherds are:

- a. blind to what the sheep are facing;
- b. ignorant of what to do;
- c. mute when they ought to barking out the warnings;
- d. loving to sleep; lazy; NO drive

And they have actually caused the sheep to go astray.

False shepherds are Pastors who aren't doing their jobs. They look like they are, but beneath it all, they aren't. They call themselves "pastors", but for them, it's a cover-up to lead a lazy life. They put themselves up as a Pastor. But, they don't care for the sheep. They are bent to lead every sheep astray that they can.

That's a danger that thousands in York County alone have been deceived by them. False Pastors/False shepherds.

3. A 3rd danger to the sheep is the ...

False Prophet .

Matthew 7:15 **Beware of false prophets**, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

Matthew 7:16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

Matthew 7:20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

Matthew 7:21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

Don't be so gullible.

We are constantly getting new people into our fellowship, but they aren't ALL true believers.

Some day, we will get someone in here who is a false prophet.
Notice his qualities:

- a. He is a preacher. He's impressive.
He'll boast of his ministry.
- b. He puts himself out as one of the sheep.
But the truth is that he doesn't have the nature of the sheep.
Inside, he more resembles a wolf ready to devour the sheep.
- c. vs 21 indicates that he is a lot of talk---
"Lord, Lord, have we not...."
and the Lord rebukes him for not doing the father's will.
God's will is obedience to this Word.
- d. This man's fruit is lacking. Check the fruit.
He may have charisma;
He may have a winsome personality;
He may be sympathetic
He may tell you what you want to hear.

BUT, beware of him.
He is dangerous to the sheep.
The false prophet.

4. In the Bible, the most talked-about danger to the sheep is the **wolf**.

- a. Notice first, that the wolf tries to get into the church AND he is successful.

Acts 20:29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you , not sparing the flock.
--

In fact, he will **ARISE** in the congregation.

Acts 20:30 Also of your own selves <u>shall men arise</u> , speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.
--

- b. vs 29---He will not spare the flock.
That means there is no end that he will go to, to get his way.
The variable is the safety of the flock.
The constant is having his own selfish way.
- c. vs 30---He will speak perverse things.
That means he will misinterpret situations and misrepresent the truth AND then talk about it to stir others up.
This the WOLF.

Stick around long enough in church work and you'll see a WOLF at work.

- d. Did you see what vs 30 says?
Acts 20:30 ... to draw away disciples after them.
And now we see the purpose of his misinterpretations and misrepresentations.
He wants to gain a following of his own.

HE wants to be the big cheese.
And he'll gain that following, whatever it takes.

- e. In fact, John 10:12, says that he catches the sheep and scatters them.
He distracts them from their shepherd.

John 10:12 But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep .

Beware of the danger of the wolves....
....even in the congregation
....from time to time.

They don't care for you. They have the exaltation of themselves as their goal.
You are just a pawn to them to accomplish their goal.
You are just a stepping stone for them to reach their fame.

5. Finally, John 10 describes an intruder to the sheep called a thief/robber/stranger.

John 10:1 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

- a. Notice 1st about the thief/robber, that he doesn't enter the sheepfold the proper way.
You're supposed to go thru the door.
Look at 10:7,9 to see what door Christ is teaching about:

John 10:7 Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, **I am the door of the sheep**.

John 10:9 **I am the door**: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

Christ is the ONLY WAY of salvation.
BUT, this thief won't get into the Church thru Christ, the door. He's trying to climb in thru good works of the law, bribery, affluence, flattery, intimidation, etc.
....everything except thru Christ.

- b. Notice their goal for the sheep:

John 10:10 The thief cometh not, but for **to steal, and to kill, and to destroy**: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

Look out for the thief---false professor. He will try to steal your relationship with God and kill your faith and destroy your rewards.
No one epitomizes the thief better than the Devil himself. Those are his goals for us.

- c. They, too, speak to persuade, but the real sheep won't listen to these thieves.

John 10:8 All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: **but the sheep did not hear them**.

Don't be taken up with the smooth words of these trouble-makers.
They always disclaim that they are trying to hurt the church.
They put themselves up as do-gooders, trying to HELP the church.

Notice a common thread in these danger people:
They have problem with authority.
They are smooth talkers.
They lie. They criticize (probably with a concern in their voice).
They have their own interest at heart.
They are persuasive.
They destroy the church (or a part of it).

C. **Who is the Shepherd of the Sheep?**

Psalm 23:1 The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

1. Christ is my shepherd.
I am a sheep. Christ is my shepherd.
That's personal. I know who my shepherd is.

He owns me, cares for me, protects me, etc.

2. Look at John 10:11, 14

John 10:11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

John 10:14 I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.

He's not only MY shepherd, but He is also the good shepherd.
Good in character. Good in caring for me. Good in His sacrifice for me. God in His knowledge of me.

3. Hebrews 13:20 says,

Hebrews 13:20 Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,

Christ is great in His blood sacrifice, great in His resurrection and great in His covenant with us.

He is my shepherd. That's personal.
He's the good shepherd.
He's the great shepherd.

4. Look at 1 Peter 5:4

1 Peter 5:4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

Christ is also the chief Shepherd who shall appear and when He does, he will bring His reward for us with Him.

5. Finally, let's look at some that are precious to us because He is our shepherd.

a) We are able to discern His voice

John 10:3-b ... and the sheep hear his voice: ...

If you can't tell His voice, maybe you aren't His sheep.
His sheep hear His voice.
He doesn't disguise His voice.
He makes His will known & clear to us.

b) He knows us by name.

He doesn't just say, "Hey, you."

John 10:3-c ...and he calleth his own sheep by name,...

i.e., He distinguishes you from every other sheep. Every sheep is an individual to Him.
i.e., You are special to Him.

c) He leads us where He wants us to go.

Psalms 23:2-b ... he leadeth me beside the still waters.

John 10:3-d ...and leadeth them out.

Christ will lead His sheep if they are willing to be led.
But I have to be quick to warn you that NOT everyone who says they are led of the Lord, are really led.
People, like sheep, don't always want to go the way that they are being led by the shepherd.

People like sheep, have a mind of their own.

d) But notice that Christ's sheep follow Him.

John 10:4-b ...he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.

They follow Christ because they are in tune with His voice.
They are tuned in to His frequency.
So they hear, understand, & follow.

I wander about those who don't follow Him.
I wonder if they spend enough time with Him to know His voice.
I wonder if they are even His sheep at all.

e) Christ's goal for His sheep is abundant life.

John 10:10 ...I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

AND only Christ can give us that life.

You can't find abundant life in money or job or family alone. Christ is the masterlink that ties everything together and gives us that life.

f) He also gives His sheep eternal life.

John 10:28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

John 10:29 My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.

Only Christ can give them eternal life.

and what a gift.

It's the gift that keep on giving and giving.

D. Who are His on sight under shepherds?

John 21:17 He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

1. Peter was the first to be delegated to do the work of an under shepherd in feeding Christ's sheep.

2. Then Peter writes to Pastors and passes the same instructions on:

1 Peter 5:1 The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:

1 Peter 5:2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;

1 Peter 5:3 Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

Feed them and oversee the sheep; the flock. Be examples to them.

AND Peter addressed it to the elders/pastors.

So, Christ appointed under shepherds.

3. Finally, look at Acts 20:28

Acts 20:28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

The HG has made Pastors to be overseers of the flock---all of the flock in that local assembly. And again, they are to feed them.

So, there are earthly shepherds who get their orders from the Chief Shepherd. Those under shepherds, called Pastors,

Let's summarize what we have learned.

We are **sons**in relationship.
saints.....in character.
students.....in learning.
soldiers.....in battle.
servants.....in obedience.
sheep.....in listening & following

As sheep, we have enemies to avoid,
a great shepherd, Jesus Christ,
AND earthly under shepherd who feed us & oversee us.

VII. Next, we are Stones in the Temple.

You might say that we are chips off the block because.....

A. CHRIST is the Stone

1. He is the Stone rejected by the builders.

Matthew 21:42 Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?

Acts 4:10 Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.

Acts 4:11 This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.

These Jewish leaders (the builders) had rejected Christ and crucified Him, but they had made a grave mistake.

He was the Stone rejected by the Jews.

2. He (as a Stone, meaning "massive rock") became the Head of the Corner (or the chief cornerstone of the Church)

Matthew 16:18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

[Peter is Petros meaning a piece of a rock.

Rock is Petra, meaning the massive rock, boulder]

1 Peter 2:7-b ...but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,

Christ is the chief corner stone, the unmovable Rock on which the entire church is built. He is the foundation for the building of the church.

It is not Peter who the Catholics say was the first pope, the rock on which the church is built.

1 Corinthians 3:11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Can it get any plainer than this?
Peter and popes have nothing to do w/building this house.
Christ is the foundation.

So, He is the rejected stone.
He is the chief corner stone (the foundation).

3. Christ is also the LIVING Stone.

1 Peter 2:4 To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious,

No, the cross was not the end.
No, Christ is not still dead.
He arose from the dead & is alive evermore.

1 Corinthians 15:20 But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

Revelation 1:18 I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

He is the Living Stone.

Rejection did not stop Jesus.
Execution & the cross did not stop Jesus.

4. He is also the Precious Stone.

There are stones in a stone pile in the dirt.
But there are also (what we call) precious stones which are beautiful, rare & have great value.
AND Christ is one of those Precious Stones.

1 Peter 2:4 To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and **precious**, [ie., He is precious to God]

1 Peter 2:6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, **precious**: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

1 Peter 2:7-a Unto you therefore which believe he is **precious**: ... [ie., He is precious to we who believe.]

Christ isn't any old stone. He is a precious stone of great value.
Remember the parable in Matt 13 about the Pearl of great price?

Matthew 13:45 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls:
Matthew 13:46 Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

Christ is
*He is the rejected stone.
*He is the chief corner stone (the foundation).
*He is the living stone.
*He is the precious stone.

5. Christ is the Stumbling Stone.

1 Peter 2:8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

Romans 9:32 Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone;

Romans 9:33 As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

Those offended by Christ are unbelievers and disobedient to the Bible. They stumble at Him & His teaching.

But they wouldn't if only they would believe.

So, we see that Christ is THE STONE. But we are supposed to be studying Who We Are.

B. We, then, are His lively stones.

1 Peter 2:5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

You are stone.

By the way it is a privilege to be called what Jesus is.

When I think of a stone, I think of:

a. something hard and tough.

Brethren, some Christians are too soft & easily reshaped. Once we are grounded in the faith, we ought to be strong enough to support & bear the weight of other newer Christians.

A stone reminds me of...

b. something unique

No two stones are the same, but all have value.

You are special to God. Only you can do what God intends for you to do in the way that He intended for you to do it.

There are probably many meditations on the stone, but my last one is:

c. Stones are used in building. AND Christian stones are joined together to build Christ's Temple or spiritual house.

Although we each unique & there is the priesthood of each believer, we are not isolationists.

We join together to form a local assembly, a royal priesthood.

Ephesians 2:19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

Ephesians 2:20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;

Ephesians 2:21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:

Ephesians 2:22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

So we are blessed to be individuals AND to be part of God's building.

We, too, are called lively. i.e., not dead.

We have everlasting life right now.

Because He lives, we shall live also.

So, We are **sons**in relationship.
saintsin character.
studentsin learning.
soldiersin battle.
servantsin obedience.
sheepin listening & following
stonesin the building of the Temple

VIII. Then, we are also Subjects under authority.

A "subject" is "a person who is under the dominion of" OR "who owes allegiance to a sovereign".

It's from this word that we get the word "subjection."
The same Greek word is also translated "submit."

A. Again, first, we look at **the example of Christ**.

1. Christ was subject to His Father, God.

1 Corinthians 15:28 And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall **the Son also himself be subject unto him** that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

This passage is describing the 2nd coming of Christ when Christ has subdued all his enemies.

Yet, even then, Christ will still be subject to God.

i.e., Christ and the Father are distinct AND Christ understands the principle of being in subjection.

We often think that the only ones who supposed to be in subjection is the wife. WRONG.

Christ, Himself, is in subjection to the Father.

2. The extent of His subjection is interesting---

John 5:19 Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, **The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do**: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

John 5:30 **I can of mine own self do nothing**: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because **I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father** which hath sent me.

Jesus watched and listened to the Father and did only what He saw and heard.
He never did anything of Himself.

Jesus was in total subjection to His authority.
He emulated His authority.

3. In fact, why did Jesus come in the first place?

John 6:38 For **I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.**

Being subject to His authority, Christ lived to obey God---to do His will.

4. One step further, ...
Christ didn't even speak for Himself.

John 12:49 For **I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me**, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.

John 14:10 Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? **the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself**: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.

The Father spoke on behalf of God. He did what the Father showed Him and told Him. He only left Glory because the Father told Him to. **That's total subjection.**

So, Christ set the example of subjection.

By the way, God has exalted Christ into the position of having everything in subjection to Him.

Hebrews 2:8 Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that **he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him**. But now we see not yet all things put under him.

God rewards those who successfully subject themselves to their authority.

B. Christians are also supposed to be in subjection.

1. First and foremost, we are to be subjection the Lord.

Acts 5:29 Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.
James 4:7 **Submit yourselves therefore to God**. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

Who is more important to obey? God or man?
Ultimately, we are subject to God, like Christ was.

He even has authority to discipline us because we are His children.

Hebrews 12:9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much **rather be in subjection unto the Father** of spirits, and live?

2. Secondly, we ought to be ...
... in subjection to one another.

1 Peter 5:5 Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. **Yea, all of you be subject one to another**, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.
Ephesians 5:21 **Submitting yourselves one to another** in the fear of God.

All of us need a spirit of humility. Those who rise to positions of authority can't let it go to their heads.

But those who serve under other believers shouldn't be disloyal to their leaders OR cut them down.

- If something isn't right, what should we do?
a. PRAY for them
b. Talk to the Preacher.

3. We are subject to those who watch for our souls---i.e., the Pastors in our lives.

Hebrews 13:17 Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

We are subjects under authority.

Likewise, the younger ministers are to be subject to the older pastors.

1 Peter 5:5-a Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder...

The Lord wants us to respect AND submit to older folks for their experience sake AND in this context as he discusses Pastors (or elders) it's the same within the ministry.

4. We are also subject to governmental leaders and the laws of the land.

Romans 13:1 **Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers.** For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

1 Peter 2:13 **Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man** for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme;

God wants us to be law-abiding citizens. BUT, we are still to obey God supremely.

That means that if the law of the land is contrary to God's law, we obey God's law.

e.g., When Pharaoh told all the midwives of Israel to kill the baby boys, did they obey Him?

Exodus 1:17 But the midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men children alive.

e.g., When the King issued the command that everyone bow to his image, what did Shadrack, Meshack, & Abednego do?

Daniel 3:18 But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

Notice that they were subject to the King, but obedient to God.

5. We are also to be subject as employees to our employers.

Titus 2:9 Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again;

[This is the preacher's job to tell the employees.]

1 Peter 2:18 Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but **also to the froward.**

1 Peter 2:19 For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.

1 Peter 2:20 For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.

1 Peter 2:21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: [i.e., Christ took what they dished out.]

1 Peter 2:22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:

[This is the hardest thing---not to bad-mouth our authorities.]

1 Peter 2:23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:

We are subjects under authority at work.

If you don't like that arrangement, go into business for yourself.

6. In the home, wives have to follow their husbands example of subjection.

The man sets the example of subjection at church and work.

Then the woman is likewise subject to her husband.

Ephesians 5:22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

Ephesians 5:24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.

Titus 2:5 To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.

[By the way, the same people that say that this is cultural, say that women not wearing men's clothing and men not wearing their hair short IS also cultural. They don't accept the Bible as the literal Word of God.]

1 Peter 3:1 Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives;

[Here's the secret to saved women winning lost husbands. NOT by nagging, but by subjection and obedience in words and living.]

NOTE this pattern:

Christ set the example of subjection for all of us by His subjection to God the Father.

A Pastor set the example for those in his church by his subjection to the Lord.

Men set the example to their entire family and for other men by subjection at work, government, and church.

Women set the example to their children and for other women.

AND God holds each of responsible for our submission to the ones He identified.

He will never hear the excuse that you aren't in subjection because your leader is not in subjection OR that you will suffer for it.

The sad thing is that today, we see everything reversed in too many homes.

Even in Christian homes, the wife is calling the shots.

Oh, the man would be the head, but she won't let him.

Here's a great big he-man-----

* muscles bulging.

* skilled and successful in business.

* popular and well accepted w/others.

But, his favorite words are:

"Yes, honey." "Whatever you say, honey."

He can't make a decision and her follow him.

So, he quits making decisions.

Now, she is out of the will of God & so is he.

Men, lead your homes.

As you view situations, do you see what needs to take place?

Advise & Command your home after you.

AND do it in a right spirit.

AND Women, follow your husbands wishes AND be thankful God gave you a man with some godly leadership about him.

If he is about to make a terrible mistake, make your appeal to him humbly.

If he wants you to clearly violate Scripture, kindly explain that you dare not.

Otherwise, follow his lead.

If that doesn't happen, your family is out of order and you will experience many other problems.

Watch the next step, now.

7. Children are to be subject to their parents.

1 Timothy 3:4 One that ruleth well his own house, **having his children in subjection with all gravity;**

Q: Would God have higher & godly qualifications for the Pastors, OR lower?

So, the pattern type of home is one where the children obey w/ consequences if they do not.

There can be no doubt that Scripture teaches us who we are---As Christians, we are clearly...

Subjects under authority.

The alternative is anarchy where everybody does whatever is right in their own eyes.

So, We are **sons**in relationship.

saints.....in character.

students.....in learning.

soldiers.....in battle.

servants.....in obedience.

sheep.....in listening & following

stones.....in the building of the Temple

subjects.....under authority

IX. We are also Stewards in responsibility.

A Steward is one who manages the property or financial affairs of another.

He is left in charge of something or some group.

And the Bible speaks of us as stewards of God.

God has established every one of us as stewards of several different areas:

A. Every one of us are stewards of the finances and possessions that He has entrusted to us.

Your car is God's car. Your job is to manage it for Him.

Your home is God's home. You are the steward of it.

Your paycheck and cash flow is God's AND your job is to manage it for Him.

Matthew 25:14 For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.

Matthew 25:15 And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.

Do you, as the steward of all you have, ever ask God what you ought to do with it?

Do you ask God for your needs?

Stewardship is serious business.

B. We are also stewards of our gifts, talents, and abilities.

Every music talent. Every ability to work with your hands. Every gift to organize & plan. Every ability to speak to groups or gift of mercy is from God.

AND you are a steward of that gift.

What are you doing with the gifts, talents, and abilities that God has given you?

Hiding them, Hoarding them, selfishly using them for yourself, or are you using them to further the kingdom of God?

1 Peter 4:10 As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

C. We are stewards of a precious commodity which God has loaned to us---Time.

Ephesians 5:16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

I will AND you will stand before God and give an account of how we used our time.

Do you use your time in a way pleasing to the Lord?

You are responsible for your usage.

Have you ever listened to 2 people explain something?

One is quick and to the point.

The other one has to give you every detail and every emotion that entered into the situation digressing for background historical notes along the way.

In so far as they drag unnecessary details into telling the story, they waste precious time.

Remember, when you kill time, it has no resurrection.

Yesterday is a canceled check.

Tomorrow is a promissory note.

Today is the only cash you have. Spend it wisely.

"Redeem" means to purchase back. Regain something that you have lost or are losing.

What changes in your daily schedule can you make to be a redeemer of time...for the Lord's sake?

God has TIME. He gives it to you to manage for Him. How are you doing?

D. God also gives us the ability to have **thoughts**.
What are you allowing yourself to think upon?

Psalm 139:23 Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and **know my thoughts**:

Philippians 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, **think on these things**.

Someone says, "Well, since I didn't say what I was thinking OR do it, it's OK to think it."

Of course, they're talking about their evil, wicked, sensual, revengeful thoughts.

Scientists say that about 10,000 thoughts go thru the average mind in a day.

BUT God has asked us to get control of our thought life. A Christian is only as strong as what he allows in his thoughts.

When wrong or sinful thoughts try to enter, you ought to quickly dispel them as you would an enemy trying to enter your house with a gun.

Why are thoughts so important?
Because they lead to words and actions.
You become like you think.

Proverbs 23:7-a For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: ...

The Bible does not teach mind determination.

It does teach that your thoughts are important to the development of your speech and behavior.

Everything wrong begins w/wrong thoughts.
Everything right begins w/right thoughts.

Let's realize the sobering task we have of managing our thought life.

E. We are also stewards of **our tongue**.

Matthew 12:36 But I say unto you, That **every idle word** that men shall speak, **they shall give account** thereof in the day of judgment.

Hey, that's stewardship language-"give account."

Our every word is important to God.
Manage them careful for His sake.

F. We are stewards of **the choices or decisions** that confront us.
God allows them as tests of our maturity.

Joshua 24:15 And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, **choose** you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

God's plan for us is to learn the principles and commands of Scripture. Then, let those things make as many of our decisions as possible.

Choose God's way in every decision.

My pastor once said, "When I'm not sure which way to go and I've got to choose, I start walking in what seems to be the best direction.

Then, I watch for God to open & close doors AND for the peace that the HS either IS or ISN'T giving me."

G. Finally, God has made us stewards of the **Gospel**---to tell it.

1 Corinthians 9:17 For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me.

1 Corinthians 9:18 What is my reward then? Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel.

In the parable of the pounds, the pounds is like unto the Gospel. We have been given the Gospel to save us AND to tell to others.

It's a stewardship or responsibility that we will give an account to the Lord concerning.

How are you doing in telling others about your Lord?

Some final notes about stewards & stewardship:

A. Although we believers are all stewards, there is a diversity in what is given to each of us.

i.e., We're not all given the same amount to be a steward over.

Matthew 25:14 For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.

Matthew 25:15 And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.

B. Stewards can be removed from their resp.

Luke 16:3 Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed.

Luke 16:4 I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.

e.g. How many of you have heard of folks (who had musical talent but wouldn't use it for the Lord), lose their talent?

e.g., We've all heard of Pastors and Deacons who disqualified themselves and lost their position of stewardship.

e.g., But you don't have to have a highly profile ministry to lose it.

So often, folks who did have some ministry become headstrong and become their own boss and can't be trusted with their responsibilities any more.

They lose their stewardship.

Ministry is a privilege that we must appreciate. We are stewards of it while God allows us to perform it.

Value it.

Summary:

* We each have different resp. of stewardship.

* We can lose our stewardship. We can be removed.

C. Stewards will give an account face to face to God one day.

Luke 12:48 But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

Luke 16:2 And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? **give an account of thy stewardship**; for thou mayest be no longer steward.

Romans 14:12 So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

You will give account of you music, typing, speaking ability, time, thoughts, tongue, choices, ability to use your hands, ability to organize, witnessing opportunities, your finances, and more.

We ALL will. If that audit took place today, how would you do? What do you need to change?

D. Stewards manage.....they don't own.

We manage what He owns.

i.e., He owns our houses, cars, families, time, thoughts, worship, possessions, bank accounts, etc.

E. A steward must be noted for these 3 qualities:

1. Faithfulness

1 Corinthians 4:2 Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

2. Wisdom

Luke 12:42 And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and **wise** steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season?

3. Blameless

Titus 1:7 For a bishop must be **blameless**, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;

Let's be the best stewards (of ALL that God has given us) that we possibly can be.

We are stewards in responsibility.

X. Finally, we are **Sowers in the field.**

This is near and dear to the heart of God because God was the first sower in the Bible. Genesis 2:8 tells us:

Genesis 2:8 And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.

A. Christians are the sowers and we have 2 choices in sowing. (Turn to Galatians 6:8)

Galatians 6:8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

1. So, we can sow to the Flesh, OR

2. we can sow to the Spirit.

B. There are four ways that we sow to the Flesh or the Spirit

1. Our **Thoughts**
2. Our **Attitudes**
3. Our **Behavior**

All three of these are spoken of in Gal.

Notice the results of our sowing to the Flesh is the works of the flesh in our lives, BUT the results of our sowing to the Spirit is the development of the Fruit of the Spirit in our lives.

Galatians 5:19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,
Galatians 5:20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,
Galatians 5:21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.
Galatians 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,
Galatians 5:23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.
Galatians 5:24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.
Galatians 5:25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

4. The 4th area of sowing & reaping in our lives is in the area of **witnessing**.

D. There are at least 15 principles that govern our sowing and reaping.

1. We must sow the right seed.

AND the right seed is the Word of God.

Luke 8:11 Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.

That's why we need to use the Word in witnessing and preaching and teaching.
It's not the fairy tales and illustrations that bring conversion.
It's God's Word. That's the right seed.

2. Then we must sow that seed in the right place

AND the right place is in someone's heart.

Matthew 13:19 When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away **that which was sown in his heart**. This is he which received seed by the way side.

There is no such thing as a silent witness.
The seed must be sowed.
That means that you have to talk to someone.
Tell them about their need of salvation.
Then tell them how they can be saved.
Sow it in their heart.

3. Then, there must be the right preparation of the soil of their heart for you to bear fruit from the sowing.

Right preparation is breaking them. Only God can do this.

Jeremiah 4:3 For thus saith the LORD to the men of Judah and Jerusalem, Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns.

Few people will let you talk to them unless God has sent a recent tragedy in their life.

So the heart must be broken up to receive the seed of the Word. That's God's job.

But when someone is so hard-hearted, we can pray for God to start breaking up their heart's

soil to receive the seed of the Word.

In fact, even the sower of the seed needs to be broken in order to reap in joy.

Psalm 126:5 They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.

When you go to deliver the seed, go broken hearted. It acts like rain causing the seed to produce its crop.

4. Generally, the valley produces a better harvest than the mountain does.

1 Samuel 6:13 And they of Bethshemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley: and they lifted up their eyes, and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see it.

The mountain leaches too easily. It is too rocky and steep. The soil is usually shallow. The valley usually has better soil and water.

The mountain relates to our great times of rejoicing and blessing when all is going well. The valley relates to times of trials, illness, sorrow, stresses, problems, and spiritual lows.

But isn't it interesting that the harvest has the greatest potential in that valley.

Hey,...God has a purpose in your valley. He's about to give you an opportunity to bear some real fruit that you couldn't bear on the mt.

5. You reap where you sow.

Exodus 23:16 And the feast of harvest, the firstfruits of thy labours, which thou hast sown in the field: and the feast of ingathering, which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field.

Notice that he sowed in the field and reaped in that same field.

AND we don't sow cornfield in the front yard and reap it in the back yard. It comes up right where the seed falls.

MZ won't bear any fruit in Italy until we send a missionary or Bibles or tapes there. You won't bear any fruit in your family until you sow the right seed there.

Why? Because you reap WHERE you sow.

5. (Same verse) Notice that it says, ...
"in the end of the year."

You reap LATER than you sow.

Everyone who hears about sowing and reaping wants to make a commitment to sow the right seed tomorrow if they can see the result tomorrow.

They want to sow the right seed in their family after years of the wrong seed and see instant change. AND if it doesn't happen, they want to give up.

They want to go out and be fluent the first time out on visitation having never gone before. You don't learn to drive a car in a day and neither will you learn to be effective in visitation.

What they don't understand is that folks today who are reaping good harvest have been sowing the right seed for years.

Be content to start sowing the right seed BY FAITH that somewhere in the future, God will bring you the harvest.

We don't reap at the time of sowing. That's unreasonable. We must plan ahead.

We reap LATER than we sow.

7. You reap the same kind of seed that you sow.

Galatians 6:7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

Matthew 7:2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

You will reap only the kind of seed you sow.

Does corn seed produces watermelon?

Do horses produce cows?

That's one strong argument against evolution.

illustration

If we sow **anger**, should we expect to reap kindness and understanding?

If we sow **rebellion** to authority, should we expect to reap promotion and fame?

If we sow **immorality**, should we look for a harvest of respect and trust?

If we sow **bitterness**, should we anticipate a harvest of sweetness and right relationships?

No. Why? Because we reap the same KIND of harvest that we sowed.

Some of us had better get busy and make up for lost time in sowing the right seed.

a. It works on the positive side.

Proverbs 11:18-b ... but to him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward.

b. It works on the negative side.

Job 4:8 Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same.

Proverbs 22:8 He that soweth iniquity shall reap vanity: and the rod of his anger shall fail.

8. NO SOWING; NO REAPING.

Proverbs 20:4 The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing.

When you give to someone who expresses a need, you need to know something about the situation. You may be interfering with God's judgment on someone for their slothfulness or mismanagement.

No one will reap without sowing.

9. You will reap much more than you sow.

Genesis 26:12 Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year **an hundredfold**: and the LORD blessed him.

Mark 4:20 And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some **thirtyfold**, some **sixty**, and some an **hundred**.

One corn seed may produce 3 or 4 ears each with 100 seeds.

Oh this can be a wonderful principle.

We ministered the Word to Steve Phyllair.

He shared it with the Lovetts.

Today, the Lovetts are part of this church and share the same message with many others.

You treat your partner right AND it will come back to you 100x.

You give one Gospel witness and it can win many to the Lord.

If one person receives Christ thru one of our JR's or thru one of our witness AND that person goes in the ministry and preaches and hundreds are saved, our seed sown produced 100's of souls.

AND that's true because we reap much more than we sow.

However, it can work in reverse. We can sow one little sinful seed and it will surely bring the bumper crop that we didn't want.

Why is this? Because we reap more of the same kind of seed than we sow.

10. You reap proportionately to what you sow.

2 Corinthians 9:6 But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

If one seed reaps 100,
1000 seeds will reap 100,000.

So, you need to determine if you want to reap 100 OR 100,000.

If you reap a little, you'll reap a little.

If you reap much, you'll reap much.

This works to the good in soul winning.

If you broadcast much seed, you will surely have many souls to your account in heaven.

This works in child rearing & family relationships.

If you spend hours training your children, you will have a great, joyous harvest of it.

If you spend quality time with you partner nurturing your relationship, you will certainly reap a rich trust and communication.

This also works in the negative.

Much time in sin living for the devil will bring a great harvest--much of which is irreversible after you are saved.

11. There are times NOT to sow.

Lev 25:20 And if ye shall say, What shall we eat the seventh year? behold, <u>we shall not sow, nor gather in our increase:</u>

Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit in sowing.

There are times to train your children and times not to. It is not wise to train late at night. It may not be wise to train when everyone is sick OR in the middle of an outing.

There are times when you need to be led of the HS in witnessing NOT to say anything.

e.g., We seldom go into a Nursing Home and start talking about dying and going to Hell.

e.g., We seldom go into the plan of salvation with someone when he has a house full of company sitting behind him.

There are times NOT to sow.

12. There are definite hindrances to reaping even when you do sow the right seed, in the right place, in the right way, at the right time.

a. The type of soil of the heart can produce a variety of results. Matt 13 describes 4 types of soil, only one of which produces a harvest.

Wrong soil included wayside, thorns, & stones.

b. Seed can be stolen.

Mark 4:4 And it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the way side, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up.

As fast as we witness, someone in that home can negate what we have said and in effect steal the seed that we have sown. AND thereby steal the harvest.

c. Seed can be crushed by persecution or affliction.

Mark 4:17 And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended.

d. Seed can be leached by cares of this life or by the deceitfulness of riches.

Mark 4:19 And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.

Those who you witness to OR even in you will not produce fruit IF the cares of this life and riches loom large in your mind.

e. Mixed sowing also prevents a full harvest.

In this one, we see the devil cross sowing look-alike tares to confuse and diminish the harvest.

Matthew 13:24 Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:

Matthew 13:25 But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.

Matthew 13:39-a The enemy that sowed them is the devil;....

So, there are hindrances to reaping even when we do everything correctly.

13. We will reap if we don't give up.

But quitters don't reap.

We must continue by faith even when we don't see results.

Galatians 6:9 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

The problem with Demas was that he was a quitter.

God's workers are so prone to be quitters.

Don't let it happen to you.

14. If there IS a reaping, God did it.

Give Him the Glory.

1 Corinthians 3:6 I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.
1 Corinthians 3:7 So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.
1 Corinthians 3:8 Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.

15. Finally, We need laborers (or reapers).

Today is the time of harvest. In fact, the harvest is so ready, the only thing we lack is folks to do the reaping.

Luke 10:2 Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.

WE are the SOWERS in the field.
AND we are also the REAPERS in the field

I ask you 3 questions:

- 1) Why aren't some of you sowing the right seed in your life and family?
Some of you have let your devotions slide. You quit training your children. You let your date time with your partner slide away.
- 2) Why aren't some of you sowing the gospel seed?
- 3) Why don't you come out for the ANTS which is a planned time of sowing and reaping?

So, We are **sons**in relationship.
saintsin character.
studentsin learning.
soldiersin battle.
servantsin obedience.
sheepin listening & following
stonesin the building of the Temple
subjectsunder authority
stewardsin responsibility
sowersin the field

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